Correspondence between Mike Lothian and Synaptics Incorporated

Re: Vino driver — July to October 2026

Compiled by Mike Lothian on 14 October 2026 from his own mailbox. Messages are in date order and their bodies are reproduced verbatim. Quoted earlier messages, repeated e-mail signature graphics and standard confidentiality footers have been removed to avoid duplication. Attachments are listed but not reproduced. Times are UK local time (BST).

#	Date	From	Subject
1	Sun 5 July 2026, 13:49	Mike Lothian	Vino and Revdi
2	Mon 20 July 2026, 09:23	Michal Lukaszek	Vino
3	Mon 17 August 2026, 22:18	Andrew Bateman	Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
4	Thu 27 August 2026, 11:01	Mike Lothian	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
5	Fri 18 September 2026, 16:42	Mike Lothian	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
6	Sat 19 September 2026, 02:22	Andrew Bateman	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
7	Tue 6 October 2026, 04:23	Andrew Bateman	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
8	Tue 6 October 2026, 05:47	Mike Lothian	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
9	Wed 7 October 2026, 00:24	Andrew Bateman	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated

Message 1

Date Sun 5 July 2026, 13:49 (UK)
From Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
To Łukasz Spintzyk <lukasz.spintzyk@synaptics.com>
Subject Vino and Revdi

Hi Łukasz

I've been reverse engineering DLM into a Rust kernel module called Vino (you might recognize the name [winking emoji])

During my testing, I found a few bugs in evdi and have submitted a pull request here: https://github.com/DisplayLink/evdi/pull/581

Since I can't get Vino fully working just yet, I decided to test some of my code paths by reimplementing evdi in Rust using the Rust abstractions/bindings I've been developing: https://github.com/FireBurn/revdi. This is working great and even includes a few features that evdi doesn't currently have enabled (such as the hardware cursor and the suggestion from this PR: https://github.com/DisplayLink/evdi/pull/562)

I don't know how open you or Synaptics are to what I'm doing - I'm just looking to finish what I've started - but I've been stuck for weeks now. The encryption looks good, but EP08 never opens (details here: https://github.com/FireBurn/vino-scripts/blob/main/docs/BLOCKER.md)

I'm not sure if it's something the firmware itself doesn't like, something I've missed that isn't tracking on usbmon, differences between the Rust USB implementation and libusb, or if I've simply overlooked something else entirely

Any guidance or insight you could share would be greatly appreciated

Equally, if responding to this would get you into trouble, please let me know and I won't email anyone at Synaptics again

Cheers

Mike

Message 2

Date	Mon 20 July 2026, 09:23 (UK)
From	Michal Lukaszek <Michal.Lukaszek@synaptics.com>
To	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
Subject	Vino

Hi Mike,

I hope you don't mind me reaching out directly.

I came across your work on the VINO project and the accompanying documentation you've been publishing, including the vino-docs repository. It's obvious you've put a significant amount of effort into understanding how DisplayLink devices work, and I appreciate that you've been open about your progress and even reached out to us previously through the EVDI project.

I also noticed your work on revdi, your Rust implementation of EVDI. To avoid any misunderstanding, that isn't what concerns us. EVDI is an open-source kernel component that we publish ourselves, and reimplementing its interfaces is a very different matter from attempting to implement the proprietary DisplayLink protocol itself.

The reason I'm writing is that DisplayLink is not an open standard. The protocol, codec, and other technologies used by DisplayLink devices are proprietary to Synaptics and are protected by a substantial portfolio of patents in a number of jurisdictions, including the UK.

From what you've published, it appears that the VINO project is progressing beyond interoperability work and toward implementing technology that we believe is covered by those patents. While many developers understandably focus on avoiding copyrighted source code, patent law is different. An independently written or clean-room implementation does not necessarily avoid patent infringement if it implements patented inventions.

I'm mentioning this because it's entirely possible you were unaware of the intellectual property landscape surrounding DisplayLink. If that's the case, I'd rather make you aware of it now than have the situation become more formal later.

I would encourage you to carefully consider whether continuing the project is worthwhile in light of these issues. If your goal is to improve Linux support for DisplayLink devices, we certainly appreciate the motivation, but implementing proprietary DisplayLink technology without authorization raises concerns that we cannot ignore.

If you think I've misunderstood the scope or objectives of your work, or if you'd like to discuss this further, I'd be happy to have that conversation.

