

> From: Tobias Hoevekamp [mailto:tobias.hoevekamp@ilw.agrl.ethz.ch]
> Sent: jeudi 26 octobre 2000 17:42
> To: consultation@eurolinux.org
> Subject: Eyetrack

>
> Dear EU-Commission,

>
> 2 years ago, we (2 Ph.D students from ETH Zurich, Switzerland and
> one person in the consulting business) tried to patent an
> idea on an visual cursor positioning system. Studies with
> neural network simulators indicated, that determining the
> eyegaze was inaccurate by 5mm. Though, our idea was to
> introduce a two step mechanism with a fine positioning
> of the cursor in the second step. See
> <http://www.vt.ilw.agrl.ethz.ch/~hoevekam/open-world/eyetrack.html>
> for further details about our idea.

>
> We did not patent our idea due to various reasons which
> are listed partially below (without any order):

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> o We came to the conclusion (and were told by a patent
> attorney as well), that our patent would not be worth
> very much. Large companies are in a much better for
> litigations as start-up companies and do make use of
> this position.

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> o our 'patent' would have been an collection of ideas
> which would have been easy to work around

>
> o We would have had to pay round about \$ 10.000 to get
> the patent filed without garuantee if we really get
> the patent in the end.

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> o We would have had to wait 18month to be sure if
> a) we get the patent and
> b) nobody else filed the same idea at the same time
> we did

>
> o We would have build our new company on a very weak basis.
> Even if we would have got the patent in the end, this
> would not have ment much.

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> o We would have not been able to make a 'treaty of peace'
> with big companies since crosslicensing would have been
> of no use for us, but a cheap deal for competitors.
> Crosslicensing seems to us as a way for big companies to
> enforce their power over small enterprises. Too bad for us.

>
> o All those latent juridical implementations seem more
> of a playground for attorneys than an appropriate tool for

> enhancing technical progress.
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> I hope to be a little helpful in answering your question
> if software patents would rather enhance or inhibit
> technical development.
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> I am very eager to learn about your conclusions that
> you draw from your consultation.
>
> Sincerely Yours,
>
> Tobias Hoevekamp
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> TOBIAS HOEVEKAMP <mailto:tobias.hoevekamp@ilw.agrl.ethz.ch>
> <http://www.vt.ilw.agrl.ethz.ch/~hoevekam>
> WORK: ETH Zurich, LFO E21, CH-8092 Zurich, +41 1 632 3304
> HOME: Anna Heer-Str. 2, CH-8057 Zurich, +41 1 350 5986