Since 2011, Patent Translate has been overcoming language barriers and opening up access to the world’s patent documentation. And recently it has improved even further, thanks to a technology called "neural machine translation".

Usage statistics show that Patent Translate is a global service. The 15,000 translation requests each day come from across the EPO’s member states and beyond, with a large proportion originating from India, Japan, Russia and the United States. This number is a clear illustration of the need the EPO was responding to when it launched Patent Translate. Global patent data is multilingual and users demand seamless and immediate access to it. Patent Translate has clearly moved us close to that goal.

**EPO data at the core**

This remarkable achievement has, in part, been due to the sheer amount of data the EPO can provide. A prerequisite for good machine translation is the existence of high-quality human translations between the two languages concerned. The computer can analyse these human translations and learn from them. To do so, it needs a lot of translations. The patents in the EPO’s databases are perfect for this purpose. The EPO was able to provide Google with the text from hundreds of thousands of patent documents in different languages. Thanks to the fact that the databases gather the documents together in patent families, it is...
known which texts in different languages correspond to each other. The EPO sets stringent requirements for the data it provides to feed the translation machine, insisting that tens of thousands of human translations must be available in a particular language before it considers offering that language in Patent Translate.

Access to foreign language data
Machine translation is not just replacing human translation, but is providing access to masses of data previously inaccessible to patent searchers. Back in 2013, for example, the EPO estimated that it would take 16,000 man-years to translate the Chinese patent documentation available at the time into English. Patent Translate provides all that documentation, and the additional documents published since then, instantly in English, French and German, and to a level of quality that is perfectly adequate for readers to understand the nature of the invention. It would have been impossible to translate this information using human translators.

Neural machine translation
Neural machine translation (NMT) takes machine translation a step further and puts the EPO/Google co-operation at the forefront of machine translation technologies. NMT is already in use in Patent Translate for eight languages (in addition to English) – Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish.

The conclusion that the NMT method leads to better results is evident to anyone who uses Patent Translate with these languages. The quality is not just anecdotal, however, since the EPO and Google also use scientific methods to assess how good machine translations are. There are two measures for patent translation quality: accuracy and fluency. In both of these areas, the new NMT solution is producing significant improvements.

Google's latest development in machine translation is called Attention, which lies behind the recent advances in Patent Translate. With Attention, the machine finds the correct translation of words and phrases by trial and error, over and over again, and establishes artificial neural pathways closely resembling those in human brains. As the number of neural pathways increases, a neural network forms. Since this happens via the language pairs of translated patents and patent-related documents, Patent Translate is very precise. It recognizes styles of writing based on context and diction and is able to make accurate translations accordingly, down to appropriate nuances in style. Attention is a system in which programmers are “making the machine understand how to focus its attention on specific pieces of the input. You can visually see where the attention is given,” says Ian Wetherbee, a senior software engineer at Google. The Attention system gives numerical feedback that indicates proximity to the most correct translation. If the system presents an unfavourable word choice, the programmers are able to locate the precise point at which the machine made an error, and correct it.

Programmers no longer have to tell the machine what to look for, because the system finds patterns based on syntax from examples in the data. In this way, the machine learns to make choices independently of a human. The system accesses words and their definitions, and sentence structures. It then applies meaning, thereby learning to choose a correct translation.

Neural networks even mean that computers can now use what they learn from one language pair to improve the translations of another language pair. With the vast quantity of data, the machine begins to predict how the language is structured, how words are used, and how to develop its own sentences in the other language, based on the relationships in previously seen language pairs. Each network can learn a global model and arrange its own internal language so that it can tackle language pairs that it hasn’t been trained for. “It can create this universal representation of language, so as long as it had enough data from one language, it could learn how to represent that in the universal model and end up translating into any number of output languages,” says Wetherbee.

With its NMT solution and with the help of EPO data, Google has taken automated translations to a new level, and several more languages are in the pipeline.
Patent information supporting innovation and innovation supporting patent information

70% of innovators use patent information for their work. That, at least, is the outcome of a recent survey conducted by the EPO (see following article).

The remarkable point about this statistic is that the survey explicitly targeted the innovators themselves and avoided surveying IP experts. The study has also confirmed the EPO as the leading provider of patent information.

