WIPO

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

2001

ON PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES[1]

submitted by

CANADA

An annual series of reports on the patent information activities
of members of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies

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[1] – The term "patent" covers utility models and SPCs.
   – Information related to design patent activities reported by industrial property offices issuing design patents is included in the series of documents SCIT/ATR/ID.

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT ON PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

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CANADA

I.   Evolution of patent activities:

–   Changes experienced in terms of application filings and grants with respect to the previous year;

The number for e-services and grants are fine, although changes are required for filings and PCT: as of June 20, 2002 the numbers and percentages should read 39,629 (1.8%) and 26, 326 (8.07%) respectively.

At your discretion, you may want to change the numbers for year 2000. The last numbers we have are 38,894 filings and 24,181 PCTs.

1.89 % increase in filings (38,894 in 2000 and 39,629 in 2001)
0.3 % increase in grants (11,740 in 2000 and 11,774 in 2001)

–   Trends or areas experiencing rapid changes with respect to the previous year.

8.87 % increase in PCT National entry (24,181 in 2000 and 26,326 in 2001)

–   Trends in our e-services

67% increase in e-filings (82 in 2000 and 137 in 2001)
200% increase in e-correspondence (176 in 2000 and 528 in 2001)

Even though patent agents have not started using e-filing on a large scale, some small firms do use it on a regular basis.

Our e-correspondence allows an applicant to perform all transaction (enter national phase of an application, pay fees, etc.) The biggest impact is on paying maintenance fee on application. They can pay all fees online using their credit-card or a deposit account opened with us. Unfortunately, once we receive the data, we still have to enter it manually in our system (this part has not been automated yet).

II. Matters concerning the generation, reproduction, distribution and use of primary and secondary sources of patent information:

– Publishing, printing, copying (main types of publications of the office in the field of patent information, etc.);

Reproduction and Distribution:

Canadian Patent Office Record (gazette) (http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/patents/record) was made available in PDF format by means of the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) Web site in 1999. This publication is published weekly and is also available in paper format for a fee.

Also the Annual index of the Canadian Patent Office Record was made available by means of the Web Site in 2000:

MIMOSA CDs for Laid open applications and Granted applications are prepared every week and sent to various Patent Offices around the world.

– Main types of announcements of the Office in the field of patent information;

Office notices and changes to office procedures are done through the Canadian Patent Office Record (CPOR).

Some of these office notices, when considered important, are put directly on the CIPO WEB site under the Patent notices section.

– Mass storage media used (paper, microforms, optical storage, etc.);

Our TechSource system includes bibliographic data (from 1920-present), text (abstract, claim and description of laid open patent documents from 1978-present) and images of patent documents (from 1920-present). Technology used to store our images is an optical technology which will eventually be replaced with hard disk technology.

To help searchers, the office also maintains data on United States Patents on DVDs and Espace World (Mimosa) CDs/DVDs, and provides online access through WEST.

Storage process of new application/correspondence:

As paper applications or other requests are received, if money is included, the paper documents are forwarded to finance to clear payment before they are forwarded to the formality section. The Formality Section enters some tombstone data in our TechSource system which creates a PA (Patent/Application) number. Then they put divider pages indicating the various sections of a document. Then

it is forwarded to the Scanning Section for scanning these sheets in the system. Once scanning is complete, a QA is done on it.

For amendments or any other correspondence without payment, the info is scanned as soon as it is received and then tasked to the appropriate section.

The paper is put in boxes in the same order as they are being scanned With respect to retaining paper copies of all Canadian inventor filed applications, we do not keep the paper. Since P/A # 2,300,000, April 2000, the paper for all initially filed applications and all subsequently filed correspondence, (except prior art greater than 50 pages and unscannable material), is set aside for destruction, after the scanning and quality check steps. We then destroy the paper when we have a truck load of them.

–   Word processing and office automation;

Currently we use WordPerfect 8 as our word processor to handle custom correspondence. There is a plan to move to WordPerfect 10 during the course of the 2002.