Kind regards,

Michal Lukaszek
Synaptics Inc.

Message 3

Date	Mon 17 August 2026, 22:18 (UK)
From	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>
To	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
Subject	Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
Attachments	Cease and Desist Notice_Mike Lothian_08-17-2026.pdf

Dear Mr. Lothian,

Please see the attached correspondence from Synaptics Incorporated ("Synaptics") regarding your unauthorized implementation of Synaptics' patented DisplayLink Technology.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Respectfully,
Andrew Bateman

Andrew J. Bateman
Assistant General Counsel, Intellectual Property
Synaptics Incorporated

Message 4

Date	Thu 27 August 2026, 11:01 (UK)
From	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
To	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>
Subject	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated

Hi Andrew

Thanks for taking the time to write to me and set out Synaptics' concerns

I've finally had a chance to sit down and read through your email and the attached letter properly. I have to admit I wasn't expecting quite such a dramatic escalation, and I'm still struggling a little to understand exactly what Synaptics believes I'm doing wrong

One thing that surprised me in the letter was the suggestion that I hadn't engaged with Synaptics

Before Michal emailed me on 20 July I'd already tried to engage directly with people at Synaptics about Vino, and I'd opened an issue on the DisplayLink EVDI GitHub tracker specifically explaining what I was doing, offering to collaborate and asking for some non-confidential technical guidance:

https://github.com/DisplayLink/evdi/issues/577

That issue is still open without a response

I appreciate that Michal subsequently contacted me to raise the general patent concern, but none of the technical questions or offers to collaborate have really been answered. It feels a little odd that I've now received a 13 page legal letter when I'd genuinely been trying to talk to you

On the patents themselves, I'm afraid I'm very much not a patent expert, which is part of why I'm having difficulty understanding the letter

Appendix A contains a very large number of patents, but quite a few appear from their titles to concern things like electrical connectors, wireless docking, headset technology, security devices and other hardware functionality that, as far as I can tell, Vino doesn't implement at all

Others have much broader titles around display processing, USB, compression and docking. Some of those seem, at least to a layman like me, to describe types of functionality that exist elsewhere in the Linux graphics and USB stacks and in other USB docking solutions

I may be completely misunderstanding the patents, of course. That's really the problem with only having a list of titles

Could you therefore be a bit more specific about what Synaptics actually believes Vino infringes?

In particular, could you identify the specific patents and claims you are relying on, and which parts of Vino you believe practise each of those claims? A claim chart mapping the relevant claims to the relevant code would make it much easier for me to understand and properly respond to your concerns.

At the moment I'm being asked, as an individual hobbyist, to assess more than 125 patents without being told which claims you believe I've infringed or how. I don't realistically know how I'm supposed to do that

There's another thing I'm a little confused about

I understand that Synaptics is a member of the Open Invention Network, and I am also now an OIN licensee. I'd understood that the OIN cross licence was intended to reduce exactly this sort of patent problem around Linux and open source software

I'm not claiming to understand all the legal detail there either, but could you explain Synaptics' position on how the patents and claims you're asserting against Vino interact with our respective OIN commitments?

I'd also really like to understand what Synaptics' end goal is here

I'm not a company and I'm not trying to build a competing dock. This is a hobby project that started because I wanted the DisplayLink hardware I already owned to work better on Linux

Vino is intended to make DisplayLink hardware more useful. It already implements functionality that isn't currently available through Synaptics' Linux support, and if it were eventually accepted upstream it could work as part of a standard Linux installation without users having to install a separate proprietary driver stack

From my point of view that makes existing DisplayLink hardware more useful and, hopefully, more valuable

I'm also not trying to obtain or reproduce Synaptics source code or confidential information. I've tried to document where everything I've learned has come from and to conduct the work openly and in good faith

So if there's something more specific Synaptics is worried about, whether that's a particular feature, a particular piece of code, interoperability, security, or something else entirely, I'd genuinely like to understand what it is and whether there's a sensible way to address it

I've deliberately not tried to turn your letter into a public argument or involve the press. I'd much rather sort this out directly and constructively. I don't think a public dispute between Synaptics and an individual open source developer would be particularly helpful for either of us, especially within the Linux and open source communities

Given the breadth of the demands in your letter, I also don't think I can reasonably provide the signed undertaking you've requested by 28 August without first understanding which patent claims you're actually alleging are infringed

Could you therefore please provide the specific claims and mappings above and confirm a reasonable extension to the deadline while I consider them?

