

JAPAN
Annual Technical Reports on Industrial Design Information Activities
(1998 Edition)

I. Evolution of registration activities:

- Comparison with the preceding year in application filings and grants (registration);

In 1998, application filings and registrations respectively totaled 39,352 and 36,264.

- Technical fields undergoing major changes in the year reported;

Nothing particular to report

II. Matters concerning the generation, reproduction, and distribution of industrial design documents and of secondary sources of industrial design information, i.e., official gazettes:

- Publication of gazettes and documents by printing, reproduction and electronic printing;

The Japanese Patent Office (JPO)-published design documents are offset printed. Plates for printing design gazettes are photoengraved. Plates for printing trial decision gazettes are made using a direct process.

- Major design gazettes and documents published by the Industrial Property Office in 1998:

Design gazettes:	37,700
Trial decision gazettes:	650

- Mass data storage and microfilms;

Since 1989, the JPO has been storing design gazette image data in optical discs, with the total reaching about 1.26 million documents by 1998 fiscal year.

- Database and office automation;

Nothing particular to report

III. Matters concerning classifying, reclassifying and indexing of industrial design information according to the classification systems applied:

- Classification and reclassification: Currently used classification systems, e.g., International Design Classification (Locarno Classification) (State your internal classification if used.);

The JPO operates on the 1983-revised domestic design classification system. The design classification based primarily on the concept of usage consists of group, major classification, minor classification and morphological classification as a "sub-minor" classification as required, totaling 5,100 classification branches.

In 1998, design classifications were assigned to 39,352 applications filed and to 180,000 items of data in the public domain including journals, catalogues, etc. used as criteria for determining the novelty of design.

- Bibliographic search data and data processing;

Bibliographic data used for search purposes include application number, application date, registration number, registration date, design classification, D-terms (classification symbols of an architecture differing from design classification), etc. These data are stored in the database by document and used for retrieval.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep:

- File generation;

a) For manual-based search

The drawings of registered design applications are filed by registration number (by design classification), and those of pending or refused design applications are filed by application number (by design classification).

As to reference materials in the public domain, a single photo is generated for each picture carried on the journal, etc. and stored in the cabinet by specific design classification.

b) Computer-aided search

By 1998, the JPO had stored 2 million application data, and 1.8 million reference data in the public domain involving image data, bibliographic data, design classification and D-terms in search files.

- Updating;

a) For manual-based search

The JPO added the drawings of 39,352 application data to the files.

b) For computer search

The JPO added 46,314 application data, 180,000 reference data in the public domain involving image data and bibliographic data to files.

- Mass data storage and microfilms;

Optical disc and hard disc

- Documentation from other patent offices maintained and/or considered part of the available search file;

Foreign design gazettes, journals and catalogues

V. Activities in the field of computerized search systems for industrial designs:

- In-house system (online/offline);

The JPO has been processing design application examination data, such designs in the public domain as carried in domestic and overseas journals, catalogues, etc. into electronic image data (including color graphic data). Other than Japanese design classification, the JPO has also generated D-term search key lists for multi-viewpoint classification for about 330 themes, assigning D-terms (search keys) to application data and reference materials in the public domain contained in respective themes in accordance with the relevant list.

The design retrieval system allows online searches of application data and reference materials in the public domain using the above design classification and D-terms as search keys. Retrieved document image data are displayed on a terminal screen from the image file server (color graphic data are displayed in color) and can be viewed quickly.

On the other hand, the system has been downsized and would have been ported to a client-server type system since January, 2000, operating without a host to achieve faster and more reliable retrieval and display.

- External database;

Nothing particular to report

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

The JPO operates the following major administrative systems.

a) The application processing system processes data on design applications and can inquire online about the legal status on design applications. When an examiner or an administrative officer inputs a design application number from the terminal, the system displays processing details about the application concerned and prints out results.

Besides, in the case of non-response from applicants against notifications of reason for refusal within a specified period from the date notified by the examiner, the system automatically lists them up and outputs notifications of refusal decisions.

The application processing system also automatically drafts various notifications and actions with respect to refusal decisions in the case of non-response from applicants and decisions for registration in case no opposition is filed.

In case applicants fail to respond the notifications of reason for refusal within a specified period after they were served with regard to given applications, these applications are listed and refusal decisions are automatically drafted according to list entries.

In this instance, file-wrappers applicable to the listed application numbers are singled out and combined with printed-out documents.

b) The transmission processing system records numeric data (e.g. application number, data drafted, examiner's code, etc.) entered by the examiner based on the notification of reason for refusal, refusal decision, etc. as code data with the aid of OCR, and further records Japanese-written portions such as attorney's name as facsimile image data.

This system prints out the patent office's notifications and actions taken by the applicant or attorney and sorts them in order. Finally, this system places these printouts in outward envelopes, weighs them and generates mail slips. This system also compiles statistics on mail transmission.

c) The registration processing system processes registration data and generates notifications and reproduces register entries.

d) The trial affairs processing system processes data on trials, and collects numeric data on trial ID number, category of notification, examiner's code, etc. using OCR, and prints out trial notifications.

e) The file wrapper control system, which manages design application file-wrappers for which final action was taken, provides information on the whereabouts of applicable file-wrappers or whether desired file wrappers have been reviewed or scrapped.

- Equipment used (hardware including terminals and network used, and software);

The JPO operates a comprehensive, integrated system, which incorporates the design processing system and the search system as subsystems.

