

# Apple awarded patent on the Dock

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Created 09/10/2008 - 5:08pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Thursday 9th of October 2008 05:08:03 PM Filed under [Legal](#) [1]

It took nearly nine years, but Apple chief executive Steve Jobs and Co. were awarded this week with a patent for their implementation of a software-based computer dock that has since become a trademark of the Mac OS X operating system.

On Tuesday, the United States Patent and Trademark Office granted the Mac maker patent number 7,434,177 titled "User interface for providing consolidation and access." The 20-page filing outlining the principles behind the Dock and its magnification component is credited to Jobs, in addition to well-known Apple interface designers Bas Ording and Donald Lindsay.

Apple now retains the exclusive right to prevent others from making, using, selling, or otherwise employing replicas of the technology in their own products. Under United States patent law, that right typically extends 20 years assuming the company keeps up with routine maintenance fees due 3½, 7½ and 11½ years following the grant date.

Since the release of Mac OS X 10.0 in 2001, the Dock has been one of the most prominent features of operating system's user interface, serving as a centralized and resizable launch pad for applications and document files.

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