The TechSource system generates a high volume of notices automatically.

Most of the office reports, notices and letters are sent to applicants in paper form.

With our e-commerce, we allow applicants to communicate electronically with the office. E-filing is done securely through a SSL server.

–   (New) techniques used for the generation of patent information (printing, recording, photocomposing, etc.).

The cover page creation process has been automated but there remains some minor manual intervention done on some of the cover pages generated.

In cases where applicants elected to communicate electronically with the office, we send them copies of our report, notice, letter in image format (TIFF). For host generated document, we have to scan the printed copy of the document. For custom generated document, rather than scanning a printed copy of a document, we convert the document using an AFP driver to an image file (in AFP), which we then convert to a TIFF file using an imaging software (ImagePlus). This function uses regular e-mail and is therefore not secure. Very few applicants have elected to communicate via unsecure e-mail currently.

The office would like to automate the sending of all host generated correspondence directly via e-mail to our applicants in image format.

CIPO can now load images from Espace World CDs/DVDs directly into its system for applications entering the national phase.

III.   Matters concerning abstracting, classifying, reclassifying and indexing of technical information contained in patent documents:

–   Abstracting, reviewing, translating;

   The Office translates the titles in French or English depending on the language of the application. Some translations are retrieved from the PCT import process which uses an XML file "FTPed" from WIPO.

–   Classification and reclassification activities; Classification system used, e.g., International Patent Classification (IPC), other classification (please indicate whether or not patent documents are classified by your Office and, if so, which classification is used);

   The Canadian Patent Office classifies patent documents internally using the International Patent Classification system (IPC) as its classification system since October 1, 1989. Before this date, the office used the Canadian Patent Classification system as its classification system. Documents between August 1978 and March 1994 contain classification codes from both systems. Classification code information appearing on applications following the PCT route are transferred directly in our system.

–   Coordinate indexing (ICIREPAT-types and/or domestic deep indexing systems, keyword indexing);

   n/a

–   Hybrid system indexing;

   CIPO uses a concordance table between the IPC and its CPC.

–   Bibliographic data and full-text processing for search purposes.

   Canadian Patent Office maintains an electronic search file of all patent documents open to public from 1920-present, searchable using bibliographical data.

   Documents from 1978 -present are also searchable using text fields of abstract, claims and description. Only the text from the abstract and claims is verified for quality when the image is converted to text using OCR. The bibliographical information and image format of patent documents are available internally through our in-house system "Inquire Text" or externally though our Web site. The only information not available searching our Web site is the text from the description.

IV.   Search file establishment and upkeep:

–   File building;

The information for our search engine is coming from our Line of Business application which manages electronically all Canadian patent documents (paperless office).

–   Updating;

The Canadian Database search engine is updated electronically daily for our internal search tool (Inquire Text) and weekly for our external search tool (verity) available on our Web site.

–   Storage, including mass storage media;

CIPO does not use Microfilms anymore. CIPO now relies solely on electronic backups of all patent documents. Patent documents can be recovered from our system (TechSource).

–   Documentation from other offices maintained and/or considered part of the available search file.

CIPO has replaced the US Patent paper collection on paper by an electronic access to the USPTO's WEST database.

V.   Activities in the field of computerized and other mechanized search systems:

–   In-house systems (online/offline);

Canadian Patent Office is involved in a renewal project to replace 1) the existing search engine Inquire Text and Internet Canadian Patent Database with a single database; and 2) the electronic patent document data management system (Line of Business) in future years. The requirements document for the above noted enhancements has been completed recently.

On the e-commerce side, we are planning to modify the WEB interface to be able to individually identify transactions to allow data to flow directly into our financial system. Integration with our TechSource system will be done at a later stage.

Biotechnology. The office uses the Wisconsin Package (Genetics Computer Group) to help to search biotechnology field. We have recently upgraded the server holding this package.

– External databases;

The Canadian Patent Office uses commercial databases on patents and technical literature through Questel-Orbit, STN, DIALOG, Delphion providers and general databases available over the Internet.

