

Patent Office Requests Rehearing on 'Software'

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 12—The Patent Office filed today with the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals a petition for a rehearing on the court's decision holding computer programs, or "software," to be patentable.

The petition raises the question as to whether the decision, granted Nov. 20, had not held that thought is patentable.

A program is a set of instructions to a computer. The Patent Office has not knowingly granted patents on them unless they were incorporated in something mechanical, such as cams, rods and bolts.

The Patent Office itself fears that opening the door to software patents would admit a great flood of applications that would be difficult to process.