

# SCIT.ATR.PI.2007.EP

## Annual Technical Report 2007 on Patent Information Activities submitted by EPO (SCIT /ATR/PI/2007/EP)

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.

The term "patent" covers utility models and Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in their Annual Technical Reports on Industrial Design Information Activities.

### I. Evolution of patent activities

In 2007, The EPO recorded 140 725 applications for European patents, a 3.9% increase over 2006. Of these, 62 100 were filed as direct European applications (+1.6%). As a consequence of the ongoing increase in the number of PCT international applications, the number of applications entering the European phase also increased by 5.8% to reach 78 600 in 2007.

The growth in filings was nevertheless different among the technical units of the IPC. The number of European applications in the field of Electric Communication Technique (H03, H04) is the highest with 15 650 applications (+5%). The units Engines & pumps (F01-F04,F15;4 624; +12.1%), Lighting and heating (F21-F28; 3 075; +9.7%), Health (A61-A63, excl A61k; 10 753; +9.6%) show some of the largest increases over the previous year among those unit with large numbers of applications. Eleven of the 31 technical units experienced at least a 5% growth over 2006.

Seven units registered fewer applications in 2006 than in 2005. Among these were Instruments III (G09-G12; 3 382; -15.2%).

In 2007, 56.4% of the applications in the European patent procedure, were applied for in the leading 10 IPC classes (A61, H04, G06, H01, C07, G01, B60, C12, C08, F16). In these classes taken together, the number of applications increased by 4.3% over the previous year.

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

#### Publishing, printing, copying (main types of publications of the Office in the field of patent information, etc.)

Following the implementation of a Quality Management System in 2005, data monitoring tasks, corrections and improvements continued successfully in 2007. The Global Patent Data Coverage (GPDC) report was published twice on the Internet in January and July. 2007 also saw the launch of the Non-Patent Data Coverage system (NPDC), aimed at systematically monitoring the timeliness and completeness of non-patent data.

#### Patent Applications:

In 2007 the EPO published 130 450 patent applications broken down according to the 31 Technical units of the International Patent Classification as shown in Table 1 attached.

Since the opening, the EPO published the following number of patent applications (see Table 2 attached).

#### Granted Patents:

In 2007, the EPO granted 54 699 patents.

Since the opening, the EPO has granted the following number of patents (see Table 3 attached).

#### Publication services:

##### 1. European publications API

Synergies between ESPACE products, the European Publication Server, and other Patent Information procedures have been identified and solutions bundled together into a common "European Publications API" with the twin objectives of cost control and quality enhancement.

This Java based API offers a wide range of commonly used functionality and is heavily based upon open source frameworks such as those available from the Apache foundation ([www.apache.org](http://www.apache.org))

In accordance with common industry practice, the European Publications API is aimed at programmers who need to design and build data processing systems. The EPO's user friendly GUI is called JTASK, and is used by operators that do not necessarily have a knowledge of the Java programming language to call sequences of API functions (i.e. a processing chain). Naturally, a JAVA expert could access the API functions directly without recourse to JTASK or by using an alternate GUI. In 2007 the JTASK console application was further enhanced to better manage the use of European Publications API features with better reporting and quality control features.

##### 2. European Publication Server

The European Publication Server became operational on 1 January 2005 and - in line with the decision of the President of the Office dated 22 December 2004 - has been the official medium for publication of all kinds of European patent documents since 1 April 2005.

An intuitive interface allows users to view and download the documents from the date of publication across a secure connection on the internet. All the different types of documents (A1/A2/A3/B1/B2/B3 and corresponding correction documents A8/A9/B8/B9) can be accessed via their application numbers, publication numbers, IPC classification symbols and the dates of publication.

Users can download documents published since 1 April 2005 in both PDF and SGML (2005) / XML (2006) formats. When included, documents published before 1 April 2005 are made available in the best available format(s).

Access to the European Publication Server across the internet is free of charge at:  
<https://publications.european-patent-office.org>

The European Publication Server is an up-to-date way of publishing the increasing number of European patent documents and - by offering the publications free of charge - is an important contribution to the "knowledge-based society" in Europe.

Improvements of the system in 2007 included various optimisations to enhance the search performance, and efforts to facilitate better indexing by web based search engines.

### 3. ESPACE Series and MIMOSA Software System

#### ESPACE EP

In the framework of the EP backfile data, converting to a unique standard format (XML and PDF) for loading onto the Publication server, the EPO analysed the completeness of the collection of published European patent documents. The result will be used to identify and close gaps.

The adaptations necessary to implement the EPC 2000 were completed on time in the production chain and the user interface for ESPACE EP.

#### ESPACE ACCESS EP / ACCESS EP-B / BULLETIN

The EPC 2000 had a big impact on the ESPACE series through the introduction of new document kinds e.g. B3 or INID Codes (27). The necessary adaptation had to be made on the basis of dummy data provided by the responsible EPO services. Nevertheless no major problem occurred when the first real cases were published.

#### ESPACE LEGAL

Phase one of the ESPACE LEGAL rebuild will be completed with the production of volume 2008/001 in May 2008. The goal of the rebuild is to make the legal texts available in HTML or PDF format, searchable with the powerful MIMOSA user interface while allowing users to browse and read texts on the screen as one would read and browse through a real book.

At the same time, data loading and extraction routines are being developed so that data extracted from the new EPO content management system could be used as input for ESPACE LEGAL production to ensure that exactly the same data is published on ESPACE LEGAL as on the EPO internet/intranet.

