

Norwegian Patent Office (NPO)

Annual Technical Report on Patent Information Activities in 1998.

I Evolution of patent activities:

In 1998 the number of patent applications increased from 6161 applications in 1997 to 6219 applications in 1998. 1288 of these were filed by Norwegian residents. The increase is mainly in the fields of electrotechnology.

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

The NO Patent Gazette (Norsk patenttidende) is published once a week, and contains bibliographic information on new applications (AO), published patent applications (A-publication, 18 months from priority date) and granted patents (B1, B2, B3). The Patent Gazette is generated from our internal database with bibliographical information.

The NPO print and publish an abstract document containing bibliographic information, abstract and drawing or chemical formulae which is distributed to subscribers. The published patent applications are made available to the public for inspection in the reading room, or can be supplied as a photocopy on demand.

Granted patents are published and printed as B1 documents, or B2 or B3 documents after amendments. They are produced as paper documents and microfiches, and distributed to subscribers.

Our internal database contains bibliographical information for patents, patent applications and SPC's including changes in legal status and other information.

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

The NPO uses the IPC for filing new paper documents - also US patent documents. We seldom reclassify foreign documents, but file according to the IPC classification allotted at first place on the document by the publishing country. There is a continuous activity to reclassify the Norwegian patents according to the latest IPC classification.

None of the Norwegian patents are indexed or translated by the NPO. Patent applicants provide an abstract of the patent applications which is published after approval of the examiner.

The NPO has an internal database which can be searched on bibliographical data, with legal status, on patent and patent applications from 1976-. It also includes SPC's from 1994-.

IV Search file establishment and upkeep:

Most of the search files used by the examiners are stored on paper according to the IPC. Old files are not reclassified, that is, the examiners search documents filed according to present

and previous IPC versions. For really old material they also search files classified after US system (1900-1981) and old German and Dutch classification systems. Most of the files are continuously updated.

During 1998 the NPO stopped filing paper in some areas where online searching has replaced the manual searching.

We have stopped filing paper on:

Countrycode	Classification
AT	G
CH	G
DE	C (some minor classes are kept in paper)
DE	G
DE	H
EP	C (some minor classes are kept in paper)
EP	G
EP	H
FR	A-H (abstracts)
US	C (some minor classes are kept in paper)
US	G
US	H

During 1999 we expect to cease filing paper documents in favour of CD-ROMs in other IPC classes.

During 1998 the NPO established a jukebox solution for CD-ROM's which contains about 4000 CD's with US, EP-A, EP-B and WO CD's. The examiners order their documents from their own PC, browse on the screen, and print out if necessary. We expect to increase the capacity in 1999 gradually when we receive CD-ROMs instead of paper documents under the exchange agreement.

We received about 343.000 new patent documents on paper during 1998, and 13.000 units with patent publications on other medias. (CD-ROM and microfiche)

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

The NPO has an in-house database for patents with bibliographic data. The database covers all administrative management such as administrative support, update legal status and provide statistical data. The database is so far for internal use only, see however chapter IX for the automation plans.

The examiners use a lot of on-line databases for searching, for example Dialog, STN and Questel-Orbit. All examiners (and other staff) have access to Internet from their own PC.

The NPO uses Novell Network and TCP/IP communication. Client operating system is Windows 95.

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

In 1998 the Reading Room was reorganized and an Info Centre was opened. The Info Centre answers questions and inquiries and gives general information concerning industrial property rights to the public. (including assisting clients on searching procedures) The number of inquiries by telephone increased from about 6000 in 1997 to 12 700 in 1998. Most of the inquiries are legal information from the patent and trademark registers.

The public can visit the Info Centre and use two workstations for searching patent literature on several CD-ROM's (i.e. ESPACE ACCESS, DEPAROM KOMPAKT) and Internet. They are also allowed to use the internal database for Norwegian patents and applications. The public can use the classified file of Norwegian patents, and to a certain extent the public are also allowed to use the examiners classified file on other countries.

The public has access to any numerical document or gazette within the industrial property, or they can order photocopies.

The Search and Advisory Service undertook approximately 1000 paid commissions to carry out searches and examinations in technical literature, and 480 bibliographical searches via in-house and online databases. In addition approximately 400 trademark and design commissions were carried out.

VII Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information:

Our office exchange patent documents with about 20 patent offices and the EPO. Bibliographic data of Norwegian applications and patents are provided on a machine readable form to the EPO, EPIDOS.

The only accepted medium at present for filing patent applications in Norway is paper. We will however in the future make possible electronic delivery of applications. (see chapter IX)

For the time being, the NPO provides the Norwegian Patent Gazette on paper only, and the Norwegian Patents on paper and microfiche. The NPO intends to change to an electronic data carrier. (see chapter IX)

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

The NPO regularly organizes internal courses for our own examiners and other office staff in both industrial property rights and online searching.

Our Course Service held courses in industrial property rights for the public. Mainly staff from the industry, staff from other government agencies working in this area and patent attorneys participate in this courses. In 1998 there were 6 courses in industrial property rights and 23 lectures and seminars on industrial property rights. The Course Service is given much backing, and there is a great demand for the the courses.

Our office provides some technical assistance to developing countries by giving novelty searches free of charge. The assistance is administered by WIPO.

IX Other relevant matters:

The NPO is preparing to introduce electronic casework and is therefore about to make a comprehensive investment in IT, the SANT Programme. The SANT Programme started on 1 October 1998 and is estimated to be completed by the end of the year 2001

Using the SANT Programme, the NPO wishes to introduce a system that will support the following functions:

- New receipt of applications function for industrial rights and ordinary correspondence, including the recording, scanning and OCR treatment of received material. The NPO must also have the facility for electronic submission of material.
- Electronic document archive with journal and archive management.
- Electronic casework system, including electronic work-flow and the facility for electronic checking of applications for previously registered rights.
- An Internet solution permitting casework-related information in the document archive and the casework system to be accessed by the general public.
- Electronic document exchange, including the transmission of Norwegian patents to patent offices in other countries, receipt of other countries' patents and also the transmission of applications for industrial rights through international applications systems.