These results are impressive and motivate us to do more. Firstly, we must acknowledge that the study was only a start, and that we need to conduct more research to deepen our understanding of the role patent information plays in the innovation process. Secondly, the results highlight the importance of having patent information specialists available to innovators. Europe’s PATLIB centres are there to fulfil that purpose. In this context, it was satisfying to observe how successful the last month’s PATLIB conference in Munich was (see page 5). The EPO is taking a number of measures to support the PATLIB centres so that they can enhance the services they provide and function even more effectively as an international network.

Patent information supports innovation, but the reverse is also true. Innovation supports patent information. We can observe today how technology has made information retrieval so much better in recent years. The latest news about the improvements to Patent Translate (see page 1) is testimony to that, and we can expect to see even more impressive advances in future. As the leading provider of patent information, the EPO intends to be at the forefront of this progress.

Richard Flammer
Principal Director Patent Information and European Patent Academy

SURVEY

Does patent information support innovation in Europe? Survey results

For years, it has been an accepted, if unproven, fact for many people that patent information supports innovation. In 2015 and 2016, the EPO conducted qualitative1 and quantitative2 research to prove that assertion, and to find out how patent information ranks as a source of information in the innovation process, i.e. whether patent information supports innovation, in Europe.

The innovation process
The study set out to show how patent information contributes to each phase of the innovation process, using a model based on four phases (see diagram).

Survey methodology
Over six weeks between October and November 2016, the EPO conducted an online survey. One of the survey goals was to find out which sources of information innovators use to do their work in each phase of the innovation process.

One challenge in the project was to avoid bias in the survey through having patent information specialists among the respondents. In other words, it was important to avoid having respondents who would naturally regard patent information as important. For this reason, the survey was not branded as a “patent information” survey in order to avoid any bias in its results. Furthermore, the survey was not hosted on the EPO website but by an external consultant. Also, it was not promoted by the EPO but by EU trade federations and associations.3

Richard Flammer
Principal Director Patent Information and European Patent Academy

continued on page 4 >
Main findings of the survey
– 70% of the innovators who took part in the survey use patent information as a source of information.
– 72% of them rate patent information as important or very important for their innovation work.
– The EPO is by far the preferred source of patent information, confirming its position as leading provider: 75% of respondents use EPO products including Espacenet, followed by DPMA/DEPATISnet 30%, USPTO 21% and WIPO/PATENTSCOPE 17%.
– Of the four phases in the innovation process, innovators use patent information the most in the applied research and development/prototyping phases, and the least in the fundamental research phase.
– Patent information is predominantly used as a source of technical and legal information but lags behind with business information.
– Large enterprises use patent information more than SMEs.
– The three main barriers that deter innovators from using patent information are:
  – lack of awareness of its benefits
  – lack of knowledge of where to access it
  – its perceived complexity.

Usage of patents as information source
For patents used as a source of information, did the respondent mention a specific source?

As it regards the usage of patents as information source for technical, business or legal information, 70% use patents for at least one of the information categories, while 30% don’t use patents at all.

Which sources did the respondents mention?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPO</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPMA</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USPTO</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIPO</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minesoft</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questel</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomson Innovation</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*number of sources: 2.6  *results > 5% displayed

Implications for the EPO
The results of the study are very promising and show not only that patent information does indeed support innovation, but also that the EPO plays the leading role Europe-wide as a patent information provider.

It is clear that the EPO must pursue its efforts to increase awareness and understanding of patent information in Europe, especially among SMEs. It cannot do this alone, and the use of multipliers such as the PATLIB network will be one of the keys to success.

The EPO will also continue to develop and enhance its patent information tools so that they make patent information more accessible to new users, with an increased focus on patent information for business use.

Implications for the patent information community
These results are more than just the results of an EPO survey; they are relevant for anyone who works in patent information. They indicate that such work, the collective efforts of the patent information community, plays a role in innovation in Europe. The results allow us to say with confidence that patent information supports innovation.

You can find more details on the survey results at epi.org/searching-for-patents/pi-innovationsurvey.

