SOFTIC

Software Information Center

GREETINGS

It can be foreseen that computers will be used much more widely in fields such as industry, communities and the home, following the current trend of information technology (IT), represented in particular by the Internet, being developed and disseminated globally. It is even more likely that the development, distribution and use of computer software, one of the most important elements of information systems, will grow exponentially.

The Software Information Center (SOFTIC) was established in December, 1986 with the support of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry at present), the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology at present), and many other concerned institutions and companies. Since then, SOFTIC has conducted a variety of activities such as research and education related to software products, research on the protection of rights related to software, and the registration of copyrightable programs as a "designated registration organization" commissioned by the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Since the Japan Patent Office has revised its "Implementing Guidelines for Examination Procedure for Computer Software-related Inventions", SOFTIC established the Software Patent Information Center in July of 1997 to initiate the electronic information compilation activity for the construction by the Patent Office of the Computer Software Database which contains non-patent literature including business-related documents.

Additionally, SOFTIC started the registration of the semiconductor circuit layout rights from September 2004 as the only registrar approved by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry.

From its activities and achievements SOFTIC has come to be recognized domestically and abroad as a center for basic information on software. SOFTIC intends to continue to stay active in building the IT society, which eagerly awaits developments such as electronic commerce, and we appreciate your continued support and cooperation in these endeavors.

Toyohiro NOMURA
President
Software Information Center

MISSIONS of SOFTIC

The Software Information Center (SOFTIC) is a non-profit foundation with the missions of promoting the improvement of infrastructure for information technology (IT) and aiming for the healthy development of an advanced IT society that will contribute to the development of the industry, economy and culture of Japan through such activities as:

- research and education related to software products
- research on the protection of rights related to software
- registration of copyrightable programs
- registration of semiconductor circuit layout rights

ESSAGE

ACTIVITIES of SOFTIC

1. Research on Protection of Rights Related to Software and Dissemination of Related Information

SOFTIC has organized several committees to carry out research on the protection of rights related to software under copyright law, industrial property rights law, unfair competition law, antitrust law, the Civil Code, the Commercial Code and other laws and regulations. In addition to convening symposia and seminars at which Japanese and overseas experts can meet to discuss intellectual property rights for software, SOFTIC researches into trends abroad in that field. The results are published in reports and in newsletters.

2. Research and Education of Software Products

In order to promote the development, distribution and use of software, SOFTIC acts as an escrow agent for software and encourages the use of the escrow system, carries out research on software distribution, and holds seminars.

3. Registration and Research of Copyrightable Programs

Pursuant to "The Act Providing Special Regulations for the Registration of Copyrights on Programs", SOFTIC was commissioned by the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs to act as a registrar for the registration of copyrights on programs, and is active in the advancement of the registration system.

4. Registration and Research of Semiconductor Circuit Layout Rights

Pursuant to "The Act Concerning the Circuit Layout of a Semiconductor Integrated Circuit", SOFTIC has been commissioned by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry as a registrar for the semiconductor circuit layout right, and is striving to promote the development of semiconductor circuits.

5. Collection of Information on Trends in Software-Related Technology

SOFTIC has been cooperating with the Japan Patent Office (JPO) in developing the Computer Software Database (CSDB) used for preliminary technical investigation in examinations of applications for software-related inventions by examiners of the JPO. Toward this end, SOFTIC collects "non-patent literature" (including business-related documents) such as computer software manuals, books, journals, treatises and companies' technical reports concerning software-related technology, provides referential keywords (CS terms) and picks up free words for the collected literature for information retrieval, prepares their summaries, and compiles the information on computer-readable media for inputting the CSDB.

6. Information Service

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, in its Software Information Library, SOFTIC provides a reference service with domestic and foreign books, documents and judicial precedents on the protection of rights related to software. Further, the SOFTIC web site provides a variety of information, such as a summary of the organization's activities and structure, announcements of events, outlines of activity reports and reports on the registration of copyrightable programs.

Research and on Protection of Rights Related to Software and Dissemination of Related Information

● Research by the Committees

  - Research of Judicial Precedents Related to Software

  SOFTIC conducts research on cases related to computer software, databases, contents, networks and so on.

  - Research on Software and the Antitrust Laws

  SOFTIC studies the relationship of the antitrust laws to software, by examining the application of antitrust laws, trial decisions and the like.

  - Research on Patents Related to Software

  Since the scope of patentable subject matter is expanding in the area of software-related inventions, SOFTIC examines patent licensing issues and disputed cases.

  - Research on Transactions involving Software and Information

  With the aim of advancing e-commerce transactions, SOFTIC tries to keep abreast of improvements in the legal systems in the United States, in Europe and in other advanced countries, and examines their effect on Japan.

