



POSITION STATEMENT

AN OVERALL APPROACH TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

*Adopted by the IEEE-USA
Board of Directors, 20 Nov. 2009*

IEEE-USA recommends that the administration develop an overall approach to the handling of federal intellectual property protection, including the restructuring of the existing intellectual property organizations. Intellectual property is now a significant and growing component of our national economy.

IEEE-USA believes that a unified approach to federal intellectual property protection policy can benefit current protection and can better accommodate new forms of protections, such as protection for fast-moving technologies against knock-off copying or federal protection for databases beyond copyright. This intellectual property policy should be made at the highest levels in the administration. We suggest that a model much like that for the Office of Science and Technology Policy and associated science committees be considered.

IEEE-USA also believes that the handling of patents, copyrights, trademarks, and any new form of intellectual property be given to independent operational agencies for each particular form of intellectual property as appropriate. Each of these operational agencies should be fee-supported, with flexibility in setting their fees subject to the oversight of Congress, and following appropriate administrative procedures.

IEEE-USA also believes that all fees collected by these agencies should remain in the respective agency. In the past, the appropriations process has worked to the detriment of the quality of the patenting process and to patent applicants in particular by allowing the diversion of revenues derived from patent application fees away from the Patent Office to fund unrelated activities.

IEEE-USA also believes that the functions of the patent, trademark, and copyright offices, and any other new agencies, that benefit the public (such as providing material for the Library of Congress and making information available to all on the Internet) should be funded through general tax revenues.

This statement was developed by IEEE-USA's Intellectual Property Committee and represents the considered judgment of a group of U.S. IEEE members with expertise in the subject field. IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of more than 210,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of IEEE. The positions taken by IEEE-USA do not necessarily reflect the views of IEEE or its other organizational units.