CWS/ATR/TM/2017/AU

Annual Technical Report on Trademark Information Activities in 2017 submitted by IP Australia

Please fill in your items before submitting your report

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TRADEMARK INFORMATION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Outline of main policies and plans aimed at development of trademark information activities and expected time frames for their realization

During 2017 IP Australia commenced the development of online training for use by new or acceding nations on the Madrid Protocol on behalf of WIPO. This initiative will be completed in 2018 and online modules will be delivered to WIPO. A new trade mark examination dashboard will be delivered to enhance the quality and timely processing of trade mark applications in preparation for the new trade mark administration system that will be implemented in 2018.

New projects launched or resumed this year in the context of the policies and plans mentioned above, short description: aims, partners, tasks

A number of other initiatives were under development during 2017. These include:

-The Australian Trade Mark Search was launched in February 2017. The search portal includes new features such as image searching and enhanced functionality to assist users of the TM system in Australia.

-TM Assist online tool aimed to educate customers to discover their proposed word based mark prior to applying for a trade mark was launched in 2017.

Main areas of trademark information activities and related information and communication technology (ICT) practices which were in the focus of attention last year

Significant work is underway to modernise and improve IP Australia's business systems and processing environment. This work will progressively deliver a more agile business environment that captures efficiencies and improves customer service delivery. The first of the organisation's four business lines (Designs) is now alive with a pilot of the new system which is known as RIO (Rights-In-One).

What is Rights-In-One?

RIO is predominantly an internal administrative system for electronically receiving, processing and monitoring IP right cases and their related customer interactions. The system includes document management, correspondence generation and will progressively introduce decision support functionality which span a complex array of quasi-legal business processes unique to the IP system.

Since online transactions now account for more than 98 per cent of IP Australia's approximately 850,000 customer service interactions each year, the RIO Program holds a key to achieving better customer service delivery and improved internal efficiencies.

RIO will eventually enable the decommissioning of more than twenty legacy systems including a thirty year old mainframe with commensurate maintenance and operational savings.

Key points for 2017

- Build for the second business line (Trademarks) for RIO commenced.

- The RIO program has delivered a suite of new specialist tools for trade mark examiners that allow them to manage their own search and research work in support of their examination decisions. The new tools include a new trade mark search system optimised for the needs of examiners, some automated research tools that inform examiners about facts of the trade mark (geographical location, dictionary meaning, common surname, etc.), tools to capture internet research, assess whether goods and services are acceptable, and allow examiners to raise objections and capture objection reasons in a 'case based' dashboard.

Statistics: changes in terms of application filings and registrations with respect to previous year; trends or areas experiencing rapid changes

Total TM Classes Filed

2016: 129,186

2017: 139,780

Percentage difference: TM applications increased by 8.2%

Madrid Applications Filed

2016: 25,859

2017: 34,152

Percentage difference: Madrid applications increased by 32.1%

Total Registrations

2016: 94,106

2017: 107,649

Percentage difference: Registrations in classes increased by 14.4%

Other matters and useful links (URLs): annual report of the Office, news page, statistics, etc.

Statistics

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/economics-ip

Annual Report

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/data-and-research/australian-ip-report

Latest news

Latest news is featured on the home page of IP Australia's website:

http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/

Trade marks Search System

https://search.ipaustralia.gov.au/trademarks/search/quick

II. SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO TRADEMARK INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Information and support provided by the Office to applicants regarding filing on paper and/or e-filing (instructions, seminars, etc.) - URLs

Planning, administration, automation, security

IP Australia's Contact Centre provides a central contact for customers to obtain information about a wide range of Intellectual Property issues. Customers contact the Call Centre via telephone, and online enquiry form with around 95% of matters of a general nature solved at the first point of contact.

Increasingly, IP Australia is using its web site as a means of providing an alternative means of public access to these services, such as electronic filing (currently approximately 99.6% of trade mark applications are filed online), registrations, renewals and trade mark searching via TRADE MARK SEARCH.

