

From: dr bill [e-mail redacted]
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2010 6:41 PM
To: Bilski_Guidance
Cc: [e-mail redacted]
Subject: Bilski Guidance -- please end for once and all software patents

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a practicing accelerator and laser physicist who has worked for Dept. of Energy laboratories (Livermore, Lawrence Berkeley) for nearly 31 years. Much of my research involves computer code development and use for government projects that can be as expensive as 500 M\$ (e.g., the LCLS x-ray free-electron laser project at Stanford Linear Accelerator Laboratory). Software patents can cripple software development and it is best that for once and for all that the US Patent Office makes it clear that software methods are not patentable.

Computers are now ubiquitous and their control via software is now truly become comparable to use of normal spoken language. As far as I know, the Patent Office has never permitted someone to patent an English language phrase nor a page of text. Software methods are essentially just a particular form of applied mathematics. Copyright of course is different and fortunately computer languages allow one to write out a method in multiple ways, just as one can express an idea via normal spoken language in a number of ways. Consequently, while it may (or may not) be in the best interest of the Nation to permit a particular formulation of the software code incorporating a particular method to be copyrighted, the patenting of software methods is extremely more restrictive and damaging to the common good.

Please, please, please prevent any additional US issuance of software patents and also negate any such previously issued patents.

Sincerely,

Dr. William M. Fawley
Staff Scientist, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (affiliation for identification reasons only)