I'd genuinely prefer if we could reset this slightly and have the constructive conversation that I thought we were trying to have in the first place

Cheers

Mike

Message 5

Date	Fri 18 September 2026, 16:42 (UK)
From	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
To	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>; Michal Lukaszek <Michal.Lukaszek@synaptics.com>
Subject	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated

Hi again

I'm a bit concerned by the lack of acknowledgement to my last email

Is it now safe to assume you're no longer concerned and I can continue my work?

I've been running the Vino driver here for quite a while (10bit HDR now fully enabled) and I'm keen to upstream without patent threats hanging over my work

Cheers

Mike

Message 6

Date	Sat 19 September 2026, 02:22 (UK)
From	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>
To	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
Cc	Michal Lukaszek <Michal.Lukaszek@synaptics.com>; Samuel.Y. Shen <Yiming.Shen@synaptics.com>
Subject	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated

SUBJECT TO FRE 408

Dear Mr. Lothian,

Yes, you should be concerned. Very concerned, actually.

As you previously requested, we have been documenting your ongoing patent infringement by mapping your Vino driver to specific claims of our DisplayLink patents. I will provide this claim mapping documentation to you within the next two weeks. I will also be sending to you our demand for substantial monetary compensation to recoup the cost and effort required to create such documentation of your infringing acts. I previously gave you the opportunity to stop your infringement, but you decided to push back and not heed my warnings, and so now we are escalating as we deem appropriate.

You will be hearing from our local UK patent counsel as well regarding this matter.

If you are not currently represented by competent legal counsel, I strongly recommend that you obtain legal representation promptly. You are going to need it.

By open sourcing our DisplayLink technology for whatever personal reasons you may have as a "hobbyist," you will be single-handedly eviscerating DisplayLink's competitive advantage in this crowded market by educating our competitors and other third parties as to how we implement our proprietary technology, which we have gone to great lengths and great expense to prevent. Your actions are literally putting tens of millions of dollars of corporate revenue at risk. In short, you are making a significant, dramatic, and grave business decision on behalf of Synaptics and DisplayLink that you have absolutely no authority to make. We will not and cannot let this happen. Given the magnitude of the potential damages resulting from your actions, do you still wonder why our response to you has been so forceful?

And to clarify, DisplayLink is not a member of OIN, and none of the DisplayLink technology is licensable through OIN or any other organization. Only from Synaptics and DisplayLink. As you have not been granted any license to make, use, etc. our protected technology, your actions have been and continue to be infringing.

If you'd like to notify the media or otherwise publicize our response, I encourage you to do so. We welcome any and all free publicity to let the world (in particular, our competitors and our shareholders) know that Synaptics aggressively defends and protects its DisplayLink IP from all threats of infringement.

You will hear from me again within the next two weeks.

Respectfully,
Andrew Bateman

Andrew J. Bateman
Assistant General Counsel, Intellectual Property
Synaptics Incorporated

Message 7

Date	Tue 6 October 2026, 04:23 (UK)
From	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>
To	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
Cc	Michal Lukaszek <Michal.Lukaszek@synaptics.com>; Samuel.Y. Shen <Yiming.Shen@synaptics.com>
Subject	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated
Attachments	Cease and Desist Follow-Up Notice_Mike Lothian_10-05-2026.pdf; GB2484736_Claim 11_Vino Infringement Mapping_10-05-2026.docx; GB2485613_Claim 11_Vino Infringement Mapping_10-05-2026.docx

CONFIDENTIAL RULE 408 COMMUNICATION

Dear Mr. Lothian,

Please see the attached follow-up correspondence from Synaptics and the accompanying claims charts documenting your unauthorized implementation of Synaptics' patented DisplayLink technology.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Respectfully,
Andrew Bateman

Andrew J. Bateman
Assistant General Counsel, Intellectual Property
Synaptics Incorporated

Message 8

Date	Tue 6 October 2026, 05:47 (UK)
From	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
To	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>
Cc	Michal Lukaszek; Samuel.Y. Shen; Edward Meintzer, Keith Bergelt, Raffi Gostanian (Open Invention Network); Dave Airlie; Rebecca Rumbul (Rust Foundation); Greg Kroah-Hartman; dri-devel@lists.freedesktop.org
Subject	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated

Hi Andrew

I'm on holiday at the moment without access to my computer and won't be back home in Scotland until the 13th. Given that, I'd ask for an extension to your 11 October deadline until I'm back and can go through the claim charts and the letter properly, ideally with someone qualified to help me read them

While I've got a moment, I want to be clear about a couple of things

I'm not a company. I don't have a legal team or a budget for one. Vino is something I put together in my own time, as a hobbyist, using a Claude subscription, because I wanted the DisplayLink hardware I already own to work properly on Linux

If I can do that on my own with a consumer AI subscription and no funding, your actual competitors, who have engineering teams, legal budgets and a direct commercial incentive to do it, will find it considerably easier. Pursuing me doesn't change that, and I don't think it achieves what you're trying to achieve

I'm also not trying to make any money from this. The goal has only ever been a better experience for people who already own DisplayLink hardware, not a competing product

If there are companies out there actually cloning your hardware or using this kind of information to build competing docks, nothing I've done stops you pursuing them directly, and that seems like a more proportionate use of your time than pursuing an individual who's given you everything openly from day one

It's also not the first time I've tried to engage constructively rather than just going ahead unilaterally. Beyond the GitHub issue I raised back in July asking to collaborate, which is still open without a response, I've also submitted fixes to the official EVDI driver itself that have simply been ignored. That makes it difficult to square with any suggestion that I haven't tried to work with Synaptics and DisplayLink directly

I'd like to suggest a practical way forward rather than just deadlines and penalties. I'm willing to pause any further public development of the specific strip/Haar encoding code identified in the claim charts, and not add anything new to it, while we actually discuss this properly, if in return Synaptics pauses the 11 October deadline and the escalating monetary demand for the same period. If there's a reasonable way to license or clear that specific piece for non-commercial, hobbyist use, along the lines of what OIN already exists to do, I'd much rather explore that than have this turn into litigation that doesn't obviously benefit either of us

I'd still appreciate answers to what I asked back in August: Synaptics' position on how this interacts with the OIN commitments, and specifically which parts of the claim charts you believe describe something that isn't already standard, publicly documented USB/display behaviour. On that point, I'd also note that the Haar transform itself is a wavelet technique dating back to 1909, long in the public domain and used in other compression standards such as JPEG2000, so I'd genuinely like to understand what Synaptics considers novel here beyond applying a well-known mathematical transform to display data

Cheers

Mike

Message 9

Date	Wed 7 October 2026, 00:24 (UK)
From	Andrew Bateman <Andrew.Bateman@synaptics.com>
To	Mike Lothian <mike@fireburn.co.uk>
Cc	Michal Lukaszek; Samuel.Y. Shen; Edward Meintzer, Keith Bergelt, Raffi Gostanian (Open Invention Network); Dave Airlie; Rebecca Rumbul (Rust Foundation); Greg Kroah-Hartman; dri-devel@lists.freedesktop.org
Subject	Re: Unauthorized Implementation of Patented DisplayLink Technology owned by Synaptics Incorporated

Dear Mr. Lothian,

Synaptics hereby agrees to extend the deadline specified in our letter dated October 5th (the "Letter") to 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on October 18, 2026. All other demands, deadlines, and penalties specified in the Letter remain unchanged. No further extensions of time will be granted.

And let me be perfectly clear on two points. First, Synaptics has repeatedly responded to your outreaches with the exact same response: stop your infringement. Synaptics has no interest in working with you and will not grant you any patent license, covenant not to sue, authorization, or other permission to implement or distribute Synaptics' patented DisplayLink technology. We have been consistent and unequivocal in our responses and our demands.

DisplayLink technology is not and has never been some freely available, open-source product that you can simply take and use with impunity. DisplayLink is a commercial, proprietary, and patented

technology owned by Synaptics, and we exclusively control how, when, and where it is used. Synaptics zealously and vigorously defends its IP against any infringer, especially when the magnitude of potential damages at stake is enormous, as it is in this instance. Infringement of our technology comes with consequences.

Second, as I stated previously, DisplayLink is not a member of OIN, and none of the DisplayLink technology is licensable through OIN or any other organization. It is only licensable from Synaptics and DisplayLink. As you have not been and will not be granted any license to make, use, etc. our protected technology, your actions have been and continue to be infringing.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Respectfully,
Andrew Bateman

Andrew J. Bateman
Assistant General Counsel, Intellectual Property
Synaptics Incorporated