Launched in early 2016, IP Australia's Virtual Assistant 'Alex' is available 24/7 across a number of electronic platforms (primarily our corporate website) to answer general customer queries concerning IP Rights.   Virtual Assistants play an integral role in the provision of general information in response to customer queries concerning the products and services of the agency.

IP Australia held a number of seminars for small and start-up businesses providing information on TM value and the application process.

URLs of web pages of the Office's website for electronic filing of trademark applications

Filing:

http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/get-the-right-ip/eservices/

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trade-marks

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that provide information on business procedures such as: filing, publication, examination and registration procedures related to trademarks; opposition and appeal procedures related to trademarks; etc.

Forms & Publications:

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/tools-resources/trade-marks-forms

and

http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/epublish/epublish/search_page.jsp

Exam & Registration procedures:

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trade-marks

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trade-marks/understanding-trade-marks/trade-marks-examination-process

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that provide a description of information products and services offered by the Office (e.g., trademark search service(s) and trademark databases), as well as information on how to access and utilize them

The application process for trade marks:

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trade-marks

Applying for International trade marks:

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trade-marks/managing-your-trade-mark/international-trade-marks/getting-an-international-trade-mark

Trade mark searching
https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trade-marks/applying-for-a-trade-mark/searching-trade-marks

Availability of the application dossier in electronic form

As at 2017 IP Australia does not provide public access to the application dossier in an electronic form.

Matters concerning classifying
(i) Classification and reclassification activities; classification systems used, e.g., International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purposes of the Registration of Marks (Nice Classification), International Classification of the Figurative Elements of Marks (Vienna Classification), other classification
(ii) Use of electronic classification systems and pre-defined terms of the classification applied

Australia classifies goods and services according to the Nice Classification. Australia updated the 11th Edition of Nice on 1 January 2017, with all applications filed on or after that date being classified according to the 11th Edition.

Australia does not use the Vienna Classification scheme to classify the figurative elements of marks. Rather, figurative elements are classified (and searched) according to a glossary of device terms developed by the Office. For example, the WIPO device is indexed as follows:

1 ANNULUS 2 CONCENTRIC

3 HAND 4 PEN

5 BOOK,OPEN 6 GRAIN,EAR

7 VIOLIN 8 WHEEL,GEAR

9 MUSICAL-INSTRUMENT

10 CIRCLE+
11 ROUND 12 ROUND+

Each device term may then be used as a search criteria, either singularly or in combination, in order to locate marks with similar device characteristics.

Applicants are not obliged to use pre-defined classification terms. Checking of goods or services statements is performed manually where the statement is furnished by the applicant.

An on-line application form (e-form) allows selection of goods/services relating to a Trade mark via a set of pre-defined classification terms (Pick-list). About 46% of electronic filers use the Pick-list functionality. Goods and services statements provided via the Pick-list functionality require no manual checking.

The terms in the Pick-list are also those which form the basis of the Goods and Services help within Australian Trade Mark Search, the trade marks Office searchable database.

As mentioned above, the trade mark e-form gives applicants the choice to use a pre-defined set of terms (Pick-list) at reduced cost or alternatively to specify their own goods/services.

Matters concerning processing of different types of non-traditional marks (e.g., three-dimensional, motion, hologram, color mark, etc.)

Other activities

III. SOURCES OF TRADEMARK INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE

Main types of publications in the field of trademark information, outline of the content and medium (on paper, on CDs, online - URLs)

The Australian Official Journal of trade marks (the trade marks Journal) is published weekly. There are 50 issues per year. The Journal is available on-line, free of charge, via the IP Australia web site and contains both bibliographic text and images.

Examination Reports are generated electronically and are issued to customers online via IP Australia's online services.

The Australian Trade Mark Search system, contains bibliographic details, about trade marks and is available to the public, free of charge, via our website.

Official Gazettes: main types of announcements, frequency of publication, medium (on paper, on CDs, online, URL), etc.

