

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT ON 1998 PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES IN FINLAND

I Evolution of patent activities

As a consequence of accessing the EPC during March 1996, the total number of new patent applications filed in Finland was 2484. The number of foreign filings was 373. Finnish domestic applications increased by 3% meaning that the number of new domestic patent filings was 2484. Utility model applications increased 2 %.

In 1998 the Finnish Patent Office started developing a Finnish version of the EASY software package.

II Matters concerning the generation, production, distribution and use of primary and secondary sources of patent information

The Finnish Patent Office publishes patents (e.g. the B- and T-documents in paper form and B-documents also in microfiche form). In co-operation with Jouve, FIPO started to produce B-documents on CD ROM. The first discs from the backlog series, starting from the 1976 onwards, came out at the end of 1998.

FIPO does not print A-documents. For first level publications FIPO publishes abstracts with bibliographic data and drawings or chemical formulae. All application documents are made available for public inspection in the reading room of FIPO's library. Photocopies of application documents are delivered on demand.

The Finnish Patent Gazette and the Weekly List of New Applications are published and produced as reported previously.

The jukebox-network solution (12 jukeboxes, 1 file server, 1 Linux server and 3 jukebox servers) was installed. The jukeboxes contain over 6000 discs. Services will start in 1999, first as an inhouse service, later being offered also to outside clients.

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

Nothing new to report.

IV Search file establishment and upkeep

In 1998 the classified search file increased by 341 000 publications and the numerical collections by more than 1 million new documents, mostly on CD ROM. At the end of 1998 the library had about 7500 CD ROM discs.

The collection of patent documents now comprises of over 25.5 million documents.

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

Online databases were actively used in novelty searches. The B-DOOR version of EPOQUE II was implemented. The most frequently used databases were EPODOC and WPI. Most frequently used commercial databases were Chemical Abstract files and INSPEC.

Development work for implementing Common Software was started.

A jukebox-network solution was implemented in cooperation with the European Patent Office. The system includes 12 jukeboxes, each with a capacity of 600 disks.

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

In FIPO's library reading room all documents in the search and numerical files are available for public inspection. Library users have work stations to carry out in-house database searches as well as CD ROM databases, document discs, and an internet connection.

Photocopies of all patent documents are delivered on request. In 1998 14 % less copies were delivered than in the previous year. The reason for this can be the increasing patent document services on the internet.

The Library and Information Services Unit of FIPO monitor patent information of interest to the clients and carry out patent family, legal status, name and other industrial property related searches within the collections, foreign databanks and CD ROM databases.

Beside the collection of patent publications FIPO keeps an up-to-date library with over 18 500 monographs and scientific, technical and juridical journals. The library is open to the public.

Last year the Finnish Patent Office invested strongly in developing advisory services.

The aim has been to:

- Find ways for efficiently disseminating awareness of utilising patent-information
- Give tools to SME's for improving the technical quality of their R & D projects

In 1998 emphasis was placed on developing regional co-operation with the focus on the Employment and Economic Development Centres (EED-centres).

EED-centers are regional service points where the strengths of three different departments of state are combined. The departments of state involved are the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Labor.

Cooperation has started in fifteen centers during the autumn so that now you can have basic advisory services plus the application material for trade register, trade marks and design models, patents and utility models.

In five pilot-centers we started the services based on patent-information. The technical solution for this is transmitting data, voice and video between the EED-centre and Finnish Patent Office. Using the existing connection to the EPO and the video conference system, it is possible for the examiner in Helsinki to simultaneously advise the customer in some of the pilot-EED-centres, as well as conduct searches from the EPOQUE-system and share on-line the information with the customer.

The Finnish esp@cenet service was launched.

VII Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information

Weekly, FIPO sends magnetic tapes containing bibliographic data of Finnish applications. Basic data on the patent document database is also received weekly from EPO.

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

FIPO has a training program for the SMEs covering basics in patenting and utilizing patent information in R & D. The program contains eight courses during the year. Some customized courses have also taken place. Altogether there were 13 course events throughout 1998.

FIPO also trained the personnel of fifteen regional service points and five patent information libraries; the total amount of training/man days was almost one hundred.

FIPO arranged a traditional seminar "Patent information on Internet Age '99", targeted towards industry and patent attorneys. We also had five different marketing campaigns directed at industry and SMEs, information specialists and patent attorneys; altogether more than 50 000 named contacts.

During 1998 FIPO attended five trade fairs, organised three exhibitions, and had several seminars for different interest groups.

A multimedia-CD-ROM was created in co-operation with EPO.

FIPO participated to a project based on neural network technology, studying a search-method called WEBSOM. WEBSOM is a method for organising miscellaneous text documents into meaningful maps for searching and exploring. WEBSOM is based on the SOM (Self-Organising Map) algorithm that automatically organises the documents into a two-dimensional grid so that related documents appear close to each other. Tests were run with about 7 million patent abstracts.

IX Other activities

Nothing new to report