– Administrative management systems (e.g., register, legal status, statistics, administrative support, etc.);

Information on patent documents is available through a mainframe application which supports the administration of the patent process by managing: applications, granted patents, applicant, inventors, owners, agent information, etc. The system also provides statistical information, management reports, fee payment, correspondence, workflow management facility, etc.

– Equipment used (hardware, including the types of terminal and network used, and software), carriers used;

TechSource is the system used by the Patent Branch of the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) to support its delivery of all patent prosecution processes. The core of the system consists of the major integration of Commercial Off-The Shelf (COTS) products; Image Plus to handle the scanning and image management related to patent applications, INQUIRE/Text to handle the textual searching requirements and QMF to handle interactive query of the data. These COTS products operate in an IBM mainframe environment that supports, and is supported by, the Line Of Business (LOB) system which is a mainframe CICS and DB2 applications that handles patent application tracking, financial and client management elements of the patent process. Bridging exists between the different application to have an integrated system.

User workstations are operating using the Windows NT 4 operating system and are networked through a token-ring LAN. There is plan to replace the token-ring based LAN technology with Ethernet and to upgrade the operating system to Windows 2000.

– Existing online thesauri; their structure, presentation and usefulness for computerized searches.

n/a

VI. Administration of the industrial property office library and services available to the public (relating to facilities, e.g., for lodging applications, for assisting clients on searching procedures, for obtaining official publications and registry extracts):

–   Planning, administration, automation, security, buildings;
–   Collecting, acquisitions, preparation;
–   Collection management, preservation;
–   Interlibrary lending, resource sharing, networks of patent libraries in the country;
–   Information services available to the public (including computerized services and search files contained in libraries remote from your Office and patent information posted by your Office on the World Wide Web).

Administration of Office Libraries:

CIPO consolidated the main Patent and Trademark Search Library in Hull Quebec into a single Client Service Centre. The various paper search files have been removed. CIPO clients now search only the electronic search files.

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information:

–   International or regional cooperation in the exchange of machine-readable information, e.g., bibliographic data, abstract and/or full text information;
–   Medium used for exchange of priority documents;
–   Medium allowed for filing applications;
–   Implementation of the Statement of Principles Concerning the Changeover to Electronic Data Carriers for the Exchange of Patent Documents[2] (please make a status report on the extent to which your Office has changed over to electronic data carriers for the exchange of patent documents).

Exchange of Patent Documents:
•   CIPO now provides Laid-open and Grants documents on CD-R.
•   The Canadian Patent Office Record (gazette) and Annual index in electronic format by means of the CIPO Web site
•   Priority documents are printed from the CIPO TECHSOURCE system

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[2]   See WIPO *Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation* CD-ROM, Part 8.4.

VIII. Other relevant matters concerning education and training in, and promotion of, the use of patent information, including technical assistance to developing countries:

– Training courses for national and foreign participants, use of audiovisual means;
– Assistance to developing countries (sending consultants and experts, receiving trainees from developing countries, etc.);
– Promotional activities (seminars, exhibitions, visits, advertising, etc.);
– Studies to identify trends in new technology, e.g., by the use of patent statistics, preparation of monographs, etc.;
– Assistance furnished by offices to facilitate the changing over of receiving offices to electronic data carriers for the exchange of patent documents (see also item 4 of Chapter VI, above).

During 2001 CIPO, in cooperation with WIPO, provided a 2 week (May 28 – June 7) training course on Client Service and Quality Management in the Delivery of Patent Servcies to officials from Latin America and the Caribbean.

CIPO has provided, in cooperation with WIPO, the following free patent services to developing countries:
· Patent search and examination reports for developing countries, upon request from WIPO (ICSES);
· State-of-the-art patent searches under the WIPO Patent Information Searches (WPIS) for developing countries; and
· Paper copies of relevant Canadian patent documents identified by WIPO patent searches.

IX. Other relevant matters.

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