Patenting of Software – Bane or Boon?
Various Disciplines Will Meet for the Karlsruhe Dialog on Technology and Law on November 17

Is it reasonable to patent software? This complex and controversially discussed question will be in the focus of the Karlsruher Dialog Technik und Recht 2011 (2011 Karlsruhe Dialog on Technology and Law) entitled “Patenting of Software – Bane or Boon?” The conference organized by the Center for Applied Legal Studies (ZAR) of KIT on November 17 will focus on problems in practice at the interface between engineering and law. Representatives of the media are cordially invited.

Is it reasonable to protect inventions in the field of software like other inventions? Or will this give rise to the risk of a monopolization of ideas? Where is the boundary between software as such and technical solutions for technical problems? Patenting of software has been discussed controversially for a long time already. To establish a system considering the interests of all parties affected, an interdisciplinary approach is required, explains Professor Klaus-J. Melullis, retired chief judge of the Federal Court of Justice and Head of the Research Group on Patent Legislation at KIT’s Center for Applied Legal Studies (ZAR). Apart from legal, also economic and technical aspects have to be considered.

The conference on the patenting of software planned and conceived by the Research Group on Patent Legislation will focus mainly on the interface between engineering and law in order to build up mutual problem awareness, enhance the dialog, and develop solutions taking into account the requirements made on a functioning patent legislation. Eight expert presentations will provide an overview of various disciplines. After an introduction to basic legislation and the patenting of software from the information technology point of view, exploitation options will be analyzed from the points of view of research, large, small, and medium-sized enterprises. Assessment of the number of registrations of software-related patent applications will be followed by a systematic study of challenges and opportunities from the legal point of view. The conference will represent an opportunity to discuss the concepts presented after the individual presentations as well as during the final podium discussion.
The Research Group on Patent Legislation of ZAR is of interdisciplinary character and based on cooperation. The central objective is to convey a broad awareness for patent legislation aspects. The Research Group cooperates with the technical and scientific departments of KIT. It wishes to make patent legislation part of the education program at KIT, as graduates of a technical or scientific university will often be confronted with problems of an appropriate protection of their developments during their later career. Together with the Institute for Program Structures and Data Organization (IPD), the Institute of Applied Informatics and Formal Description Methods (AIFB), and the KIT Innovation Management Service Unit (IMA), ZAR has already organized a seminar on “Software Patents” for students of informatics, information science, and economic engineering.

The conference will start on November 17, 9 hrs, at the Novotel Karlsruhe City, Festplatz 2. It will be chaired by Professor Klaus-J. Melullis, who will also open the conference. Dr. Peter Fritz, KIT Vice President for Research and Innovation, will welcome the participants. Presentations will be made among others by Professor Ralf Reussner, KIT Institute for Program Structures and Data Organization (IPD), about “Informatics – Needs from the Technical Point of View”. Professor Albert Albers from IPEK – Institute of Product Engineering of KIT – will speak about “Patents at the Interface of Hardware and Software”. The economic relevance of patents will be highlighted by Professor Ingrid Ott, Chair for Economic Policy at KIT.

The complete conference program, further information, and the registration form can be found at www.karlsruher-dialog.de

The registration deadline is Friday, November 11, 2011.

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation according to the legislation of the state of Baden-Württemberg. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

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