The Official Journal contains the following announcements:
- Applications Filed

- Applications Accepted for Registration

- Amendments, Changes and Corrections

- Applications Lapsed, Withdrawn and Refused

- trade marks Registered

- Assignments, Transmittals and Transfers

- Cancellation of Entries in Register

- Extensions of Time

- Renewal of Registration of trade marks

- Opposition Proceedings

The IP Australia web site also provides access to a variety of forms and publications, IP Legislation, Official Notices, Hearings Decisions, Practice & Procedure Manuals, etc.

The Australian Official Journal of trade marks can be accessed at the following URL:

http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/epublish/epublish/search_page.jsp

The catalogue of bibliographic data on trade marks can be purchased from IP Australia.

Information on IP Australia's Bulk Data Products can be found at:

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/doing-business-us/bulk-data-products

Information products (coverage, medium, etc.) available to examiners, including external documentation and databases

Mass storage media and microforms used

The Office's bibliographic data is maintained on an ADABAS Natural (zOS) mainframe. Trade mark images (devices) are stored in a Unix file directory. The Office also utilises an e-case (Electronic Document Management System) repository which contains all documentation relating to the prosecution of applications.

Word processing and office automation

Current standard desktop software includes Microsoft Windows 7 with Microsoft Office 2010. The Office uses a document generation tool incorporating templates to generate much of its outgoing correspondence including notices and examination reports.

The Office's publication system is partially mainframe based and produces:
- camera ready copy of the Australian Official Journal of Trade marks;
- trade mark certificates and original register entries; and
- notices for trade mark applicants or their agents.

Techniques used for the generation of trademark information (printing, recording, photocomposing, etc.)

Bibliographic data (ADABAS as XEROX XICS output) and images from Unix are merged for Journal production.

Bibliographic data and processing

Bibliographic data is stored against each trade mark application in the ADABAS Natural business administration system. Transaction history records are created as this data is updated during the life-cycle of the trade mark. The business administration system allows access to this data via a variety of search utilities. Data from the ADABAS Natural system is extracted and transformed for use as the source of data for RIO Search for Trade Marks and Australian Trade Mark Search.

Information products (coverage, medium, etc.) and services available to external users; conditions of access (e.g., free of charge, subscription, etc.)

Data from the ADABAS Natural system is carried in real time to application relational database used as the source of data for RIO Search for Trade Marks and Australian Trade Mark Search.

RIO Search for Trade Marks is used by IP Australia's examiners to access bibliographic data, and trade mark images. Australian Trade Mark Search provides public access to bibliographic data, and trade mark images, via the IP Australia web site, and most customers now use this application in preference to the mainframe.

Australian Trade Mark Search is free of charge and is not subscription based.

Legal status information (kind of information, coverage, medium, etc.)

See "In House Systems" and above.

Other sources

IV. ICT SUPPORT TO SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO TRADEMARK INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Specific software tools supporting business procedures within the Office: general description, characteristics, advantages, possible improvements

TRACS –TRACS is an electronic document management and basic workflow system which manages the trade marks related documents and workflow for examiners, administrative staff and hearing officers.

RIO Search for Trade Marks - The RIO Search for Trade Marks database allows IP Australia's trade mark examiners to search for similar trade marks and provides the most important details of trade marks. The search results include words, images, owner details and goods and services claimed.

Examination Dashboard – The Examination Dashboard allows IP Australia's trade mark examiners to collate their search and research work under a single 'case-based' system. The Examination Dashboard creates a consolidated report containing trade mark examination search and research evidence.

DocGen - DocGen is a web-based application used by examiners to create examination reports and associated documents. DocGen was introduced in 2015.

Hardware used to supporting business processes of the Office

In-house systems (online/offline)

Searching for conflicting trade marks can be conducted via the mainframe application or TRADE MARK SEARCH. All searching by examiners is conducted through RIO Search for Trade Marks with search extracts then forming part of the search file in TRACS.

External databases

The Office has developed a simple utility to search a number of external databases - principally dictionaries, gazetteers, reference titles, etc. - so as to streamline distinctiveness searching. Examiners routinely search the Internet for the same purpose.

Cloud Hosting

The Office has developed a number of systems that run on cloud infrastructure. Cloud infrastructure has allowed IP Australia to deliver systems that have remained 100% available since their launch.

