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We have all seen the less than good effect of software patents in the US as can be seen in the now infamous One-Click-Shopping(tm) patent and many more. Patents on ideas implementable in software hinder the evolution of software effectively stalling all advances in every arena that has some crucial basic idea patented, like the RSA algorithm patent in the US has held the whole cryptographic-, operating system- and application software world in a strangle hold for years until October 20th 2000 and effectively made it impossible to bring security to mass products like operating systems and especially the free ones that are developed by independent people working on pet projects that are for the good of everybody.

It can't be required that every computer science student has to know where and how to look out for patent infringement every time they do their homework and publish their solutions on the Internet. Who knows what is patented and what is not? How should the public know anything about patent laws anyway?

As an reminder I might note that most people don't know their own country's road laws even nearly throughout not to mention something as abstract as international/inter-european patent laws and issued patents. Something like patents aren't even accessible to the public so how on earth should the non-commercial private hobbyists even know about existing patents?

I can not see the action of allowing software to be patented in Europe do any good to software development and business. As we can clearly see the European software industry is getting well enough along without software patents, so why should we deliberately bring something so restrictive upon us?

The US companies sue each other over petty patents and seem to engage in sitting in courtrooms most of their time and maintaining a portfolio of patents just to protect them from being sued by other companies or to facilitate the out-of-court-agreement process, just defies the means of protecting intellectual property.

It seems to us engineers that some slick lawyers have found the fountain of gold when they made software, basically ideas, patentable in the US and it has nothing to do with protecting the IP of any company.

How will the governments themselves protect themselves against software patents when doing in-house programs? Not to mention others.

Yours truly,
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