

## Nothing like a good fight over ideas

I'm not a big fan of ideas. Sure, ideas are great ? some of my best friends are ideas. But managers tend to let our national obsession about having new ideas distract them from the hard work of building good products and successful ventures around what are almost always old ideas. So it was fun to see the great design OXO have at a competitor who claimed to "own" an idea that both had built products around.

In the end, as so often happens, OXO points out that the idea can be found in a 1919 patent granted to Addison F. Kelley: History 1, Ideas 0.

OXO then goes on to offer some lessons from this experience, a few of which are:  
Just because an idea was submitted does not mean that idea is original.  
Just because a product has launched does not mean it's new.

In fact, a similar product could have already been launched and discontinued.  
It's easy to get caught up in the chase for a new idea. It's also easy to get caught up in thinking someone stole your idea. But when you set aside the value (and ownership) of new ideas, you can better see what other factors make the same idea, in someone else's hands, innovative.