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1) 40 qualitative interviews conducted by EY in 2015.
2) 265 innovators took part in the quantitative survey, which was conducted by Motivaction (NL).
3) The result analysis was performed by market research consultant Katharina Egger (AT).
PATLIB2017 – a learning event

Munich, 3 and 4 May 2017

Founded in 1990, the PATLIB network – Europe’s network of patent information centres – offers expertise on patents and IP at more than 300 locations across the member states. The PATLIB conference is the centres’ annual opportunity to gather together to learn, and to share their experiences.

PATLIB2017 took place at the EPO in Munich on 3 and 4 May, with nearly 200 participants from 36 countries.

EPO President Benoît Battistelli welcomed participants, highlighting the PATLIB network’s importance in supporting SMEs in IP matters and how the EPO is contributing to the network. “The EPO sees the PATLIB network and the national patent offices as partners in supporting innovation in Europe,” he said. “Their wide range of services in the local language is essential, especially for users of the patent system such as SMEs, researchers and individual inventors.”

The two-day learning event was filled with extensive yet very specific presentations. The speakers had put a lot of effort into sharing their knowledge and making participants think about growth and ways to improve services for their clients. In her keynote speech Bettina de Jong emphasised the importance of communication from the perspective of someone who had worked in industry for many years. In communication between experts and non-experts the two parties often do not talk on the same level – different language, different perspective or different interpretation – and thus misunderstandings are likely to happen. In order to avoid that, it was crucial, said de Jong, to understand the clients, their needs, background, knowledge and experience regarding IP. It was up to the expert to give advice that was fit for purpose and ready to use. “Don’t be afraid,” she insisted, “to take some risks, and don’t hide behind disclaimers. Sell yourself and show your value.”

In his breakout session, EPO expert Johannes Schaal focused on statistical analysis of patent data and visualising the results. Patent information, if analysed and interpreted correctly, can support decision-making in businesses. “Gathering the right information, carrying out proper statistical measures and looking at the broader picture is like spotting a seahorse in coral – you have to look closely and identify the movement”, said Schaal. The data itself was of no great value if not used correctly, he noted. Statistics allow us to identify emerging technological trends, new developments protected by competitors, intact markets, and saturated markets. It all starts with a basic search, followed by statistical analysis and lastly processing of the results.

As the goal of a PATLIB centre is to help, advise and support the clients, it is important to learn how to set up a target-oriented IP training course and how to promote it. Lisa McDonald-Maier of the EPO, together with Roger Hildebrandt of the German Patent Office, presented best practice on how to prepare and conduct training courses tailored to specific needs. Training courses can be an effective way of learning. However, if the content is not chosen carefully, not targeted to a specific group, too advanced or too basic, the participants will not learn as much as they should.

PATLIB events are always excellent opportunities for networking. Participants had an opportunity to get to know each other and their work and as a consequence to strengthen their feeling of affiliation to the PATLIB network.

From the EPO’s perspective, the PATLIB network is important in ensuring that SMEs around Europe have access to the patent information and IP-related advice they need. The local centres can speak to the users in their own language; they know about local business conditions and culture and are therefore the right contact point for the best advice.

Most of the presentations are available at epo.org/patlib.
Divisional applications at the EPO

"Divide and rule" ("divide et impera" in Latin) has been employed as a way of achieving political success ever since the time of Philip of Macedon, who ruled from 359 to 336 BC. For many, the expression has negative connotations. Yet in the patent world, dividing is a normal process, and "divisional applications" are an important element of many patent applicants' filing strategies. Patent searchers also need to have an understanding of how divisional applications arise, how they enter the public domain, and how to retrieve them.

This article builds on an earlier one, by EPO examiner Peter Watchorn, published in Patent Information News in 2010.

What is a divisional application?
A divisional application is an application which derives from an earlier application. It is filed after the earlier application (usually some years later), but keeps the same filing and priority dates as the earlier application. In that way the divisional is not affected in terms of its patentability by any publications which occur between the filing of the earlier application and the filing of the divisional. The earlier application is often referred to as the "parent".

For example:
GB1 – filed 26.03.2010
EP1 – filed 25.03.2011 (claims priority from GB1)
published 25.09.2011
EP2 – filed 11.05.2013 (divisional of EP1)

EP2 is a divisional of EP1 and so, although actually filed on 11.05.2013, its filing date is 25.03.2011 and its priority date is 26.03.2010. EP1 is the "parent" of EP2.