Equipment used (hardware, including the types of terminal and network used, and software), carriers used

The Canberra Office has an Ethernet-based LAN providing high speed bandwidth for each user desktop connection. A DMZ-based, DSD approved firewall using IAN ports (Internet IEFT Assigned Numbers) provides the secure means to allow access from internal systems/users to external entities such as the Internet or public/private organisations.

IP Australia's Home Based Workers and Out-posted Workers supplied with IPA hardware connect using Windows machines with Citrix Receiver – they have access to a Virtual Desktop that is supplied using Citrix XenDesktop. They also have the option to use published applications provided by Citrix XenApp. All of the Citrix infrastructure runs on VMWare vSphere sitting on Dell x86 Hardware. Users connecting using their own hardware may use a variety of devices, however, they still have access to a Virtual Desktop that is supplied using Citrix XenDesktop and have the option to use published applications provided by Citrix XenApp.

The current SOE includes Windows 7 with Office 2010 Professional Plus, IE 11 and Microsoft Outlook.

Internal databases: coverage, updates, interlinks with external sources

The primary business system is the ADABAS Natural mainframe application. TRACS - the Trade Mark Records, Applications and Correspondence System, TMARK, running on IBM zOS. TMARK interfaces to a number of satellite applications, e.g. DocGen for production of reports, XICS for publishing output, a couple of mid-range applications for EDI under the Madrid Protocol, an automated data capture utility (ADC) for capturing data received electronically, and TRADE MARK SEARCH. Document management is handled via TRACS.

All processing relating to the life-cycle of a trade mark (apart from financial processing) is conducted within this environment. The trade mark Office, along with the Patent and Design Offices in IP Australia is in the process of transitioning its business applications from the mainframe to our strategic server infrastructure environment. The current environment includes Sun Solaris, Oracle RDBMS, J2EE, BEA Weblogic, and Objective EDMS.

Establishment and maintenance of electronic search file: file building, updating, storage, documents from other offices included in the search file

File building

The EDMS e-case file is established for each trade mark application on filing. The EDMS has been developed in-house using a proprietary Australian EDMS product, Objective. The system is known as TRACS - the Trade Mark Records, Applications and Correspondence System.

Updating

The TRACS e-case file is updated (added to) as correspondence is received from the applicant/agent or third party, and additionally, as it is generated by the Office. TRACS also contains the search material considered by the examiner during the course of substantive examination, and will also contain information relating to Opposition matters if the application proceeds along this path.

Storage, including mass storage media

The TRACS case file stores a variety of Word, Adobe PDF and XML files.

Administrative management electronic systems (register, legal status, statistics, and administrative support)

See "In-house Systems", "Internal Databases" and "Information products…".

Other matters

V. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES AIMED TO SUPPORT USERS IN ACCESS AND EFFICIENT USE OF TRADEMARK INFORMATION

Office's library (if deals with trademark information): equipment, collection management, network of libraries in the country, cooperation with foreign libraries

Collection management, preservation

 All Australian trade mark records/documents are handled in accordance with Office procedures set down under Australian Law and archiving practices.

Information services available to the public (including computerized services and search files contained in libraries remote from your Office and trademark information posted by your Office on the World Wide Web)

Information services are available on the IP Australia website - http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/

Publications related to different business procedures and trademark information sources available to users, for example, books, brochures, Internet publications, etc.

IP Australia provides useful links and information on a wide range of information related to intellectual property via IP Australia's website. http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/

In 2017 we continued to develop our commercialisation content and enhanced our enforcement content to include IP mediation. IP Australia established an intellectual property (IP) Mediation Referral Service for IP right holders to access mediation providers as a low cost and effective alternative to resolve IP related disputes.

IP Australia partnered with TrademarkVision to develop Trade Mark Assist, an online tool using machine learning to provide real-time information specific to user circumstances. This online information tool aims to reduce complexity and common applicant errors to improve the quality of trade mark applications. TM Assist was launched in 2017 and the promotion campaign called 'build your business from the brand up' featured case studies from Australian businesses MOVUS and Institchu.

