

Open Invention Network in the Spotlight

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Back in September, Mozilla made an announcement: This week Mozilla joined Open Invention Network as a licensee. At the time, I didn't pay much notice. Although I knew OIN, I wasn't particularly sanguine about its approach.

To be sure, the aims are noble enough, but its patent portfolio seemed so small compared to the vast array of software patents granted in the US that it was hard to see it offering much protection. But when I heard that the Document Foundation (the developer of LibreOffice) and KDE were also joining Open Invention Network, I obviously wondered why there was this sudden interest in a scheme that had been going for some years now.

The answer is not too hard to find. As the last paragraph in the quotation above indicates, one of those investing in OIN was Novell. This presumably means that it has pledged that its patents won't be used against any other OIN members. As we know, interesting things will be happening to at least some of those patents:

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