Why are divisional applications filed?
Often, the filing of a divisional application follows a lack-of-unity objection in respect of the parent. This means that the EPO finds that the parent application claims more than one invention. In this case, the applicant has to limit his claims to one invention only and remove all others. He may then pursue the excised inventions in one or more divisional applications. This is "mandatory division".

Furthermore, divisional applications may be filed where the applicant cannot pursue matter in respect of the parent application for other reasons, but still wishes to gain protection for it, for example where the applicant is required to delete independent claims excluded from the search. This is "voluntary division".

A divisional application is also a way of seeking protection for subject-matter which is present only in the description of the parent application and cannot be introduced into the claims of the parent.

What requirements must a divisional application fulfil?
The divisional application must not contain any subject-matter not present in the parent. If the EPO finds that this requirement is not met, the offending matter (not present in the parent) must be removed from the divisional application or it will be refused.

EPO divisional applications can only be filed while the parent application is still pending.

"Pending" means that the parent applicant is neither withdrawn, refused, deemed to be withdrawn (lapsed) nor granted on the date when the divisional is filed. If the parent has lapsed but is subsequently revived by further processing or re-establishment of rights (which allow the lapse to be reversed if certain requirements are met), then filing the divisional is still possible. If the parent has already been refused when the divisional is filed, but the refusal is subsequently appealed, then filing a divisional is also possible at any time during pending appeal proceedings. Furthermore, even where no appeal is filed, a divisional may still be filed within the period for the filing of the notice of appeal according to Article 108 EPC.

Between April 2010 and April 2014, there was also a stipulation that divisional applications had to be filed before the end of a 24-month period calculated from a communication sent during examination of the parent. This rule does not apply to divisional applications filed after April 2014, regardless of when the parent application was filed.

How does the EPO publish divisional applications?
The EPO publishes a "normal" patent application 18 months after the filing or priority date. Divisional applications are often filed many months after the parent application, but the official filing date is the same as that of the parent application. Consequently, the 18-month publication deadline has generally already passed when the divisional is filed, and the EPO will therefore publish the divisional as quickly as possible.

In practice, EPO divisional applications are generally published three months after completion of the formalities check. They have their own application and publication numbers. The front page of the published application lists the parent application and all earlier generations.
Divisional applications in the European Patent Register

Divisional applications appear in the European Patent Register as part of the information displayed for the parent. The example below shows the case of two divisional applications for the parent EP2932653.

Clicking on the links will take the user to the relevant record in Espacenet or to the Register entry for the divisional application itself.

The Register entry for the divisional application includes information showing the parent applications. This is the indicator that it is a divisional application.

Espacenet

Divisional applications in Espacenet can be viewed by clicking on the “INPADOC patent family” link on the bibliographic data screen.

Multiple generations of divisional applications

Sometimes you will see multiple parent applications indicated in the European Patent Register, for example in the case of EP3096484, published in November 2016. An application can in reality only have one parent, but that parent can have a parent, and that grandparent can have a parent and so on. In the example below, the original application was EP047219, filed at the EPO in 2000, which has spawned at least six generations of divisional applications.

EP630944 is a third-generation divisional of the original application EP047219. Its entry in the European Patent Register shows its parents and grandparents, as well as its own divisional applications. A divisional application may be filed as long as the parent is pending; earlier generations of the sequence of divisional applications do not need to be pending.14
Bulgaria joins the Federated Register service

The seventeen states already participating in the Federated Register service (see Patent Information News 1/2017) have now been joined by Bulgaria, which signed up to the service in May, thereby providing easy access to reliable and up-to-date bibliographic and legal status information on European patents validated in Bulgaria.

Launched on April 2015, the Federated Register service has grown to eighteen participating states: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey.

Available within the European Patent Register (epo.org/register), the Federated Register allows you to retrieve the status of a granted European patent once it has entered the national phase in these eighteen countries and view all the information together in a table.

Information on the content provided by each national patent office currently incorporated in the Federated Register is available on the EPO website.

Ultimately, the aim of the Federated Register is to offer access to the status of a granted European patent across all the designated states, as well as extension and validation states. Patent Information News will keep you posted as more countries join.

Available from the “Legal status” (Figure 1) and “Federated Register” tabs (Figure 2), the Bulgarian register with its legal status information is just one click away, providing fast, easy and reliable information on European patents that have been validated in Bulgaria.

