

Technology : fiona mcgoldrick
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Cruickshank Targets American Software Developers

Cruickshank, Ireland's leading firm of patent and trade mark attorneys, has launched an ambitious plan to target US software developers. **Michael O'Connor, Patent Attorney at Cruickshank Intellectual Property Attorneys**, has told delegates at the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) Annual Meeting in San Diego that, contrary to popular belief, software is patentable in Europe.

Michael O'Connor is a leading expert on European software patents, and explained to his audience, which comprised technology transfer and intellectual property experts from a range of companies and universities, including Yahoo!, Microsoft, MIT, UC Berkeley and Stanford, why software patent applications fail in Europe, and what needs to be done to resolve the problems. Cruickshank representatives will also be meeting with a range of US technology and software companies over the coming months as part of a drive to educate them about European software patents.

The AUTM represents technology transfer and innovation experts in more than 350 universities, research institutions, teaching hospitals and government agencies as well as hundreds of companies involved with managing and licensing innovations.

The European Patent Office currently grants approximately 56% of all patents applied for. However, the grant rate drops to just 20% of software patent applications. Requirements for European software patents are much more stringent than those applying in the USA.

Michael O'Connor, Patent Attorney at Cruickshank Intellectual Property Attorneys, said "It's a myth that software is not patentable in Europe. In fact, the European Patent Office (EPO) issues software patents regularly. Confusion arises because of differences in the European requirements for software patent applications compared to those in the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

"Inventors and companies applying for patents on software and business methods need to ensure that their application for a patent meets the very detailed European requirements or they are virtually guaranteed to fail. It's important for anyone wishing to patent software to ensure they involve a European Patent Attorney at an early stage."

Cruickshank will also be targeting Irish software developers as part of their drive to educate people about their intellectual property rights in software and other high tech areas. Cruickshank are offering a free one hour consultation with an intellectual property expert to all software companies in Ireland.

For more information visit: www.cruickshank.ie.

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