



## *Patent Pending...*

A patent is a temporary production monopoly issued to the inventor of a new “gadget.” It provides the exclusive right for the creator to manufacture the item for a limited period of time. Unlike copyright, which exists automatically upon creation of a new work, obtaining a patent is a sometimes arduous process.

Depending on the source, patents have either been in use since the Ancient Greeks or 15th-century Italy. Our founding fathers addressed the need for patents by creating the *Patent and Copyright Clause* (1787) in the U.S. Constitution. James Madison, our fourth President, wrote

the utility of the clause will scarcely be questioned.  
The copyright of authors has been solemnly adjudged,  
in Great Britian, to be a right of common law.  
The right to useful inventions seems with equal  
reason to belong to the inventors. The public good  
fully coincides in both cases with the claims of the individuals.

The first U.S. patent was granted to Samuel Hopkins of Philadelphia in 1790 for a method of producing potash, a key ingredient in soap, glass and gunpowder.

Needless to say, globalization has tremendously accelerated the evolution and growth of patent law. Initiatives toward forming international patent conventions to centralize applications throughout the world are now underway.