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Software Ownership and Innovation

Copyrights, trade secrets, and patents are widely used tactics to establish ownership throughout our society and they keep the work of developers safe from being stolen. These can be very handy for developers and without them, developers' projects can be taken from them. Even though this sounds very beneficial to have in place, some disagree with the use of software ownership. Some advocate for everything to be free and open source and that ownership can make situations worse. I disagree with this stance because without software ownership, smaller businesses have a very difficult time making their way into the market which discourages innovation. There is one aspect from the argument against software ownership that I do side with. This is the stance that algorithms should not be able to be owned and this promotes further innovation. Ownership should be explicit to the source code, object code, and look and feel of the software. It should have nothing to do with anything math or algorithm based. While I am for the ownership of software, I also am against the idea of owning any algorithms that come along with any software, or even algorithms by themselves. This combination of ideas maximizes innovation in our society.

Unlike some people (like Richard Stallman), I believe that developers should have the ability to own the software that they created, and that people should have the right to protect their source code from the public. Software ownership positively affects developers in many ways. One way is it allows creators to secure their own ideas and code. Without the ability to publicly own a project that one created, others can easily copy another person's hard work and effort by using their original idea or code. Another way software ownership positively affects developers is by allowing them to have the opportunity to make it big. This is because developers' good

ideas and code will only be accessible to the original creator, allowing them to succeed if they have a valuable idea. This gives small teams a significant “pat on the back”, motivating them that as long as they create a valuable software, they will succeed since their work will not be stolen in the future. This very idea encourages innovation in our society which is a very important aspect of any society or civilization.

Algorithm ownership should not exist as it can greatly cause a halt in innovation. The truth is, algorithms should not be owned by anyone, because algorithms are just a bundle of logical statements, and those statements existed before the developer had even came up of it. When it comes to algorithms it is a different situation than ideas and projects. The difference is that no one can own any kind of logic in this world because it already exists, but people can own ideas since it doesn't yet exist. Putting ownership on an algorithm is absurd as the algorithm already exists. Not only is it absurd, but it is also limiting, because owning an algorithm can prevent further inventions because it leaves a significantly less amount of room to create software, since algorithms and logic are what everyone must rely on in order to create things. Algorithms are just logic and math and nobody should be able to put their name on it. Owning a project and code is different because people don't need to rely on anything related to it in order to create their own projects. Disallowing ownership of algorithms furthurs innovation since it allows for more developers to create.

I fully support the ownership of software' source code, object code, and the look and feel of it. It allows for small businesses to understand that they can rise to have a chance at becoming a more influential business. It also prevents others from copying or stealing someone's work and making their own profit from it. I disagree with the concept of owning an algorithm, as

algorithms are what everyone needs to rely on in order to achieve their goal or original idea. This mix of ownership rights allows for encouragement of innovation while also providing a thriving economy.