

Most Innovative Products Are Not Patented

Editor's Pick. Written by Mike Masnick.

We've pointed out over and over and over again that patents are not a proxy for innovation. In fact, there's little to connect the two at all, except potentially for how patents can *hinder* and hold back the pace of innovation. A new study really helps to drive home how little patents have to do with innovation. Pointed out to us by James Bessen, the study looks at "R&D 100 Awards" from the academic journal, *Research & Development* from 1977 to 2004. As you might expect, the R&D 100 Awards are given out each year by the journal in an attempt to name the top 100 innovations of the year. If patents were instrumental in driving innovation, you'd certainly expect most of these innovations to be patented.

But you'd be wrong, as the reports authors, Roberto Fontana, Alessandro Nuvolari, Hiroshi Shimizu and Andrea Vezzulli, quickly discovered.

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