

# The Federal Lawyer in Cyberia

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## What Would It Be Like If There Were a “PC Genome Project” Out There, Mapping Problems and Sharing Solutions? Well, There Almost Is.

One of my favorite leisure time “go to” places on the Internet is a Web site called Pandora™ ([www.pandora.com](http://www.pandora.com)). Pandora is based in the town where I live, Oakland, Calif., but that is beside the point. The point is, the site is very entertaining. Pandora bills itself as the “Music Genome Project” and, indeed, it is.



Six days into the new millennium, a group of musicians and music-loving technologists came together in Oakland with the idea of creating the most comprehensive analysis of music ever. They wanted to capture the essence of music at the most fundamental level.

They ended up assembling literally hundreds of musical attributes or “genes” into a very large “music genome.” According to Pandora, “Taken together these genes capture the unique and magical musical identity of a song—everything from melody, harmony, and rhythm, to instrumentation, orchestration, arrangement, lyrics, and of course the rich world of singing and vocal harmony.”

Since the project’s inception a decade ago, the team at Pandora has listened to songs by tens of thousands of different artists—ranging from popular to obscure—and has “analyzed the musical qualities of each song, one attribute at a time.” That ongoing investment of time is now paying off, especially for listeners like me around the world. And it will only get better. On Pandora’s free site,

I can describe in various ways the characteristics of the music I like and, when I do, Pandora matches my list up with the “genetic” information it has stored and it automatically creates a unique “radio station” that plays songs that conform to the description I have provided. Nifty!

I can create many radio stations, each one matching one of my many music moods. Each time one of my stations plays a recording, I can respond with a “thumbs up” or a “thumbs down”—and Pandora will hone in on my tastes in music even further. What a great idea! A song I don’t like will never play on my station again, whereas a song I like will be welcome to return, and its “cousins” will start to appear as its genetic structure suggests new visitors.

Well, now there’s a website that is planning to become the “PC genome” of Cyberia. It is starting out

somewhat modestly. In its initial iteration, still being beta-tested, it is billing its product as downloadable software designed to speed up the boot-up time of your computer. Certainly, that is a laudable goal in itself. The first annoyance one encounters in any Windows™ environment is the wait that must be endured before the desktop screen appears and settles down.

Yes, I know what you’re thinking. There are ways of dealing with that issue already, and other products are on the market. However, the solution that this start-up company is offering is unique in several respects and is promising in exactly the same way that Pandora was promising just a decade ago.

However, I’m getting ahead of myself. Looking at the short-term benefits alone, Soluto™ (the program) is worth considering. It may be able reduce that initial annoyance to nearly nothing, shortening one’s initial boot-up time from minutes to seconds. Reviewers at reputable sites like [New York Times.com](http://NewYorkTimes.com) and [ZDNet.com](http://ZDNet.com) have reported cutting startup time in half using this program. (Be aware, however: because Soluto is still being beta-tested, there is always the possibility that the program may not perform as expected.)

The program and the company are both named “Soluto.” Soluto, the company, is based in Tel Aviv, Israel. Its website is at [www.soluto.com](http://www.soluto.com), and, the latest beta version of its new program is available there. Also available on the Soluto website are videos that definitely should be watched before attempting to install Soluto (the program) on your computer.

The program is designed to use on Windows XP™, Vista™, and Windows 7™ systems. Once installed, the program displays your current boot time and the number of processes you have running in the background. (You can, of course, disable this display at any time.) Soluto then sorts these running processes into three categories: “no-brainer” (processes that you can shut down very safely), potentially removable processes, and required processes (core system processes that Soluto bars you from meddling with). The program tells you how many seconds of the total boot-up time are attributable to each process. Each time you select a program in your boot list, Soluto compares it with its own database and lets you know whether you should consider hitting the pause key (thus removing the process from your boot list) or whether you should consider delaying the application’s boot-up until after your computer has



settled down and is displaying the desktop. Next time you boot up your computer, Solutio will remember the choices you have made and repeat them. And, presumably, your boot-up time will drop appreciably.

However, this worthwhile goal is not where Solutio's visionaries intend to rest. They hope to do much more. When you sign up to be a part of Solutio's family of users, you allow Solutio to take a look inside your computer, to stay there, and to watch for the annoying glitches to occur that are an all-to-familiar part of life in Cyberia. Solutio's mainframe will define the nature of each glitch it spots (in much the same way that Pandora's music masters have defined the characteristics of so many songs), and it will maintain a list of subscribers who have experienced the same problem. Solutio will continue to monitor each computer to determine whether or not the user has found a solution and, if so, it then will be in a position to recommend that solution to other "family members" who are finding the same problem to be baffling.

In this sense, Solutio is unlike Wikipedia.™ Wikipedia aggregates knowledge from its users and makes it available to others. However, the knowledge that Wikipedia aggregates is knowingly supplied by users, situation by situation, and they furnish it by logging onto the Wikipedia site and typing it in. Solutio doesn't do that; if it did, its database would probably become, very quickly, a hodgepodge of useless conflicting information. Instead, the program collects the information itself and categorizes it according to Solutio's own scheme. That is a huge difference, making Solutio much more like Pandora.

Though there certainly are obvious concerns with confidentiality of information that Solutio will capture, it is almost certainly the case that the information that its being shared on a real-time basis will be aggregated in a way that is far from disturbing.

Considerations about confidentiality aside, the Solutio is nothing short of genius, and the program holds out the stupefying prospect of revolutionizing the personal computer in a way that few others have envisioned or attempted. In this way, it certainly is a program that deserves to be watched. Perhaps it also is a program that deserves to be acquired by Microsoft™ and incorporated into the next version of Windows. However, I leave that to others wiser than I.

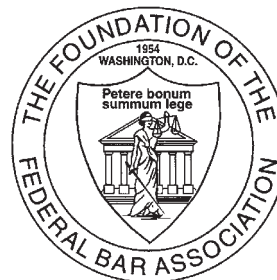
## Conclusion

In the meantime, until that great day comes when all the problems of the personal computer are resolved, I trust that we will meet again in Cyberia next month.

**TFL**

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