

INTANGIBLE INTANGIBLES

This book takes as its starting point recent debates over the dematerialisation of subject matter which have arisen because of changes in information technology, molecular biology, and related fields that produced a subject matter with no obvious material form or trace. Arguing against the idea that dematerialisation is a uniquely twenty-first century problem, this book looks at three situations where US patent law has already dealt with a dematerialised subject matter: nineteenth century chemical inventions, computer-related inventions in the 1970s, and biological subject matter across the twentieth century. In looking at what we can learn from these historical accounts about how the law responded to a dematerialised subject matter and the role that science and technology played in that process, this book provides a history of patentable subject matter in the United States. This title is available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Brad Sherman is ARC Laureate Fellow and Professor at the University of Queensland and a chief investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for Plant Success and the ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology. His earlier books include *Intellectual Property and the Design of Nature* (edited with Jose Bellido, 2023), *Figures of Invention* (with Alain Pottage, 2010), *The Making of Modern Intellectual Property Law* (with Lionel Bently, 2000), and *Of Author and Origins: Essays on Copyright Law* (edited with Alain Strowel, 1994).

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PATENT LAW'S ENGAGEMENT WITH
DEMATERIALIZED SUBJECT MATTER

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009479615

DOI: [10.1017/9781009479639](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009479639)

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI [10.1017/9781009479639](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009479639)

First published 2024

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 978-1-009-47961-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-47960-8 Paperback

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