 'Build your business, protect your brand' is a content package designed to educate small businesses on the difference between business and company names, a domain name and a trade mark and the purposes and importance for all. The project was created in conjunction with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and Business.gov.au.

Cooperation with universities, technology and innovation support centers, etc.

Exporters

To support the relationship with the Export Council of Australia, IP Australia developed a range of international fact sheets available online to assist Australian businesses when approaching a global market.

The suite includes China, Canada, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, European Union and the USA. The fact sheets were reviewed and graphically refreshed in 2017 to ensure their ongoing value.

Our partnership with the Export Council of Australia continues in 2017 and our body of work involves collaborating on a range of content including web and various publications and communication activities, cross-promotion through digital channels (in particular social media channels) and support of events, programs and speaking opportunities, to assist Australian businesses when exporting.

Accountants

IP Australia has continued to team up with CPA Australia, an accounting body with more than 150 000 members, to deliver tailored information campaign to help accountants understand the benefits of identifying and protecting IP assets.

A focus for 2017 was to encourage accountants to have conversations with their clients around registered business names and trade marks.

Indigenous

Work that supports engagement with the indigenous business community is continuing. IP Australia is continuing to support the production of a documentary titled 'Clever Country'. The documentary will feature indigenous innovation throughout history and is expected to air in Australia and selected overseas countries in 2019. This initiative is expected to encourage both indigenous and non-indigenous people to better understand the important role intellectual property play in innovation.

SMEs

Partnerships with four incubation hubs continued in 2017/18. The partnerships focused on collaborating on a range of content including web and various publications and communication activities, cross-promotion through digital channels (in particular social media channels) and support of events, programs and speaking opportunities, to assist Australian start-up businesses. The 2017/18 incubation hub partnership is currently being evaluated and we are reviewing how to maximise these partnerships in the future.

In mid-2017 a formal webinar program was established. Throughout the five month period from August to December 2017, IP Australia held 10 webinars aimed at educating start-ups and SMEs about IP. 251 people attended the webinars and we received very positive feedback. Webinars were held on IP basics, as well as three IP rights: patents, trademarks and designs. Each webinar was delivered on a rotational basis in partnership with patent, trade mark and designs examiners within IP Australia. In addition to the IP rights webinars, a guest webinar was hosted by IP Australia's IP Counsellor to China, David Bennett in November.

Continues to have an active presence at large scale start-up events across Australia, including:

- Tech23 is a long-standing event showcasing world-class starts ups from around Australia. It is an excellent opportunity for IP Australian to educate and promote the value of IP to a large number of people within the Australian business community.
- StartCon, a two-day start-up conference, which brings together entrepreneurs, growth hackers, marketers, and investors. We received feedback from the Australian business community that we should engage in more face-to-face activities and StartCon 2017 was a great opportunity to achieve this.
- Pause fest, one of Australia's premier creative, tech and business events in 2017. It was here that our new Australian Trade Mark Search system was launched.

Universities

As part of IP Australia's University Research and Commercialisation Plan, a number of initiatives have been identified to increase IP education and awareness within the higher education sector.

In 2017 IP Australia co-hosted *Protect, publish, engage: stories about collaboration and commercialisation,* with the Australian National University (ANU). There were 74 attendees at the event from the academic, business, start-up and IP community. The speaker line-up included two esteemed local researchers, a commercialisation expert, and IP Australia's own patent specialist.

Representatives from IP Australia also participated in smaller workshops with a number of universities, for both students and research staff.

IP Australia, in collaboration with Swinburne University of Technology and the University of Melbourne, created two new trade mark databases in the past year.

First, a database of trade marks containing geographic location names. Words used in trade marks registered in Australia between 1990–2013 were compared with that from GeoNames database. This exercise resulted in more than four million potential location-name—trade-mark pairs, spread across 238 thousand geographical locations around the world. Exploratory analysis of this unique database has revealed interesting facts — as presented in Australian Intellectual Property Report 2018 — about the patterns and trends in location name use in Australian trade marks.

