Written by Marco Attard
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The **European Patent Office** (EPO) announced the winners of the **European Inventor Award 2013** .

Some 500 guests attended the award ceremony in Amsterdam, including Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands, Sander Dekker, the Netherlands Minister for Education, Culture and Science, and Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services.

The 2013 awards were presented in five categories, in addition to the Popular Prize:

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Martin Schadt (Switzerland), inventor of the world's first flat-panel liquid crystal display.

It looks like rather an ugly award but nonetheless the EPO President wears an expression that the award will have to be taken from him forcibly.

But well-deserved is well-deserved and here’s why Martin Schadt deserves it:

In the early 1970s, Martin Schadt started to investigate correlations between liquid crystal molecular structures, material properties, electro-optical effects and display. His interdisciplinary approach (unique at the time) involving physics and chemistry became the basis for modern industrial LC-materials

So Martin has helped us all make some money with LCDs over the years.

Other awards for pyrosequencing DNA, a nanocapsule-cancer cure, a special wheel for quitter and more comfortable-riding high-speed trains may pale in comparison to the Austrian maker of a damper system for the “soft closing" of doors, drawers and wall cabinets—but all are true European winners.

If necessity is the mother of invention, graciousness may be an aunt: the EPO also gives out an award for the best from “Non-European Countries.”

Ajay V. Bhatt (USA) and his team won that award for creating and developing **Universal Serial Bus (USB)**
technology. You can’t argue with the impact of USB as a reported 80 million USB devices are sold globally each year (a good percentage of which are still sitting on my desk at the moment…thank you all for your press kits on USB sticks).

Caption: EPO President Benoît Battistelli with Martin Schadt, winner of the "Lifetime Achievement" category, European Inventor Award 2013. Photo by: EIA/Michael Kooren

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