

Free Trade Agreement, as it stands, will stifle australia's opportunity for growth, as one of the sections approximately means that ANYTHING can be patented - a process, a vague idea, a vague idea about a process...

consider the case of british telecom finding a patent that entitles them to royalties for almost every hyperlink on the internet.

businesses across the world have vastly gained from the internet - in fact an entire industry has been created and is flourishing purely due to the fact of the ease of doing business of any kind via the internet. if someone can file a patent (as this free trade agreement would seem to allow), then such things as "Informaton for display at a terminal apparatus of a computer is stored in blocks, the first part of which contains the information which is actually displayed at the terminal, and the second part of which contains information relating to the display and which may be used to influence the display at a time or in response to a signal" (in the case of the BT patent) could apply to almost all new technology developed - the entire set of graphical interface tools that you use to operate the computer before you comes under this, as do things like PDAs, on-screen menus in tvs and video/dvd players, some current (and probably most future) mobile phones, in-car navigation sys tems, even remote controls!

how much would the industry be crippled if BT had decided to pursue this and had been successful in collecting royalties from justabout every company that produces electronic devices?

copyright/patent law was originally introduced to find a balance between an author's right to protect his/her creation, and the public's right to use that creation.

copyright/patent law becomes useless when the industry as a whole would benefit more from having nothing.

the FTA would aid the mega-corps the most, and stifle many smaller companies and individual parties, effectively making innovation itself subject to criminal punishment, or inhumanly expensive otherwise.

if the FTA does go ahead, I am definitely going to march down to the patent office and patent "a method to interact with an electronic device by a method unpatented as at <current date>" - which the FTA would effectively allow...

then, the instant someone invents a better way than voice control, or even a better method of voice control, I sue them into bankruptcy, take their invention and make myself as rich as bill gates.

is this what australia wants?

I also strongly believe that the DMCA is a method for large record companies to execute an even stronger stranglehold on the music industry. Studies sponsored by the RIAA and similar companies have shown cd sales dropped around the time that file sharing started to take off - but the economy dipped then too. Now that the economy is moving in slightly better stead, cd sales are higher than they were last time the economy was strong - but what I think scares them is the fact that their big-name artists aren't pulling the cash they used to, as it becomes easier and easier for people to investigate alternative sources and types of music. If I find music I like on the internet, I'll go and buy a cd. Unfortunately, most of the music I like isn't available in most shops, so of course the large record companies are getting less and less of my money...

allowing the DMCA would be as devastating as passing legislation that only BMWs and Mercedes Benz' are allowed on australian roads, because they're big, rich companies and other companies selling cars are damaging their sales...

Also, what's with lowering tariffs on trade with america? they're rich enough to afford it - perhaps we should have a closer look at reducing tariffs with countries that it would make a difference with, like taiwan or korea. I am sick of governments doing ALMOST NOTHING about America's (so far successful) attempts to take over the world with economic pressures - especially when they take such a selfish, intolerant and narrow minded view towards other cultures.

In summary, I am sick of the australian government acting like america's lap-dog, like some lackey yes-man.

Everyone I know agrees that america is trying its hardest to bring the world under one government - the american one. Can we sue america under anti-monopoly laws? The american government has definitely learned a lot from microsoft's behaviour.

I am going to make sure that everyone I know knows that this is what australia is getting itself sucked in to.

Diversity is strength. Would the flight industry be as strong as it is, if there was only one company? Or would it still be a commodity for the rich only? Has its competition through diversity _not_ opened up avenues for proliferation of growth in all areas of business?

Let us be a part of the diversity, not a part of the borg-like conglomerate.

There are some parts of the FTA I agree with - America's "fair use" laws would be excellent. I abhor the fact that currently in australia, if I have purchased a cd - which, as far as I can tell from current law gives me a license to listen, and my car doesn't have a cd player, if I put the music onto a cassette tape so I can exercise my right to listen in my car, I can be charged as a criminal, and sued for many times my annual salary...

regards,

Mike Jackson

ps: you may not publish any personal information except for my name on the internet, or in publicly available listings. I don't want _more_ spam heading my way.