Second, a world-first international trade mark database called TM-Link. It enables matching of trade marks across jurisdictions and already includes more than 10 million trade marks from Australia, Canada, the European Union, New Zealand and the USA. TM-Link utilises a neural network to identify equivalent trade marks in different jurisdictions, and assign them a common identification marker which is then used to link trade marks across jurisdictions. Trade marks are first identified as potential matches by considering similar trade mark text, applicant names and Nice classes. The neural network then determines whether these images are a proper match, based on a combined image of both trade mark text and image using state-of-the-art imaging technology developed by Swinburne University of Technology. In addition, a trade mark labelling game has been developed to improve the training data on which the neural network classifies the information, presenting a pair of suggested matched trade marks and inviting the user to confirm the match.

The beta version of TM-Link was launched late 2017 and has attracted considerable interest from IP offices around the world as well as from trade mark attorney firms and large brand companies. IP Australia intends to make the database more accessible to users and progressively extend its scope to incorporate more trade mark data from other participating IP offices as they seek to join the project.

Secondary Students

IP Australia has partnered with Questacon, National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) and the CSIRO to deliver intellectual property workshops to talented and emerging young entrepreneurs.

The Questacon and IP Australia partnership provides an opportunity through the National Questacon Invention Convention (NQIC) to engage with high school students aged 14 to 18 who have demonstrated an interest in inventorship, innovation and entrepreneurship. These students are likely to pursue tertiary STEM qualifications and are encouraged to forge a career within the STEM fields.

IP Australia NYSF in 2017. The partnership provided an opportunity to engage with Year 12 students who had demonstrated their passion and talent for STEM and to help share their experiences back to their local communities. These young Australians were introduced to intellectual property concepts, with selected groups invited to further explore the role of patent examiners within the intellectual property system.

The BHP Billiton Science & Engineering Awards, organised by CSIRO, are Australia's most prestigious school science awards. This opportunity allows IP Australia to engage with 26 STEM orientated national student finalists. IP Australia was approached by CSIRO to participate in this event in 2016 and 2017 and voluntarily contributed our expertise to the program without providing funding through a formal partnership arrangement.

Education and training: training courses, e-learning modules (URLs), seminars, exhibitions, etc.

IP Stakeholders Forum (IPSF)

The IP Stakeholders Forum is the principal forum for consultation, discussion and information exchange on IP matters that relate to IP stakeholders. A key role of the forum is to validate IP Australia's self-assessments under the Regulatory Performance framework. During 2017 two IP Stakeholders Forums were held in Sydney.

Attorney Roundtable

In July 2017 IP Australia hosted a roundtable discussion with selected Sydney based attorneys. The roundtable was an opportunity to discuss the latest policy and program initiatives at IP Australia, and for attorneys to ask questions and provide feedback.

Other forums

IPBC

IP Australia partnered with the Intellectual Property Business Congress (IPBC) to deliver their Australasian conference in November 2017. The event was attended by over a hundred IP decision makers from across Australia, to discuss how IP owners can strategically use IP as a business asset.

IPTA / AIPPI

IP Australia was involved in leading attorney events and conferences, including IPTA and AIPPI, where our Director General participated as a speaker and panellist.

IP Summit

To commence in 2018, the IP Summit will be an annual event which draws together attendees from industry, academia, the IP profession and government to discuss and share information on IP issues of strategic importance.

Other activities

IP Australia's website

The IP Australia website (www.ipaustralia.gov.au) has 3.8 million unique visits per annum and is the front door to IP Australia's digital information and service transactions. It plays a critical role in educating and supporting our customers and facilitating transactions with the agency.

IP Toolkit

After a public consultation period the IP Toolkit was updated in 2017. The updated IP Toolkit is more interactive, user-friendly and accessible. The content has been streamlined, with a stronger focus on IP matters, and a new section dealing with IP Management Scenarios provides more detailed information on how the contract and term sheet templates can assist in collaboration projects.

The toolkit includes:

- a collaboration checklist covering the key issues that need to be considered
- contract, confidentiality agreement and term sheet templates
- guidance and information to help collaborating parties manage their IP.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) and IP Australia jointly developed the IP Toolkit.