Each participating patent office has provided its own way of linking to its national register and has defined which of its documents can be accessed. A list of the participating offices and the data coverage they provide can be found under: epo.org/searching-for-patents/legal/register/documentation/data-coverage.html
DATA NEWS

European phase entry for PCT applications

As of week 2017/20, the INPADOC worldwide legal status database includes information on the date of the request for entry into the European phase at the EPO for PCT applications. The information is updated on a monthly basis.

Before the end of the international phase of the PCT application procedure a PCT applicant must decide whether and before which designated Offices to proceed with the application.

To proceed with an application for a European patent based on a PCT international filing, the applicant must initiate the procedure before the EPO by submitting EPO Form 1200. The EPO then notifies WIPO that it has received this request for entry into the European phase.

This information is generally the first available indicator of a PCT application’s entry into the European phase and comes before European phase entry itself.

Entry into the European phase is confirmed by the EPO’s publication of the corresponding bibliographic data (with an EP publication number) and, where the original language is not English, French or German, by publication of the full translation of the application in one of the EPO’s official languages.

Nevertheless, the above query is very simple and can be improved, e.g. by adding BASF name variations. This is particularly important for the EVOW search criterion, because names in INPADOC are as provided by the patent offices, i.e. without further standardisation.

For detailed information on the DFE, APP, EVD and EVOW search criteria and the AND, OR and WITH operators, see the GPI user manual at epo.org/gpi.

To proceed with a search for names in INPADOC, it may be necessary to separate out these searches, because they depend on different search criteria. A feature in the EPO’s Global Patent Index (GPI) gets around this problem. It enables you to retrieve in a single search all new patent documents (i.e. available for the first time in GPI) for a particular applicant or proprietor, and patent documents with a new legal event indicating a change of ownership (the system searches for the new applicants/proprietors).

Users who conduct regular monitoring searches will probably be familiar with the challenge of looking for new patent applications, new grants, and changes of patent ownership. Sometimes it is necessary to separate out these searches, because they depend on different search criteria. A feature in the EPO’s Global Patent Index (GPI) gets around this problem. It enables you to retrieve in a single search all new patent documents (i.e. available for the first time in GPI) for a particular applicant or proprietor, and patent documents with a new legal event indicating a change of ownership (the system searches for the new applicants/proprietors).

For instance, Example 1 below generates a result list including patent documents:

- either available for the first time in GPI during the first quarter of 2017 (DFE [201701, 201703]) with the applicant/proprietor BASF (APP = BASF),
- or where a new legal event in the first quarter of 2017 (EVD [201701, 201703]) showed a transfer of rights to BASF (EVOW = BASF).

In this case, there is a legal status event dated 18.01.2017 indicating a transfer of rights to BASF.

Legal status data

The result list includes, for example, EP 1987078 B1 published on 23.11.2016 with Ciba Holding Inc. as proprietor.

To proceed with an application for a European patent based on a PCT international filing, the applicant must initiate the procedure before the EPO by submitting EPO Form 1200. The EPO then notifies WIPO that it has received this request for entry into the European phase.

This information is generally the first available indicator of a PCT application’s entry into the European phase and comes before European phase entry itself.

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For detailed information on the DFE, APP, EVD and EVOW search criteria and the AND, OR and WITH operators, see the GPI user manual at epo.org/gpi.

Legal event codes related to the European phase of PCT applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patent authority</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>The EPO has been informed by WIPO that EP was designated in this application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>REEP</td>
<td>Request for entry into the European phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>WWE (+EP)</td>
<td>Entry into the national (or European) phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>PCT application will not enter the European phase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The initial data set covered data back to mid-2016 and contained approx. 300 000 records. The data is linked to the corresponding PCT application.

GLOBAL PATENT INDEX

Searching who owns what with Global Patent Index (GPI)

Users who conduct regular monitoring searches will probably be familiar with the challenge of looking for new patent applications, new grants, and changes of patent ownership. Sometimes it is necessary to separate out these searches, because they depend on different search criteria. A feature in the EPO’s Global Patent Index (GPI) gets around this problem. It enables you to retrieve in a single search all new patent documents (i.e. available for the first time in GPI) for a particular applicant or proprietor, and patent documents with a new legal event indicating a change of ownership (the system searches for the new applicants/proprietors).

