

Just How Important are Intellectual Property Rights?

Understanding How to Obtain Proper Access to IPRs Can Be Critical to Your Company

Gaining access to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is an important issue in today's high-tech industry. The landmark trial between Napster.com and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) is an accurate account of this sensitive situation. Although this debate is relatively new to the telecommunications market, it's clearly an issue that could have damaging repercussions for companies who fail to properly gain access to IPRs.

"Many companies believe that because the source code of a technology can be accessed at nearly no charge, they can integrate it within their products without considering intellectual property. This is just not true," says Mrs. Catharie Béchamp, Vice-president marketing and Sales of Sipro Lab Telecom.

Ms. Bechamp likened the situation to visiting a museum. "We agree to pay the entrance fees to access the artworks on exhibit. Inside the museum, we will have the possibility to analyze in detail a picture or a sculpture. But this does not mean we can bring those artworks home with us or make copies and resell them for profit. Should it be any different with patented technologies?"

Sipro Lab Telecom, a Montreal-based Licensing Service Provider, understood a few years ago the need for the telecommunications industry to have a unique entrance door in order to ease the access to patented technologies. Therefore, Sipro created in March 1998 a single licensing point aiming at easing the access to essential patents related to the use of the G.729 voice compression standard.

"Instead of having to contact individually each patent holder, a company wishing to integrate the G.729 technology within its products simply knocks at our door, and doing so, clears nearly all Intellectual Property issues" explained Mrs. Béchamp.

As of November 2000, nearly 30 companies specializing in VOIP, Broadcasting, Satellite Telephony, Voice Over Packets, Cellular Phone, have agreed to acquire a license from Sipro Lab Telecom. A list of G.729 licensees can be obtained on Sipro Lab Telecom website (www.sipro.com).

Sipro recently signed an agreement with FreeWebTel, a start-up company specialized in the Internet Telephony market. The example of Free Web Tel demonstrates, that the Intellectual Property Rights issue concerns every company regardless of its size. "Companies which have decided to leave this question aside should seriously reconsider their position," suggests Mrs. Catharie Béchamp.

About Sipro Lab Telecom

Sipro Lab Telecom Inc., a privately owned Canadian corporation based in Montreal, was founded in 1994. Its mission is to promote and transfer technologies developed within private and public laboratories and research centers in the fields of digital audio compression, telecommunications and information technologies. Sipro managed to gather the essential patents of France Telecom, NTT, The Université de Sherbrooke, AT&T and Nokia within its G.729 One-Stop-Shopping Concept.

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