● International Symposium

  SOFTIC holds an international symposium occasionally on legal issues related to computer software, inviting Japanese and foreign experts.

● Seminars

  SOFTIC holds seminars on timely themes and also conducts introductory courses for beginners to acquire a basic knowledge of intellectual property related to software.

Research and Education of Software Products

● Promotion and Operation of Software Escrow Agent Services

  The escrow system operates for the protection of software licensees. At the start of a licensing transaction, the source codes and other technical information are deposited with a third party, the escrow agent, and are disclosed to the licensee only when certain pre-designated conditions occur, such as when the licenser has been affected by trouble or accident. SOFTIC is the first organization in Japan to provide escrow services for software.

● Research and Seminars on Software Distribution

  SOFTIC researches and holds seminars on trends in the software market and on contract matters.

ACTIVITY

Registration and Research of Copyrightable Programs

SOFTIC carries out the copyright registration of software programs as a registrar commissioned by the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, pursuant to "The Act Providing Special Regulations for the Registration of Program Works", an adjunct to the Copyright Act, and endeavors to promote this system. Further, SOFTIC issues an annual report on the details of the registrations, and provides information retrieval services at its offices and through the Internet.

● Data that can be registered:
- date of creation
- date of first publication
- real name
- copyrights

Registration and Research of Semiconductor Circuit Layout Rights

Pursuant to "The Act Concerning the Circuit Layout of a Semiconductor Integrated Circuit", SOFTIC has been commissioned by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry as a registrar for the semiconductor circuit layout right, and started the registration operation on Sept. 1, 2004.

The purpose of the semiconductor circuit layout right registration is to promote the development of semiconductor integrated circuits by establishing a system for ensuring adequate use of the circuit layout of a semiconductor integrated circuit, and thereby to contribute to the healthy development of the national economy.

Collection of Information on Trends in Software-Related Technology

In April of 1997 the Japan Patent Office (JPO) revised its "Implementing Guidelines for Examination Procedure of Computer Software-related Inventions. The new guidelines make "a computer-readable storage medium having a program recorded thereon" and "a computer-readable storage medium having structured data recorded thereon" patentable. And further, in December of 2000 the JPO revised its "Examination Guidelines for Computer Software-related Inventions", clarifying the examination standards for "Business method-related inventions" utilizing the Information Technology (IT) as well as providing that "a computer program" which specifies a multiple of functions performed by a computer can be defined as "a product invention", and that when information processing by software is concretely realized by using hardware resources, the said software is deemed to be "a statutory invention" prescribed in the Patent Law.

After the revision of said Implementing Guidelines, the JPO has developed the Computer Software Database (CSDB) containing so-called "non-patent literature" on software-related technology for the purpose of assisting in the preliminary technical investigation that is part of the examination of software-related inventions since FY 1997.

SOFTIC decided to cooperate with the JPO in developing the CSDB and for this purpose established the "Software Patent Information Center" as an annexed organization on July 1, 1997. Since then, SOFTIC has been commissioned by the JPO to compile the information for the CSDB. For this mission, SOFTIC selects useful computer software manuals, books, journals, treatises and companies' technical reports, assigns the literature reference keywords (CS terms), picks up free words for information retrieval, creates summaries, and compiles the information on computer-readable media for inputting the CSDB.

Overview of SOFTIC

● Headquarters

- **Name:** Software Information Center (SOFTIC)

- **Establishment:** December 17, 1986

- **President:** Dr. Toyohiro NOMURA
  (Executive Director, The Gakushuin School Corporation; Professor, Faculty of Law)

- **Executive Director:** Katsuro YAMAJI

- **Managing Directors:** Norihiro KONO, Akinori SHIMOTORI, Masahiro NAGATA

- **Address:** 4th Floor, Toto Bldg., 5-1-4, Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo,105-0001 Japan

- **Phone:** (03)3437-3071 (Int'l +81-3-3437-3071)

- **Fax:** (03)3437-3398 (Int'l +81-3-3437-3398)

- **Web:** http://www.softic.or.jp/

- **E-mail:** staff@softic.or.jp

● Annexed Organization

- **Name:** Software Patent Information Center (PIC, SOFTIC)

- **Establishment:** July 1, 1997

- **Head:** Masahiro NAGATA (Managing Director of SOFTIC)

- **Address:** 14th Floor, Atago East Bldg.,
  3-16-11, Nishi-shinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003 Japan

- **Phone:** (03)3431-2271 (Int'l +81-3-3431-2271)

- **Fax:** (03)3431-2275 (Int'l +81-3-3431-2275)

ORGAN

Membership

SOFTIC enjoys the support of entities from a variety of fields. Membership is available to those who agree with SOFTIC's missions and will support it.

