

Pinpoint sues Amazon over collaborative filtering

<http://swpat.ffii.org/pikta/xrani/pinpoint/index.en.html>

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Collaborative filtering, best known in the form of “People who liked/bought this also liked/bought that”, is widely used in the e-commerce world. Pinpoint Incorporated, a patent litigation startup company whose activity has so far been confined to the US, holds several US patents on the use of collaborative filtering for different purposes. On July 18th 2003, Pinpoint filed a lawsuit against Amazon.com, alleging violation of several of its patents.

Contents

- **Patent company sues Amazon¹**

A short news.com article on the lawsuit.

*<http://www.ffii.org/~phm>

¹<http://news.com.com/2100-1019-1027343.html?part=dht&tag=ntop>

- **A discussion of the Pinpoint vs. Amazon Case²**

An owner of similar patents on collaborative filtering (used for a dating line) obtained during the 1980s analyses Pinpoint's claims and concludes that his patents are almost certainly prior art. Lists the patents which Amazon violates according to Pinpoint:

- US 5,754,939³
- US 5,758,257⁴
- US 5,835,087⁵
- US 6,088,722⁶

Provides a short analyses of each at the end of his article⁷.

- <http://www.pinpointincorporated.com/>

The company's website. Not to be confused with pinpoint.com. The latter also own a lot of patents but are less focussed on patents.

- **PinpointIncorporated's patent list⁸**

Pinpoint's own overview of its US patent portfolio. Most of its patents on applications of collaborative filtering (television broadcast selection, identify desirable objects, deliver information and advertisements), but there are a few others as well, such as one on Lempel-Ziv data compression⁹. As of 2003/08/15, the Pinpoint website contained no other information than these links to patents.

²<http://radio.weblogs.com/0101454/stories/2003/07/19/aDiscussionOfThePinpointVs.html>

³<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=/netahtml/srchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=5,754,939.WKU.&OS=PN/5,754,939&RS=PN/5,754,939>

⁴<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=/netahtml/srchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=5,758,257.WKU.&OS=PN/5,758,257&RS=PN/5,758,257>

⁵<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=/netahtml/srchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=5,835,087.WKU.&OS=PN/5,835,087&RS=PN/5,835,087>

⁶<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=/netahtml/srchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=6,088,722.WKU.&OS=PN/6,088,722&RS=PN/6,088,722>

⁷<http://radio.weblogs.com/0101454/stories/2003/07/19/aDiscussionOfThePinpointVs.html#appendix>

⁸<http://www.pinpointincorporated.com/patents.htm>

⁹<http://localhost/swpat/pikta/xrani/gif-lzw/index.en.html>

- **One-Click Shopping**¹⁰

Amazon (internet bookstore) received a US patent on reducing the need for data input in case of repeated ordering through a network like the WWW. Based on this patent, Amazon sought an injunction against a competing bookstore. Amazon had applied for the same patent at the EPO under EP0902381 in Sep. 1998 under the name “Method and system for placing a purchase order via a communications network”. By the time a search report was issued by the EPO, this patent had already aroused an uproar in the USA, leading to the discovery of new prior art, including similar patents which Amazon might be infringing. The EPO found the Amazon method patentable in principle, but listed new prior art in an examination report of 2001. Amazon decided to split the patent into two new applications. Of these, one, EP0927945, a method for simplified ordering of articles via Internet, was granted by the EPO in May 2003. The other is still pending.

¹⁰<http://localhost/swpat/pikta/xrani/1click/index.en.html>