VI. Administration of industrial design services available to the public (relating to facilities, e.g., for lodging applications, registering designs, assisting clients with search procedures, obtaining official publications and registry extracts):

- Planning, management, automation and safety;

The National Center for Industrial Property Information (NCIPI) collects design gazettes, etc. from 41 foreign patent offices (including 2 international organizations) through the international exchange program, in addition to JPO-published design gazettes, and offers them for public inspection.

The JPO offers free-of-charge a public inspection service for design gazettes, etc. through a national network of 96 local patent libraries including regional bureaus of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry(MITI) established in all prefectures across the country, and provides guidance and supervision to these public inspection facilities relating to sorting, preservation and use of gazettes and associated documents.

- Collection, management and preservation;

JPO-published design gazettes are sorted by Japanese design classification and bound into book form for long-term preservation. Also, routine checks are made for breakage, spoilage and missing pages or books including repair.

Foreign design gazettes are sorted by date issued or document number and bound into book form for optimum preservation.

- Public information services (including computer service);

A public inspection service of paper gazettes is offered by NCIPI and through the national network of 96 local patent libraries including the regional bureaus of MITI. In addition, NCIPI and regional bureaus of MITI provide an online public inspection service using the comprehensive document database.

The following online public inspection services are offered by NCIPI (33 terminals), Kinki Regional Bureau (6 terminals), Chubu Regional Bureau (2 terminals), Hokkaido Regional Bureau (1 terminal), Tohoku Regional Bureau (1 terminal), Chugoku Regional Bureau (1 terminal), Shikoku Regional Bureau (1 terminal) and Kyushu Regional Bureau (1 terminal) of MITI, and Okinawa General Office (1 terminal).

- 1) Inquiry by design registration number
- 2) Number indexing and inquiry service which checks other relevant numbers from application number, publication number, or trial ID number
- 3) Class search and inquiry by Japanese Design Classification
- 4) Document photocopying (at cost)

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of industrial design documentation and information:

- International or regional cooperation in exchange of design gazettes, etc;

The JPO exchanges design gazettes with 80 countries, sending design gazettes to 26 countries of these and receiving counterparts from 43 countries (including two international organizations).

- Exchange of machine-readable information (e.g., CD-ROM, MT data, etc.);

None

VIII. Matters concerning education and training including technical assistance to developing countries:

a) Cooperation with WIPO through trust funds;

(1) The JPO sent an expert to each of the Department of Intellectual Property of the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand and the National Office of Industrial Property of Vietnam to provide guidance and counseling on design examination.

(2) The JPO accepted a total of 40 trainees from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam to provide education and training on administration of intellectual property, enforcement of intellectual property rights, intellectual property information and office automation in the field of industrial property with the cooperation of the Japan Institute of Invention and Innovation (JIII).

b) Cooperation with developing countries through other organizations;

(1) Education and training of Government officers

With the cooperation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the JPO offered an industrial property administration training course for competent administrative officers in non-APEC developing countries (Cuba, India, Kyrgyz, Latvia, Peru, Turkey, Uruguay and Vietnam), and an industrial property training course for examiners from the APEC region etc.(the Philippines, Cuba, Egypt, India, Kenya, Lithuania, Peru, Slovakia, Turkey and Vietnam).

Also, the JPO offered an industrial property training course for administrative officers and examiners from the APEC region (China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines and Thailand). Besides, as part of the training course, the JPO gave lectures and practice on how to retrieve patent information.

The JPO accepted 2 to 4 trainees from Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam as counterparts of experts dispatched to these countries to provide education and training on computer-related technologies and on other specialized fields.

JPO also held the third APEC/PFP training course in Thailand, attended by 16 lecturers from six countries, one international organization and one region, and by 49 trainees from 10 APEC member states and one region.

Furthermore, the JPO hosted an industrial property examination training course for Taiwanese patent office examiners with the cooperation of the Interchange Association.

(2) Private-sector training programs

With the cooperation of the Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS) and JIII, JPO the lectured on the topic of industrial property rights (IPR) as a whole including retrieval of IPR data at a series of IPR training courses (9 sessions). The courses were attended by 136 trainees from Chile, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, India, Laos, Mongolia, Turkey and Vietnam.

c) Publication of intellectual property laws and ordinances on CD-ROMs

In order to assist the intellectual property offices of developing countries that are striving to upgrade domestic intellectual property laws and ordinances to assure implementation of the TRIPS obligation by 2000, the JPO carried out the "foreign industrial property system updating cooperation program" involving the translation of industrialized and developing nations' intellectual laws and ordinances into English and storing the English version on CD-ROMs.

In 1998, the JPO stored on CD-ROMs a total of 68 laws and ordinances (including the industrial property laws and enforcement rules), of Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Italy, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States, EPO, Taiwan and Japan, and distributed the CD-ROM versions free of charge to APEC member states and other developing countries.

The JPO is planning to expand the scope of recipient countries and laws and ordinances covered.

IX. Other relevant matters.

a) Locarno-Japan classification cross-reference table (concordance data)

The JPO produces the Locarno-Japan classification cross-reference table (concordance data) to assure effective use of Japanese design gazettes in foreign countries as examination data.

b) English version of Japanese design classification

The JPO is working on an English version of the Japanese design classification to assure effective use of Japanese design gazettes and concordance data abroad.