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MicroLaw editor authors chip protection book


The 619-page book is a practical treatment of the new rights and remedies against piracy under the SCPA, Public Law 98-620, the new federal industrial property law for chip technology, and under other laws.

Included in the topics covered by this volume are: registering chip designs with the Copyright Office; in-depth analysis of chip rights; what is and what is not infringement of mask work rights; SCPA preemption of state law, and licensing chips and cell libraries.

Congressman Robert W. Kastenmeier, Chairman, Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice, House Judiciary Committee, describes Stern as “the person from the private sector most active and influential in assisting Congress to shape the details of the SCPA of 1984.”

To order the $75 book, write to the publisher at 855 Valley Road, Clifton, NJ 07013; (800) 223-0231.

NBS reviews multiprocessor evaluations

The National Bureau of Standards Institute for Computer Sciences and Technology is offering a guide to methods of measuring performance in multiprocessor computers. The $11.95 report discusses the various aspects of computer performance that can be measured and suggests ways to make and use the measurements.

Performance Measurement Techniques for Multiprocessor Computers (NBSIR 85-3296) can be ordered from the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161, by specifying PB 86-186855/AS. Orders must be prepaid.

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millstones is ground out the output of the legal system.

In this setting the writer suspends judgment about whether this is a good idea waiting for exploitation or just a bad idea whose time has come, using the terms “good idea” and “bad idea” as terms of art defined above in relation to technological progress in microelectronics. In any case it would seem substantial arguments can be made that existing copyright law protects FPDs by means similar to those for protecting software. Properly exploited, this concept would offer FPD users legal protection equivalent to that which gate-array users now enjoy under the SCPA and would narrow one of the competitive gaps between these two forms of ASIC.

References

1. For a general treatment of legal remedies under the SCPA, as well as other aspects of legal protection of chip layouts, see R. H. Stern, Semiconductor Chip Protection, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Law & Business 1986, chap. 6.

The SCPA protects “original” layouts that are not “staple, familiar, or commonplace.” See SCPA sec. 902(b). Questions about the protectability of gate arrays are discussed in IEEE Micro, June 1985, pp. 73-78.


3. Objections to this approach led the House to insist that the SCPA not be made a part of the copyright law, “because a chip layout is not a book,” and instead be made a separate sui generis law based in large part on noncopyright principles.


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