Example 1

(DFE [201701, 201703] and APP = BASF) OR (EVD [201701, 201703] with EVOW = BASF)

The result list includes, for example, EP 1987078 B1 published on 23.11.2016 with Ciba Holding Inc. as proprietor.
Global Dossier – news on coverage

In March 2017, the EPO’s Global Dossier service saw a change in the time span for data from the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) and WIPO.

The EPO’s Global Dossier allows you to look at the file wrappers for Canadian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, PCT international patent applications and US patent applications. Global Dossier is embedded within the European Patent Register and is also accessible via Espacenet. It provides an automatic machine translation when Chinese, Japanese or Korean documents are requested in English.

Within the European Patent Register you access first a European patent application and then the files for its family members via the Global Dossier link in the family list. Global Dossier in Espacenet goes further, offering, in addition to the link in the INPADOC patent family, a link straight from the bibliographic view to the original record for the patent applications in Global Dossier. As Espacenet is not subject to the requirement for a patent family link to a European patent application, you can retrieve “orphan” patent applications which have no European family members.

In the European Patent Register, you need to click on the Patent family link in the navigation menu on the left-hand side of the screen to display the family members for the European patent application concerned. Figure 1 shows a typical example (the patent family of EP2388845), including Global Dossier links.

In Espacenet you can find the Global Dossier icon in the bibliographic view. Figure 2 shows the Korean publication that also appears in Figure 1.

Machine translations are provided by the partner office at source, not by the EPO.

The table shows the publications that are currently available in the Global Dossier service.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Documents in Global Dossier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIPO</td>
<td>Patent applications published with a search report on or after 1 August 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPO</td>
<td>All published patent applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPO</td>
<td>Patent and utility model applications filed on or after 1 July 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIPO</td>
<td>Patent and utility model applications filed on or after 1 January 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIPO</td>
<td>Patent applications filed on or after 10 February 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USPTO</td>
<td>Patent applications filed on or after 1 January 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIPO</td>
<td>All published patent applications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Global Dossier – RSS feeds now available for patent monitoring

Global Dossier now includes RSS feeds, allowing you to receive alerts about changes to files, e.g. when new files are added to the system. Currently, RSS feeds are available for the individual files of the EPO and SIPO. The aim is to make them available for the files of all the patent offices covered by Global Dossier, and for all their INPADOC family members in participating countries.

You can find individual RSS feed icons in the All documents view for EP dossiers and in the Global Dossier for the other authorities. It is located near the top of the screen, next to the document’s publication number. Family-based RSS feeds are accessible via the INPADOC patent family view in Espacenet and via the Patent family view in the European Patent Register. The relevant RSS links can be found in the title next to the number of the publication to which the patent family list relates.

Currently, these individual and family-based RSS alerts are available for files from the EPO and SIPO.

Example of an RSS alert from the Global Dossier service

Events

IP Statistics for Decision Makers Conference

Mexico City, 14–15 November 2017

Save the date! IP Statistics for Decision Makers is the leading event worldwide for discussion on analysis of IP data in the decision-making process. It will take place this year in Mexico City on 14 and 15 November.

In addition to the main programme, the EPO will hold a PATSTAT user day and workshop on 13 November 2017. More details will follow in due course.

Paradigm shift in Asian patent information

East meets West 2017: This year’s forum on Asian patent information saw new search technologies take centre stage at an event attended by many newcomers from countries and regions not previously represented.

Over 100 patent information specialists from across the globe attended the East meets West forum in Vienna on 6 and 7 April 2017. The forum has been giving users a valuable opportunity for direct contact with experts from the Asian patent offices, data specialists and other users since 2002.

As in previous years, representatives of the patent offices of China (SIPO), India (IPO), Japan (JPO) and Korea (KIPO) reported on the latest developments in their countries. Li Li from SIPO gave an overview of new functions in the Chinese search tools cpquery and Patent Search and Analysis System, and then Kei Kawakami presented measures taken by the Japan Patent Office to protect personal user data when running searches in the JPO’s databases.