Social Media

Social media allows IP Australia to enhance our corporate reputation and interact with our key stakeholders and react to situations in a timely and transparent manner.

As part of our continued efforts to improve and increase IP Australia's presence on social media channels, consistent with the IP Australia External Communication Strategy 2015-2018, we are undertaking a series of online promotional campaigns to help educate the public on awareness of IP rights.

Our agency has added value to customer communication with its active social media presence. With 5 social media accounts and over 17,400 followers collectively to date, our agency continues to see an increase in online engagement and building more meaningful relationships with customers, influencers and other relevant stakeholders.

Online Services (eServices) and B2B

IP Australia's eServices and B2B channels are the agency's customer electronic lodgement platforms:

- Online Services (eServices) is IP Australia's web-based self-service portal that is widely used by private applicants, small – medium businesses and attorney firms. This portal caters for every service request type available across Trade Marks, Designs, Patents and Plant Breeder's Rights.

There are currently over 170,000 registered eServices users.

- B2B (business-to-business) is an MFT file transfer product IP Australia supports for high-volume customers; enabling the direct transmission of large numbers of service requests directly into IP Australia's internal systems. B2B caters for the majority of service request types available across Trade Marks, Designs, Patents and Plant Breeder's Rights.

There are currently 16 customers that have integrated the B2B software into their case management network.

Since the release of these platforms in 2013, IP Australia's customer base has significantly changed its lodgement behaviour. There is currently a 99.6% uptake of the electronic platforms.

Electronic Correspondence Redesign and Behavioural Economics (BE) Enhancements

This release of electronic correspondence represented a first for the agency and assisted us to further streamline our processes and reduce our reliance on physical resources such as paper. 92% of correspondence (including IP Right certificates) is delivered to customers by way of either the Online Services (eServices) or B2B account.

In August 2016, IP Australia redesigned its trade marks correspondence incorporating behavioural insights strategies. Some of the improvements to our electronic correspondence included;

- usage of colours to highlight urgency to improve response rates and payments on time;
- improved layout and fonts to attract attention and inform users of the letter's purpose, such as clearer due dates and fees;
- implementation of timelines to help readers plan their response and understand the IP rights process and their application status; and
- simplified the content to allow readers to clearly understand the action required.

The electronic correspondence redesign has contributed to a significant reduction in call centre queries in key areas such as application fee and status for trade marks. Further, high volume transactions such as trade mark renewals have also seen a reduction in key trade mark enquires.

Using randomised controlled trials (RCT) statistically significant customer behavioural changes were observed, with more payments on time and more trade mark owners choosing to renew their trademarks.

Further, the correspondence redesign has seen an increase in customer's satisfaction of approximately 7% for 2018 in questions relating to quality of IP Australia correspondence.

Portfolio View and IP Folio

IP Australia has developed and released a beta (test) of *Portfolio View* for patents and trademarks within our Online Services (eServices) platform.

Portfolio View is an initiative designed to assist self-filers and small to medium-sized enterprises by displaying all intellectual property (IP) rights associated with the user in one simple and easy-to-use location. The new capability strengthens our digital offering for customers and can be accessed from a customer's Online Services (eServices) in one click.

The beta environment uses authentic/active data and provides customers with a list of their trademarks and patents (*where the correct ownership details have been provided by the customer).

As a result of Portfolio View's success and strong customer feedback for the capability to engage with IP Australia through mobile channels, IP Australia have developed and released of our first mobile app, IP Folio, in December 2017.

IP Folio is a digital wallet for IP rights within Australia. It further optimises IP Australia's rapidly evolving customer experience in interacting and transacting by providing an accessible, convenient and responsive means to access IP right information via a mobile app. This new mobile application is consistent with the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Service Standard principles.

IP Folio displays key information and notifications keeping you updated on the progress of your applications. We'll tell you when your application has been accepted, examined or requires renewal. You can also use IP Folio to search for pending or registered rights in Australia and 'watch' them within the app to receive notifications (alerts) for status changes.

