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To: Bilski_Guidance
Subject: Software patents

Please do the right thing here, and either completely eliminate software patents, or drastically shorten their term.

Patents in most industries make sense, because the R&D behind making physical machines or something like pharmaceuticals is a very long and expensive process. Software, however, is very fast moving and it is extremely reasonable to expect hundreds or even thousands of people to come up with the same solution to any given problem. Every developer these days knows that any code they write is almost 100% guaranteed to be infringing on some random patent that was issued for something that is obvious and non-original, and it's just a matter of time before the lawyers come knocking. The only winners here are the lawyers. This is not a friendly environment to work in!

At the very least, please shorten their term dramatically. 20 years in software is equivalent to 100 years in any other field, and is just ridiculous. The very most a software patent should be valid for is 5 years, although I would suggest something closer to 2 or 3 years, or eliminating them altogether.

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