In their presentations, Kitae Kim from KIPO and Sujoy Sarkar from IPO outlined the most significant changes in their countries’ respective patent laws such as the reintroduction of opposition proceedings in Korea and the implementation of an accelerated examination procedure in India.

For a long time, however, the main issue was the language barrier, which was regarded as a nearly insurmountable obstacle to working with Asian patent data. But the impressive advances in language technology mean that the quality of machine translations of Chinese, Japanese and Korean documents is getting better all the time.

So it was no wonder that machine translation came up again and again in discussions, workshops and countless conversations between participants. There was great interest in the panel discussion between representatives of patent offices, commercial providers and a translator on assessing the quality of machine translations.

New faces

Whatever the interest in all the new gadgets, algorithms and automation tools, users were also keen to point out the immense value of the personal interaction and the direct contact with representatives of the Asian offices. The poster sessions, where over 20 commercial providers presented their services, and the evening function at the Institute for Fine Arts in the heart of Vienna offered good chances to network. It was also apparent from the many lively exchanges that a new generation of patent specialists is emerging: at least a third of all patent specialists at East meets West were in attendance for the first time.
There was also an in-depth exchange of views at the round tables, which brought together participants to discuss a topic of their choice. The range of topics showed that there has also been a paradigm shift in geographical terms: in the past, it was almost all about three countries – China, Japan and Korea – whereas now there are round tables about the Arab countries, ASEAN and the BRICS countries. And for the first time, two experts from Iran took part in East meets West and shared their knowledge of the Iranian patent system with users at a round table.

The forum highlighted the many exciting developments in tools and technologies and in the Asian patent information landscape. Giving the closing address Jiří Slavík from Zentiva a Sanofi summed it up when he said: “East meets West is an important forum for bringing together representatives of the patent offices, the commercial providers and industry and above all to learn about the products, services and patent laws of countries and regions less well known in the patent world.”

To view the presentations and find out more, go to epo.org/emw2017.
News from Asia

Upcoming changes to Singapore’s patent and design systems

According to press releases issued by the Ministry of Law, Singapore’s new Patents (Amendment) Bill and Registered Designs (Amendment) Bill are in preparation.

The changes aim at increasing the quality of patents and making the system more user-friendly. Key amendments include the broadening of the grace period to include any prior disclosure of the invention by the inventor. Furthermore, the current “foreign examination route” will close from 1 January 2020 onwards. With this change, applicants will only be able to choose between the “local route” (combined search and examination at the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore – IPOS) and the “mixed route” (examination based on a search report from a foreign patent office).

As for designs, the scope of registrable designs will broaden to include virtual designs of non-physical products that can be projected onto any surface and have useful features. Colours as a design feature will also be included. The grace period provision will include any disclosure made by the designer, and will increase to 12 months.


Administrative Measures for Prioritised Examination under review in China

The State Intellectual Property Office of China (SIPO) recently published a revised version of its Administrative Measures for Prioritised Patent Examination (Draft for Comment) for public opinion. First introduced in 2012, these measures were intended to allow for speedier examination of patent applications in certain technical fields (e.g. energy conservation, environmental protection, new materials or new energy vehicles).

Currently, prioritised examination is available only for invention patent applications. In future, this will be extended to utility models and designs. Furthermore, it will become possible, under certain conditions, to request speedier re-examination and invalidation procedures.

For invention patent applications, a first examination report will be issued within 45 days and examination completed within one year. For utility models and designs, registration will be completed within two months. The draft further stipulates the following time frames for the completion of accelerated procedures: seven months for re-examination, five months for invalidation of invention patents and utility models, and four months for invalidation of designs.

Further details are available in a dedicated section of the SIPO website (Chinese only): www.sipo.gov.cn/tz/201704/t20170407_1309354.html.

Russian search reports now available in the Official Bulletin

Russian search reports are now available in the Official Bulletin of Inventions and Utility Models and can be found in the Information Search Reports section. In addition to cited documents and IPC classification, the search report also contains a list of consulted databases, information on unity of invention and the classifications used in the search.

Recent law changes relating to the intellectual property regime, introduced to the Russian Civil Code in 2014 and 2015, have created the legal basis for the preparation and publication of the search report together with the patent application.

