

Creative Awarded U.S. Patent On User Interface For Portable Media Players

August 31 2005



Creative Zen Micro

Creative Technology, the Singapore digital entertainment products maker, today announced that it has been awarded U.S. Patent 6,928,433, which Creative is referring to as the "Zen Patent." The Zen Patent was awarded to Creative for its invention of the user interface for portable

media players, including many of the Creative Zen and NOMAD Jukebox MP3 players, and found in some arch rival players, such as the Apple iPod and iPod mini. The Zen Patent covers the user interface that enables users of portable media players to efficiently and intuitively navigate among and select tracks on the players. Creative applied for the Zen Patent on January 5, 2001 and it was awarded on August 9, 2005.

Creative's invention for the user interface for portable media players enables selection of at least one track in a portable media player as a user sequentially navigates through a hierarchy using three or more successive screens on the display of the player. One example would be the sequence of screens that could display artists, then albums, and then tracks. When the user selects an artist, the player displays a list of albums for that artist. Selection of one of the listed albums then displays a list of tracks on the album.

“The user interface covered by the Zen Patent was invented by Creative research and development engineers in our Advanced Technology Center in Scotts Valley, California,” said Sim Wong Hoo, chairman and CEO of Creative. “The first portable media player based upon the user interface covered in our Zen Patent was our NOMAD Jukebox MP3 player. We shipped the NOMAD Jukebox to U.S. retail customers in September of 2000, and by November of 2000, it was already ranked as the top revenue-generating product in the U.S. in the digital audio player category, according to PC Data. By January of 2001, we announced that we had already sold 100,000 NOMAD Jukeboxes. The Apple iPod was only announced in October 2001, 13 months after we had been shipping the NOMAD Jukebox based upon the user interface covered by our Zen Patent.”

“I am very excited that we were awarded the Zen Patent, which helps to protect our invention and recognizes our innovation in portable media players,” said Sim. “After a major investment of time and effort by a

group of our research and development engineers, we developed a way for a user to efficiently and intuitively navigate and select tracks from a significant number of tracks stored on a player. Before this invention, there was no intuitive and efficient way to deal with the large number of tracks that could be stored on a high-capacity player.”

“There has been press coverage recently regarding the rejection of Apple's patent application, published as Pub. No. U.S. 2004/0055446 for a user interface in a multimedia player. This Apple patent application was filed on October 28, 2002. A related provisional application was filed by Apple on July 30, 2002, eighteen months after our filing date for the Zen Patent and over twenty months after our NOMAD Jukebox based upon our user interface was on the market,” added Sim.

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