

Feast for open source as IBM opens patent pantry

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IBM has pledged open access to key innovations covered by 500 [IBM](#) software patents to people and groups working on open source software. The pledge applies to any individual, community, or company working on or using software that meets the Open Source Initiative (OSI) definition of open source software.

This is believed to be the largest pledge ever of patents of any kind and represents a major shift in the way IBM manages and deploys its intellectual property portfolio. That portfolio grew by more than 3,000 patents in 2004. In fact, according to United States Patent and Trademark Office, IBM earned more U.S. patents than any other company for the 12th consecutive year. IBM had 1,314 more patents than any other company. This marks the fourth consecutive year IBM has received more than 3,000 U.S. patents, and IBM remains the only company to receive more than 2,000 patents in one year.

“True innovation leadership is about more than just the numbers of patents granted. It's about innovating to benefit customers, partners and society,” said Dr. John E. Kelly, IBM senior vice president, Technology and Intellectual Property. “Our pledge today is the beginning of a new era in how IBM will manage intellectual property.

“This is not a one-time event,” said Dr. Kelly. “While IBM will continue to demonstrate leadership in patent output, through measures such as today's pledge, we will increasingly use patents to encourage and protect global innovation and interoperability through open standards and we

urge others to do so as well.”

Patents included in the pledge relate to many aspects of software innovation. Several of the patents cover dynamic linking processes for operating systems. Another is valuable to file-export protocols. The pledged patents cover a wide spectrum, including patents on operating systems, databases, methods for testing programming interfaces, and even cursive text recognition.

Pledged Patents

Today's pledge supports IBM's desire to advance open standards and information technology interoperability. IBM has been making selected patents available on a royalty-free basis for use in open standards covering software protocols, file formats, and interfaces.

The patents included in this pledge relate to many aspects of software innovation. Several of the patents cover dynamic linking processes for operating systems. Another patent is valuable to file-export protocols. In total, the pledged patents cover a wide breadth, including patents on important interoperability features of operating systems and databases, as well as internet, user interface, and language processing technologies.

The pledged patents and further related information will be posted on IBM's website at www.ibm.com/ibm/licensing/patents/pledgedpatents.pdf

Innovation that Matters to the World

IBM invests approximately five billion dollars annually in research and development and has made many discoveries and inventions that have improved quality of life.

IBM's focus on innovation goes beyond standard technology. For example, in 2004 IBM received dozens of patents related to accessibility for people with disabilities, including: advances in speech recognition, wireless Braille devices, web site accessibility and a portable colorimeter for the colorblind.

The 2004 patent results were reported today by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. An agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the USPTO issues patents, administers the patent and trademark laws of the U.S., and advises the administration on intellectual property policy.

Results and ranking also were reported today by IFI CLAIMS Patent Services, which compiles the CLAIMS© patent database and annually reports the number of U.S. patents issued to companies. According to IFI CLAIMS, IBM inventors were listed on 29 additional patents awarded to other primary assignees for a total of 3,277 patents.

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