Although the search reports are only available in Russian, they can be accessed via the English version of the Official Bulletin at: www1.fips.ru/wps/portal/ofic_pub_en/#page=bulletin&type=IZPM.

New feature for displaying family information in the KIPRIS database

The Korean Patent Office (KIPO) has recently implemented a new feature in its KIPRIS database (http://eng.kipris.or.kr) for showing a graphical overview of all patent family members. After clicking on the “Family Patent” tab on the “View Details” screen, you can switch between the existing “Table View”, which shows family members as a list, and the new “Chart View”, which displays the equivalents as a graphical visualisation, sorted according to their application date. This new display option allows users to see all the corresponding applications at a glance and find out easily which document was filed at what time.

For step-by-step guides on searching Asian databases, please visit epo.org/asia.

Closure of K2E-PAT service for Korean-to-English machine translations

The Korea Institute of Patent Information (KIPI) terminated its K2E-PAT machine translation service for Korean documents on 9 April 2017. Consequently, the EPO’s Asian Patent Information Services – which had offered this service in co-operation with KIPI since 2007 – have ended the corresponding retrieval and delivery services as well.

Should you require a manual translation of a Korean document into English or German, please contact asiainfo@epo.org for a cost estimate.

For more news from Asia, see the Updates section on the EPO website at epo.org/asia.
**Publications Corner**

"Publications corner" presents the latest statistics on EPO publications.

- **EP-A1**: European patent applications published with search report
- **EP-A2**: European patent applications published without search report
- **EP-A3**: European search reports
- **EP-B1**: European patent specifications
- **EP-B2**: revised European patent specifications

*Note: The table does not include statistics on European patent applications filed via the PCT route (Euro-PCT applications). These are published by WIPO and are not made available by the EPO unless they are in a language other than English, French or German. Currently about 60% of all European patent applications are Euro-PCT filings.*

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**New legal status codes from China**

With effect from 1 April, the Chinese Patent Office (SIPO) has changed its legal status codes. The EPO has therefore adopted these codes in the INPADOC worldwide legal status database. The new four-digit codes enable the EPO to process all legal status events for patents and utility models from SIPO, as delivered.

The EPO would like to expand the approach of taking legal status data as delivered, and users can expect to see further developments in this area in future, possibly starting with German and Brazilian data.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>AD01</td>
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<tr>
<td>AR01</td>
<td>Abandonment of patent right to avoid double patenting</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV01</td>
<td>Patent right actively abandoned</td>
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<td>CB01</td>
<td>Change of bibliographic data</td>
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<td>CB02</td>
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<td>CE01</td>
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<td>CF01</td>
<td>Termination of patent right due to non-payment of annual fee</td>
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<td>CI01</td>
<td>Correction of invention patent gazette</td>
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<td>CI02</td>
<td>Correction of invention patent application</td>
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<td>Correction of gazette and description for patent utility model</td>
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**European patent publications January – June 2017**

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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EP-A documents</strong></td>
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<td>EP-A1</td>
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EPO Patent Information Conference 2017

Programme available, registration open
Taking place at the Sofia Balkan Hotel in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 7 to 9 November, this year’s EPO Patent Information Conference is again likely to be the biggest gathering of patent information specialists in Europe.

The programme includes
– a focus on the latest developments in European patent information
– sessions on machine translation, patent analysis, freedom-to-operate searching and much more
– discussion rounds for in-depth dialogue on specific issues

– training on 6 and 9 November, on topics such as patent information from ASEAN countries, patent analytics and Espacenet
– the usual presentations with practical tips from experienced searchers.

Above all, the EPO Patent Information Conference is a meeting place, an event where patent searchers, patent office staff and commercial patent information providers get together to exchange views and experiences.

To find out more, and to register for the event: epo.org/pi-conference.

Free patent information webinars
Joining one of the EPO’s free online webinars is a good way of keeping up to date with the latest on EPO patent information. The programme for 2017 is shown below. Block your calendar now for the topics that interest you.

epo.org/pi-training.

Missed an EPO webinar?
Starting soon, the EPO will make some of its live webinars available for a limited time as recordings on its website. So, if you miss a webinar you’re interested in, take a look at epo.org/pi-videos.

Free patent information webinars in 2017

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<td>Basics of patent searching with Espacenet NEW!</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Special aspects of patent classification</td>
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