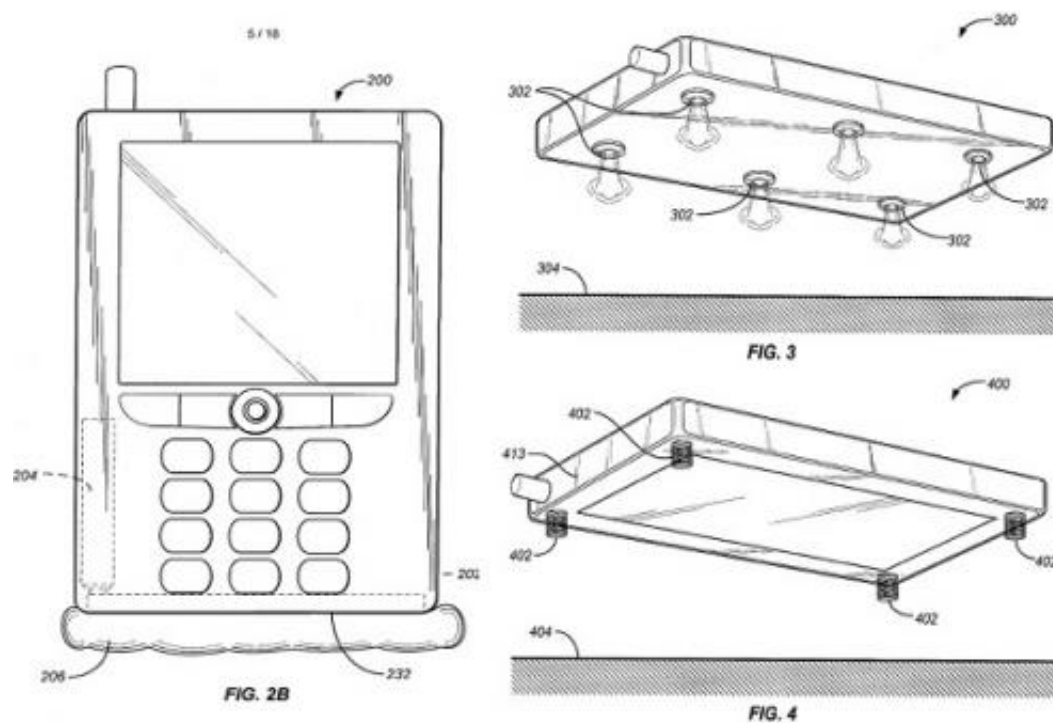


Amazon's Bezos envisions airbag phone, files patent

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A U.S. patent application was filed in February 11, 2010 bearing the names of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Amazon VP Greg Hart but was discovered this week by [Geekwire](http://www.geekwire.com). According to their patent application titled "Protecting Devices From Impact Damage," smartphones will get airbags as a safety precaution in case their users drop the phones or they fall accidentally. The two patent-seekers are

proposing the system and method not just for the smartphone but for a range of mobile devices that nobody likes to drop, such as audio players, cameras and pagers. Bezos and Hart's patent filing has illustrations and flowcharts to further explain their "removably attachable damage avoidance system."

As one [smartphone](#) scenario goes, the user drops the phone. Whoops, says the safety monitoring system, this device is no longer in contact with the user. The approaching surface is measured and the velocity is determined. Does the risk of damage exceed the threshold? If so, here comes the airbag to be deployed, and it's the airbag, not the poor device, that makes first contact with the surface.

When the news hit that Bezos had filed a patent for phones with airbags, a number of responses from writers in the blogosphere admitted disbelief, perhaps not unrelated to bearing witness to the sting of discovering that the 'Internet Explorer users are more stupid' report was a hoax.

The application states conditions that make such a proposal appear practical considering the heavy use of [mobile devices](#) and the need to protect them from damage. "These portable devices are sometimes vitally important to the user as they often contain data that is related to the user's work and personal life," says the application. That data might include private data difficult or nearly impossible to replace.

Bezos studied electrical engineering and computing science at Princeton, and also worked as a financial analyst. That, leave alone his ascent as leader of click-and-buy Amazon, suggests a scientist who knows how to market ideas. His business case in the application is as interesting as his technical description.

"With the number of cellular phones in use exceeding several billion and

repairs typically exceeding \$25, the costs of damage and loss of cellular phones amounts to billions of dollars per year,” says Bezos. He also notes in the application, “At least one report claims 1 out of 3 cellular phones are damaged or lost in the first year of ownership.”

Whatever direction the [patent application](#) takes, or whoever compares Bezos more to Don Quixote than Thomas Edison, Bezos is not likely to feel demolished. As he once told new students at Princeton, “Failure is an essential component of innovation.”

More information: [appft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Pa ... HITOFF&d=PG01&p=1&u=%2Fnethtml%2FPTO%2Fsrchnum.html&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=%2220110194230%22.PGNR.&OS=DN/20110194230&RS=DN/20110194230](http://appft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-PA...HITOFF&d=PG01&p=1&u=%2Fnethtml%2FPTO%2Fsrchnum.html&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=%2220110194230%22.PGNR.&OS=DN/20110194230&RS=DN/20110194230)

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