● **Benefits to Members**
- Receipt of free delivery of the reports and other materials on the results of research
- Participation in research committees
- Participation in symposia and seminars hosted by SOFTIC, with discounts and priority treatment

● **Membership Fees**
300,000 Yen per fiscal year
(half price if six months have elapsed from the start of the fiscal year at the time of admittance to membership)
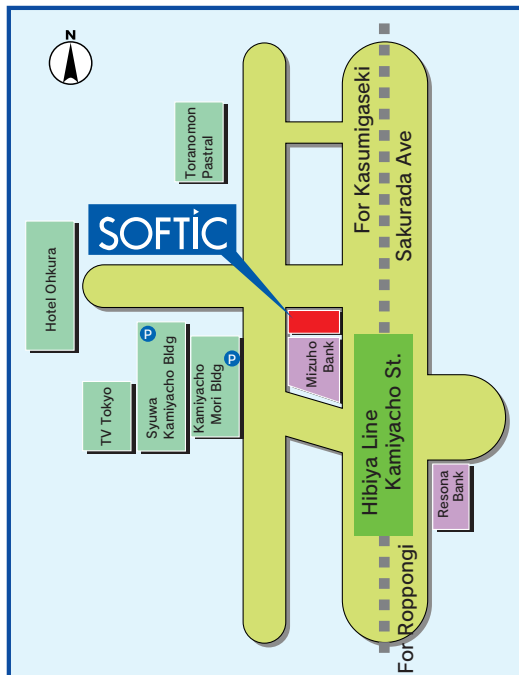
● **Application**
An application form is available at the SOFTIC office.

IZATION

Organization and Management

The organization of SOFTIC is shown on the chart. Its management and activities are carried out with the cooperation of participants from industry, academic circles and so on. The Board of Directors and Board of Trustees are composed of experts from computer makers, software companies and computer-user firms, as well as legal scholars and members of organizations concerned with IT.

Guide Map of Software Information Center

N

Toranomon Pastral

SOFTIC

Hotel Ohkura

For Kasumigaseki
Sakurada Ave

Mizuho Bank

Syuwa Kamiyacho Bldg
Kamiyacho Mori Bldg

TV Tokyo

Hibiya Line
Kamiyacho St.

Resona Bank

For Roppongi

SOFTIC

Software Information Center

Address：4th Floor, Toto Bldg., 5-1-4,
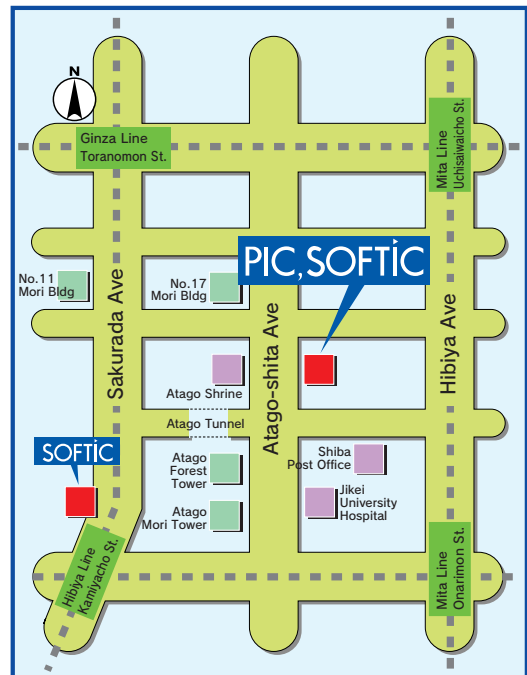　　　　　Toranomon　Minato-ku,Tokyo,
　　　　　105-0001, Japan
ＴＥＬ：（03）3437-3071（Int'l +81-3-3437-3071）
ＦＡＸ：（03）3437-3398（Int'l +81-3-3437-3398）
ＵＲＬ：http://www.softic.or.jp/
E-mail：staff@softic.or.jp

Guide Map of Software Patent Information Center, SOFTIC

N

Ginza Line
Toranomon St.

Mita Line
Uchisaiwaicho St.

No.11 Mori Bldg

No.17 Mori Bldg

PIC,SOFTIC

Sakurada Ave

Atago-shita Ave

Hibiya Ave

Atago Shrine

Atago Tunnel

SOFTIC

Atago Forest Tower

Shiba Post Office

Atago Mori Tower

Jikei University Hospital

Hibiya Line
Kamiyacho St.

Mita Line
Onarimon St.

PIC,SOFTIC

Software Patent Information Center,SOFTIC

Address：14th Floor, Atago East Bldg.,
　　　　　3-16-11, Nishi-shinbashi, Minato-ku,
　　　　　Tokyo 105-0003　Japan
ＴＥＬ：（03）3431-2271（Int'l +81-3-3431-2271）
ＦＡＸ：（03）3431-2275（Int'l +81-3-3431-2275）

2008.1