

-----Original Message-----

From: Pete Chown [mailto:Pete.Chown@skygate.co.uk]

Sent: samedi 28 octobre 2000 14:19

To: MARKT SOFTPAT

Subject: Software Patents

I noted with alarm that the European Union may be going to allow software patents. I own and run a small computer consultancy firm called Skygate Technology Ltd, here in the UK.

We have experienced considerable problems designing software for the American market because we have to avoid using techniques that are the subject of any of the thousands of existing software patents. In my own field of expertise (computer security) I know of the most important patents, but there are still many more that can be infringed unwittingly.

As a small company we do not have the resources to carry out the multiple patent searches that would be required for any software that we are developing. We also would not have the resources to patent ideas of our own.

It is of course a concern in business that an innovative technology may simply be "ripped off" by competitors. We have several technologies under development that could fall victim to this. However, software development is so time consuming that it would almost always be better for a company to license the technology from us.

Another problem we would have is that software patents are generally considered unethical in the industry. If we used them in a

significant way, both my personal reputation and the reputation of my firm would be damaged.

In conclusion, although there are situations where we could benefit from software patents, they are far outweighed by the downside.

Software patents would be a significant step closer to a world where only large companies can be successful.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Pete