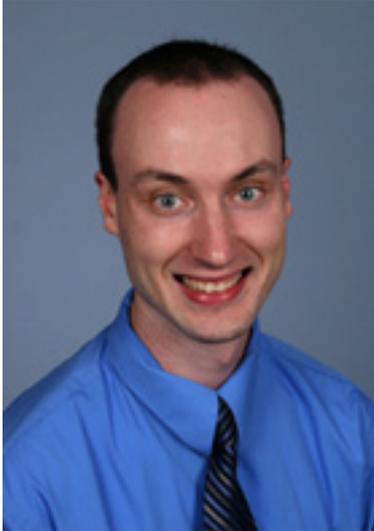


Roger That

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[Manufacturing Business Technology](#) [1]

“Did you hear... ?”

It feels like I hear some form of this phrase on a fairly regular basis. Considering how often this transpires, even if there is a sense of urgency in the voice of the family member, friend, acquaintance, or colleague who utters these words, a significant portion of the overall message often fails to get through to me.

Information gets passed along very easily in today’s high-tech age. Fifteen years ago, you and I were one phone call, letter, or in-person visit away from one another. Now, we’re one phone call, letter, in-person visit, email, text, or GChat message away. As a result, we see and hear a lot over the course of any given day. Whenever someone thinks of something they want so share with us, they do it. Why? It’s so easy.

No, I am not about to rage against how over-stimulated and distracted we are today, nor am I about to suggest we cut back on the amount of people, places, and things that demand our attention. What interests me is how often someone sends a message my way and how quickly I am to trivialize or dismiss it without even a little bit of half-hearted examination. It isn’t a grand revelation to say I miss out on the messages that are not what they appear to be, but it amazes me how often I fail to consider this fact.

One recent story I ignored multiple times before I decided to take a closer look involved all of the patent squabbles involving tech giants today. It is quite difficult to keep track of all the pending patent lawsuits, and *it seems* like who is suing who over what has very little to do with me. On the surface, they look like nothing more than inconsequential lawsuits between corporations over technology. But like any corporate lawsuit, they are fights over money. And it costs quite a bit to engage

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Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

your opponent in a patent battle. Companies seem to have no problem finding the cash to either file a patent lawsuit or defend itself in court. That is evident. But there's more to the story.

According to a report by *CNN Money*, the makers of smartphones and tablets will not be the ones to take financial hits due to their lengthy legal squabbles over patents. Instead, it will be the consumers who foot the bill for the Great Patent War. The report states that at some point all handset manufacturers may need to pay licensing fees to other handset manufacturers to claim that they own the royalties on certain technologies. As royalty fees increase, there's a pretty decent chance customers will end up paying more for their devices. This fact isn't so obvious when you come across your standard patent litigation story.

Something tells me the motivation behind fighting these patent battles isn't to protect the ability to offer the best product at the most reasonable price. No, it's probably to protect the bottom line. I'm less than pleased about helping pick up these royalty fee tabs, but at least it's comforting to know where my dollars and cents are headed.

Missing out on this not-so-obvious "news behind the news" of the Great Patent War has been a helpful reminder to be more cognizant of the true meanings of the messages sent my way. While I can't promise the next time I hear "Did you hear...?" I'll be ready and willing to offer my full and undivided attention to the source of that phrase, there's a good chance I'll at least think once or twice before dismissing the message altogether.

Did you miss the news behind the news of the Great Patent War? Email your thoughts to mike.schmidt@advantagemedia.com [2].

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