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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

2001

ON PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES¹

submitted by

AUSTRALIA

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

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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I. Evolution of patent activities:

- **Changes experienced in terms of application filings and grants with respect to the previous year; For 2000**

Patent applications filed = 13924 Patents granted = 13548
PCT designations = 63723

For 2001

Patent applications filed = 13559 Patents granted = 13983
PCT designations = 81060

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

PCT designations, international searches and preliminary examinations and Article 15(5) searches show a steady increase over the previous year.

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

Publishing, printing, copying

The number of patent documents published in 2001 in the Australian Official Journal of Patents was:

- patent applications open to public inspection (AU-A) 76985
- patent applications advertised accepted (AU-B) 14526

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

Australian patent specifications are published on CD-ROM and on IP Australia's web site. Patent specifications of Australian designated PCT applications are no longer being republished by IP Australia at the open for public inspection stage following their original publication by WIPO.

The Office continues to receive foreign patent specifications on CD-ROM and DVD.

Abstracts of published Australian patent specifications, including AU designated PCT applications, are loaded onto an in-house search system, the Patent Abstract Image System (PAIS). Under an agreement with Derwent Publications Ltd., Derwent abstract images on CD-ROM are also being loaded onto PAIS.

- **Word processing and office automation;**

The Office has a Local Area Network (LAN) interconnected via bridges and routers. The LAN is also connected to a remote IBM mainframe computer and has a gateway to the Internet. The Office continued to add IBM compatible microcomputers to the LAN. TN 3270 terminal emulation packages provide access to the mainframe. Microsoft Word 97 for Windows, Microsoft Excel 97 for Windows and Lotus Notes are the Office's standard word processing, spreadsheet and e-mail packages.

- **Techniques used for the generation of patent information**

The Office's publication system is partially mainframe based. The mainframe provides the following functions using "XICS" typesetting software:

- production of camera ready copy of the Australian Official Journal of Patents;
- production of patent certificates and original register entries; and
- production of notices for patent applicants or their agents.

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

Classification and reclassification activities;

Patent applications are classified into the 7th edition of the International Patent Classification.

Reclassification of Australian documents to the 7th edition of the IPC from the Australian Classification and from earlier editions of the IPC continues in areas where there are benefits to be gained.

IP Australia no longer reclassifies Australian designated PCT applications at the open for public inspection stage.

The Office continues to classify relevant articles from periodicals on the PCT minimum documentation non-patent literature list for publication in JOPAL.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep:

File building, updating, storage;

Electronic images of Australian patent abstracts are added on a weekly basis to PAIS. Full specifications of all non-PCT designated AU-A and AU-B patent specifications are available on CD-ROM and on the Internet, and are updated on a weekly basis. Complete sets of pre-1999 AU specifications are available in microfiche form. AU classification details are added to the Patindex mainframe database at filing. A link between Patindex and PAIS allows abstracts to be brought up on PAIS corresponding to searches carried out on IPC classification marks on Patindex.

IP Australia is capturing a backfile of non-convention Australian Patent Specifications back to 1975 which will be published on CD-ROM and on IP Australia's web site.

Introduction of the Patent Abstract Image System has largely eliminated the need for shoebox storage of the non Capri component of manually retrieved paper abstracts required for international searches. Existing abstract shoeboxes are only updated with JAPATIC abstracts.

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

IP Australia is in the process of enhancing its on-line filing facilities for patent applications to allow all new standard patent applications as well as innovation patent applications to be filed on-line. To process these on-line filings, IP Australia is further developing its electronic case file management system to allow these applications to be processed electronically.

A search engine will be implemented as part of IP Australia's on-line services to allow the bibliographic data relating to these new applications to be accessed.

IP Australia has conducted trials with two of its major customers in relation to the feasibility of business-to-business data exchange of particular patent and trade mark transactions. Further investigations in relation to this are continuing.

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).

All online services (e.g. searching, application filing, forms, information and advisory services) are available

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

– **Exchange of machine-readable information,**

IP Australia continues to supply data to EPIDOS for the INPADOC database in machine-readable form.

– **Medium used for exchange of priority documents;**

Certified copies of Australian patent applications for use as priority documents in foreign applications are provided in paper form. Priority documents on which Australian applications are based are required in paper form.

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).

Representatives from the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) of the People's Republic of China visited Australia 25-29 June 2001. The purpose of the visit was to brief interested industry and government agencies on changes to the Chinese Patent law which came into effect on 1 July 2001. The delegation met with IP Australia for discussions on future bilateral cooperation activities. These activities will include the exchange of views on the development of international IP systems, the exchange of information on IP laws and policies and the exchange of officials and experts.

Four Patents examiners from the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) visited IP Australia in June 2001. This exchange was initiated as a recommendation from the Third Heads Meeting of KIPO and IP Australia in 2000. Two examiners from IP Australia then visited KIPO in September. The visits focused on search and examination practice and procedures as well as benchmarking issues in patents. In December 2001 4 examiners from KIPO visited IP Australia again for the purposes of search and examination techniques and benchmarking.

IP Australia also assisted the Intellectual Property Office of Papua New Guinea with technical assistance to set up a patent administrative system following the passing of its patent legislation and assisting with legislative matters.

IP Australia hosted visits from staff of the Intellectual Property Offices of Singapore, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia in November, 2001. The staff were looking at, amongst other things, IP public awareness programs and patent administration.

IP Australia signed a Co-operation Agreement with the Intellectual Property & Company Registration Unit of Tonga in November 2001. The Agreement provided that the Australian Patent Office could undertake search and examination free of charge for up to 10 Tongan Patent applications per year.

IX. Other relevant matters.

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