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ON PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES*

submitted by

SWEDEN

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

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- 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.



SWEDISH PATENT AND REGISTRATION OFFICE (SPRO) ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT 1999

I. Evolution of patent activities:

The number of national patent applications was higher than the previous years, i.e. 4870 applications in 1999 and 4625 in 1998.

The number of applications filed under Chapter I of the PCT, where the SPRO acts as an International Searching Authority (ISA) is on a high level with 4822 filings in 1999, slightly lower than in 1998 (5059 filings). However, , the number of applications filed under Chapter II of the PCT, for which the SPRO acts as an International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA), increased from 3119 filings in 1998 to 3295 in 1999.

The technical area of most rapid growth during last years is the one dealing with mobile telephones, a trend which seems to continue.

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

The SPRO publishes examined applications and patents as well as abstracts, i.e. the B-, C-, E-, L- and T-documents. They are produced as paper documents as well as microfiches (the L- and T-documents, however, only in paper form). All new documents, as well as most of the backlog, are available in electronic (facsimile) form in the reading room.

We do not print any A-documents. Instead the whole application is made available to the public for inspection in our library or can be supplied as a photocopy on demand.

However, for the first level of publication we do have a printed product, i.e. a published collection of the separate abstracts of the applications together with bibliographic data.

The weekly published Swedish Patent Gazette contains bibliographic data concerning national applications, European applications designating Sweden and PCT-applications applied for at the SPRO.

Bibliographic data of the applications mentioned above and information concerning responses and actions taken in those applications are stored in our database.

The Swedish Patent Gazette is generated by an EDP-system.

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

Reclassification of non-US patent documents to the latest version of the IPC is a continuous activity at the Office. We have, some years ago, developed an internal EDP-system using information from EPO'S CONDA tape, currently updated and designed for our own reclassification needs.

The US documents, which we store according to the US Patent Classification System, are continuously reclassified by means of the above mentioned system in combination with the use of recorded reclassification information, which we currently receive from the US Patent and Trademark Office.

In anticipation of new procedures for maintaining the search files – for implementation in the year 2000 - the reclassification activities were reduced during the second half of 1999.

IV. Activities in the field of computerised and other mechanised systems:

During 1999 our BNS system has been further enhanced in order to raise the capacity. New tape cartridges were introduced with a capacity of 30-50 GB, a vast improvement in comparison the 800 MB of the old ones. Our system uses three StorageTek robots which contained roughly 21 million documents at the end of the year. Towards the end of the year we started to store Swedish document on hard discs in addition to the tape storage of the BNS system in order to improve the access time.

New versions of our BNS viewer, DocView, have been taken into service. This viewer is developed by the SPRO, runs under Windows and makes it possible to read the BNS documents on a workstation.

Further development has been done in cooperation with the EPO and Berthelsmann on a Windows version of the EPO's query system EPOQUE, called SPOQUE I (the Swedish Patent Office QUery system).

The SPRO is now scanning its unique patent documents, including those published in the period from 1885 to 1919, for loading into our BNS.

Every year new on-line systems are developed or acquired and loaded into the mainframe computer. The mainframe has been upgraded and new peripherals have been installed. The main purpose of all systems so far has been to support the search and examination work.

On-line searching of external databases made available by DIALOG, QUESTEL-ORBIT, STN etc. is a natural and integrated part of the searching procedure at the Swedish Patent and Registration Office. Databases made available by Swedish hosts are also searched, e.g. MEDLINE (host: MIC--KIBIC/QZ) and BODIL and BYGGFO (host: BYGGDOC). These databases contain information in biomedicine and building technology & research respectively.

All examiners get training courses in on-line searching. Newly employed examiners have to pass an obligatory introduction course. This is followed at regular intervals by different kinds of courses: advanced courses, refresher courses, specialized courses etc. These latter courses are normally in-house courses held by outside instructors from the different hosts, databases or other organisations.

All examiners have their own PC-workstation running on Windows NT, which allows them to access all interesting databases, internal as well as external (EPOQUE, commercial etc) from the same terminal without having to take notes on the side or to make intermediary print-outs.

The SPRO participates in the esp@cenet network.

V. Search file establishment and upkeep:

Non-US patent documents are kept in classified order according to the IPC. In several technical areas they are kept according to the ECLA. Some [pre-1968] documents are still stored according to the old German classification system.

US patent documents are all kept classified according to the US Classification System.

The manual search files have increased by more than 500 meters per year. In total the search files now cover more than ca 27 000 meters. The SPRO has heavy space problems regarding the manual search files. Towards the end of 1999 the SPRO made a detailed study to investigate the possibilities to stop updating the manual search files in those technical areas where the manual search can be replaced by the SPOQUE search tool and/or database searches. The study showed that it was possible to stop the updating of the search files in many areas, which are to be identified in the beginning of the year 2000. In all areas, however, the files will be updated with Nordic (i.e. SE, DK, FI and NO) specifications.

The files contain the whole PCT minimum documentation together with patent documents from all the Nordic countries. The search files from most countries are complete and start with documents from the nineteenth century, i.e., they comprise more than is stipulated by the PCT minimum documentation Rule 34.

Furthermore, a large collection of non-patent literature is included in the files. This collection is more extensive than the non-patent literature stipulated in PCT Rule 34.1.b (iii).

VI. Administration of the industrial property office library and services available to the public:

Swedish patent applications, open for public inspection, are available in the main reading room of the Office.

In the reading room the Swedish Patent and Registration Office keeps classified collections available to the public. These collections consist of Swedish patent specifications and European patent specifications translated into Swedish (i.e. EP patents granted for Sweden). Furthermore, the complete classified search files are available on demand in the reading room.

The reading room is equipped with six workstations for the public for the use of different CD-ROM collections.

The esp@cenet is available in the reading room for the public. Access to web sites of other patent offices is also available from the public work stations.

The public also has access to the Swedish Patent Gazette and any other Intellectual Property Gazette.

Any patent document in our numerical files can be inspected in the reading room on demand.

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

On a weekly basis the Swedish Patent and Registration Office sends magnetic tapes containing bibliographic data of Swedish applications to EPIDOS and to the EPO in the Hague respectively.

Only paper is allowed for filing applications. However priority documents can be accepted in the form of microfiche if they fulfil the WIPO Standard ST.21.

On a weekly basis the SPRO receives data cartridges from the EPO containing new patent documents for loading into our BNS system.

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

The SPRO gives assistance to developing countries in cooperation with WIPO. Staff from the SPRO has also been released for missions as WIPO experts in developing countries.

The SPRO has a special cooperation with the Latvian Patent Office for training and education of Patent Office personnel, patent attorneys and a broader public in Latvia.

IX. Other relevant matters.
