

Re: Where would we be without these important patents?

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.econ/2006-03/msg00228.html>

- *From:* royls@xxxxxxxx
 - *Date:* Sat, 18 Mar 2006 17:54:50 GMT
-

On Sat, 18 Mar 2006 14:27:59 -0000, "Andy F." <never.mind@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

<royls@xxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:441af311.19388493@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

On Fri, 17 Mar 2006 10:46:35 -0000, "Andy F." <never.mind@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Thu, 16 Mar 2006 14:09:30 -0000,
"Andy F." <never.mind@xxxxxxxx>
wrote:

<royls@xxxxxxxx> wrote
in message
news:4418e1af.7530316@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

On Thu, 16
Mar 2006
02:44:55
-0000,
"Andy F."
<never.mind@xxxxxxxx>
wrote:

"nospam"
<nospam@xxxxxxxx>
wrote
in
message
news:JKWdne-jtsfgYYjZnZ2dnUVZ_v2dnZ2d@xxxxxxxx

Andy
F.

Re: Where would we be without these important patents?

wrote:

That
would
mean
a
lot
of
inventors
would
be
out
of
a
job.

From
where
you
got
this
idea
?
The
scientists
and
engineers
are
employed
to
design
a
product.
The
company
will
have
the
full
right
to
use
this
designs.

But
without
exclusive

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use
of
the
designs,
the
firm
won't
make
enough
profits
to
justify
paying
the
inventors'
wages.

Such claims
are
common,
but false
and
ridiculous.
Do you
think no
inventor
was ever
paid wages
before there
were
patents?
Give your
head a
shake.

Technological progress has
been a lot faster since
patents were
introduced.

That is a blatant post hoc fallacy. So has
population growth,
literacy rates, democratic governance, life
expectancy, etc. Do
patents get all the credit for those, too?

I didn't use a post hoc fallacy.

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Yes, of course you did.

You raised the question of what happened before there were patents.

And you couldn't answer it, because the only possible answer destroyed your argument. So you trotted out the post hoc fallacy instead.

The fact is that before patents, technological progress was very slow for centuries.

Nope. In fact, technological progress was roughly proportional to total economic production and the level of scientific knowledge both before _and_ after_ patents. The publication of Newton's Principia had far more impact on technological progress than patent privileges.

A fact which destroys the argument you were trying to make.

No, of course it doesn't, because in the first place it is not true, and in the second place even if it were true, it would be nothing but a post hoc fallacy.

No, they only get some of the credit.

Why any of it? Only because of your post hoc fallacy.

The historical evidence just confirms what economic theory predicts.

Economic theory predicts no such thing, and the historical evidence outright refutes it. What economic theory does predict is that granting monopoly privileges is one of the least efficient ways to provide an incentive.

In fact, the rate of progress in scientific discoveries that do _not_ qualify for IP

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monopolies has been even greater than the progress in technology.

Any evidence for that claim?

The ratio of patent filings to published scientific papers.

Which only proves that scientists write a lot of papers.

No, it proves your claims are flat false. Technological progress is driven by scientific progress, which does not get any IP monopoly privileges. It is not driven by patents, as, for example, the Soviet Union's successful development of space flight technology before the USA in the total absence of patents proves.

In other cases, the imitators will have an advantage because they can learn from their competitors' mistakes and produce a better product.

No, that almost never happens, because the first producer has much better information about the product, customer problems, etc.

It's quite common. For example, do you remember when Sinclair produced the world's first home computer?

It wasn't the first, just the cheapest up to that time. And how is it germane to the issue? Sinclair made some bad business decisions, dropped the ball on the technology, and was left behind. And he had patents, lots of them. So that example just proves you wrong again.

Now have you got any reason to believe that the extra innovation caused by the patent system isn't worth having?

Yes, of course: it's focused on what is most patentable, not on what is most useful and promising.

Nonsense. Unless you patent something useful, the patent isn't worth a thing.

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Irrelevant. A losing lottery ticket isn't worth a thing, either. That doesn't stop people from buying them. And buying those tickets reduces the amount people have to invest in more useful things, just as the huge rent seeker spending on worthless but patentable technologies crowds out more useful and promising research on unpatentable technologies.

Unless you're going to explain what's special about Dyson. Why did he have a chance but other people don't?

He's smart, prolific, and works on simple technologies.

Is it unusual for an inventor to be smart?

It's quite unusual for one to have Dyson's business acumen.

Inventors usually agree to work for a salary because it gives them a regular income instead of having to wait for uncertain rewards in the future.

Nope. Flat wrong, as usual. They work for salaries because they know a fact that you refuse to know: that they invent because they like it, not because they anticipate being able to collect monopoly rents.

Dreaming up a new invention might be enjoyable. However, developing an invention into a marketable product involves a lot of hard work, which people aren't going to do unless they're getting paid.

And people do it just as willingly for unpatented as for patented products. Your arguments are garbage.

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If the product wasn't patentable, people would be less likely to get paid for developing it.

But more likely to get paid for developing a more useful unpatentable one.

My arguments are destroying your arguments, but as usual you're being too arrogant to admit it.

ROTFL!! Your arguments lie in ruins. All of them. Deal with it.

— Roy L

.