The first release to the Apple App Store allowed customers to view and track any trade mark. An update was released in May 2018 that increased its features. It is now available to Android users from Google Play and customers can now view and track patent.

Ask Alex: IP Australia's Virtual Assistant

Launched in mid-2016, IP Australia's multi-award winning Virtual Assistant 'Alex' is available 24/7 across a number of electronic platforms (primarily our corporate website) to answer general customer queries concerning IP Rights.   Virtual Assistants play an integral role in the provision of general information in response to customer queries concerning the products and services of the agency.

Following successful results in her pilot trade mark phase, Alex's knowledgebase was enhanced enabling her to assist customers with their patents, PBRs and designs queries. Using the latest Virtual Assistant technology available to us, Alex will continue to learn and expand her knowledgebase. The more customers continue to interact and ask her questions, the more Alex will learn and develop.

We are continually improving Alex to ensure she remains a valuable customer service tool. Here is an overview of some of her Key achievements and enhancements:

- Over 95,000 customer interactions with the Virtual Assistant.
- Livechat – Alex can offer customers the option of being transferred to a live agent to continue their conversation for more complex queries (during the agency's hours of operation).
- AlexCoach – If an irregular or highly complex query cannot be resolved by Alex in the first instance, the query is automatically sent (during the agency's hours of operation only) to a 'hidden' agent for a response. Using machine learning software, the system will search through existing content on IP Australia's website to aid the 'hidden agent' by providing suggested responses which can be sent back to the customer in a timely manner.

Alex can be found on the agency's corporate website and also on IP Australia's Facebook page and the above mentioned *Portfolio View* beta site.

VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF TRADEMARK INFORMATION

International or regional cooperation in the exchange of trademark information, e.g., in the form of official gazettes

- IP Australia's Official Journal is available to all users on-line.
- IP Australia has been supplying its trademark data to WIPO's Global Brand Database.
- IP Australia has also been supplying its trademark picklist classification data to WIPO's Goods and Services Database Section.

International exchange of trademark information in machine-readable form (e.g., Official Gazettes)

- SGML/XML (MECA) exchange between IP Australia and the International Bureau;
- IP Australia uses the Madrid e-filing system as an office of origin

Participation in international or regional activities and projects related to trademark information

IP Australia presented at the following seminars and workshops in 2017

- Participated in the national workshop on Non-Traditional Marks in Manama, Bahrain (May 2017).
- Participated at the Worldwide Symposium on Geographical Indications, Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province China (July 2017).
- Participated at the Singapore-Australia "Workshop in Intellectual Property Rights (November 2017).

Assistance to developing countries

Through the WIPO Funds-in-Trust theme of developing the IP system, IP Australia has supported the following activities in 2017:

- Lao PDR : Development of a National IP Strategy

- Kiribati: Development of a National IP Strategy

- Niue: Development of a National IP Strategy

- Translation of Tool Box in national languages. This would include both standard contracts/protocols and presentations to be used by national institutions to facilitate appropriation of IP and knowledge transfer (Indonesia and Vietnam)

- National IP Marketing and Valuation (Indonesia, 10-13 July)

- Advanced National Successful Technology Licensing Workshop (Viet Nam, 25-29 September 2017)

- National IP Commercialization Program for Academic Institutions and National SMEs (Philippines, 19-21 September 2017

Other activities

- Participate in ST.96 for Madrid protocol XML and other trade mark XML standard
- Support Madrid e-filing system

VII. OTHER RELATED MATTERS

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that:

Provide information on legislation related to trademarks

Trade Marks Act: http://www.timebase.com.au/IPAust/index.cfm?id=tmact

Trade Marks Regulations: http://www.timebase.com.au/IPAust/index.cfm?id=tmreg

Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Act 2012
http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2012A00035

Contain the Annual Report of the Office

Annual Report

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/data-and-research/australian-ip-report

Contain trademark-related news regarding the Office

Latest news:

Latest news is featured on the home page of IP Australia's website (scroll to News and Community):

http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/

Subscription-based mailing lists

https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/news-and-community/stay-informed