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Software patents have been an enormous bane on the industry. A key example is the mp3/lame patent, which has stifled innovation in the open source community and made it difficult for businesses to use basic music playing technology in their software for decades. Similar patents on compression technology have also been extremely damaging to the industry. In general, we are falling behind other countries (China) in terms of innovation as a direct result of our tendency to approve software patents. Patent troll organizations in the U.S. have also created additional chilling effects that make businesses wary of developing code that is even similar to existing solutions patented by other companies. Imagine if the wheel had been patented -- that is what it feels like when a piece of code or algorithm is patented.

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