### 4. MIMOSA

#### MIMOSA Authoring

With the introduction of XML as a new standard in filing, processing and publishing patent documents, the EPO upgraded its ESPACE production lines to GTI V5 as a new search engine and MIMOSA 5 as a new user interface because only this combination could handle publications in both the old SGML and the new XML format.

This new enhanced Mimosa software system also allowed online distribution of ESPACE series with very little extra effort. It just required an Internet Access Control module (IAC) in the user interface for controlled, secure access to the online databases and a server module to make the ESPACE series accessible in an internet/intranet environment through a simple access control mechanism with one common user ID and password for all subscribers to one series.

In order to handle the huge number of patent documents published by the EPO since its opening in 1977, the next step towards upgrading the publication system was taken in the middle of 2007 with the upgrade of the database engine to GTI V6, which is capable of handling up to 100 million bibliographic records, including abstracts of more than 7 000 000 full text searchable documents, thus easily covering all European patent documents published.

The JTASK graphical user interface (used to configure most of the production steps in an ESPACE production chain) has been further enhanced by a "Patent Writer" module allowing for correction of incomplete or wrong input data. Non Patent Literature can even be added with a set of minimum bibliographic data to any chosen ESPACE collection. A statistics/reporting module summarising the results of all production steps in an easy to understand structure and standard document format was also added.

Planning has not yet begun for a graphical user interface for the most complex production step, the indexing.

#### MIMOSA Application Software

Recent versions of the widely used Windows operating system made installation use of the MIMOSA Application software difficult and cumbersome. Under Windows Vista, many of the operations performed when searching patent data with MIMOSA required administrator rights which is not feasible in an office environment with a strict security policy. Therefore, the application software had to be modified to no longer require administrator rights for installation and normal use. As an additional benefit, it is now even possible to run the MIMOSA application software without prior installation so that it can be launched directly from a data carrier such as a CD-/DVD-ROM or a USB device.

In the context of on-line use, it is possible to download the self-contained application software to the user's workstation and run it without installation. Further enhancements in the usability of the MIMOSA application software can also be envisaged which, on the basis of new web programming techniques, will make the user initiated download of the application software superfluous.

### 5. Under Development

In order to complete the data available in the ESPACE series, MIMOSA already provides links to other EPO online services e.g. Register plus and esp@cenet. These links were enhanced so that MIMOSA could make use of the OPS interface to retrieve additional data elements offered in

version 2.

The enhanced indexing capacity of GTI 6 together with new standard data services (DOCDB XML) helped to reactivate the old project of a Global database searchable under MIMOSA which had to be put on hold because of unsolvable data delivery and data preparation problems. A proof of concept based on an amended project specification, and taking the most recent improvements in the MIMOSA software and other EPO data exchange and online services into account, was successfully completed at the end of 2007.

[Table2](#) [Table3](#) [Table1](#)

### **(New) techniques used for the generation of patent information (printing, recording, photocomposing, Optical Character Recognition (OCR), etc.)**

In the framework of EPO's early-OCR project, 300 000 unpublished patent applications were made available via the search system EPOQUE in full-text form. These were not only EP and PCT applications but also French applications searched by the EPO.

Furthermore, around 600 000 documents were OCR converted in order to make all US, FR and GB patent publications text-searchable.

### **URLs of web pages of the Office's website that provide access to online publication of patent documents and gazettes, and to other primary and secondary sources of patent information, including patent publication servers and download of bulk patent data**

- <http://www.epo.org/patents/patent-information/european-patent-documents.html>
- <http://www.epo.org/patents/patent-information/european-patent-documents/publication-server.html>
- <http://www.epo.org/patents/patent-information/european-patent-documents/european-patent-bulletin.html>
- <http://www.epo.org/patents/patent-information/raw-data/download.html>

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

### **Classification<sup>1</sup>, preclassification<sup>2</sup> (if applicable), and reclassification<sup>3</sup> activities; Classification system used, e.g., International Patent Classification (IPC), other classification (please indicate whether or not patent documents are classified by your Office and, if so, which classification is used)**

During 2007, almost 1.4 million circulations of patent documents and about 40 000 non-patent literature documents to be classified were treated by EPO examiners.

The Examiner Assistance Programme (EAP), in which external staff is employed to assist examiners with reclassification work, was consolidated office-wide.

e-gate, a new tool for pre-classifying PCT files on line, was introduced.

In 2007, a major classification issue was the continued harmonisation of ECLA with the IPC to support further development of the reformed IPC.

In 2007, 600 requests for revision of the internal classification (DOC14) were received, resulting in more than 14 000 changes to ECLA.

Around 97% of all new documents are now loaded with IPC coding. Work on improving the overall coverage of the IPC Master Classification Database (MCD) continued in 2007 with the loading of several backfiles from national offices. Coverage of pre-2006 documents is currently about 92%. For the first time, the full IPC revision life-cycle was processed in 2007.

In 2007, the trilateral Harmony project started 7 sub-projects, another seven were forwarded to WIPO as IPC-AL revision requests, three AL projects came into force, and two were completed for introduction into the IPC in 2008. IPC block area C07D was harmonised at Trilateral and IPC level.

In 2007, the examiner exchange programme launched in 2005 on trilateral level continued and was held to be a very effective tool for making progress on Harmony projects.

Classification training for examiners continued on a large scale. Around 450 examiners attended the various courses. In addition to that, examiners from eight Member State Offices received in-house training on ECLA, bringing the total number of countries participating in this programme, launched in 2002, to 21. A publicly available e learning module on developments in ECLA and IPC8 was supplied to the European Patent Academy.

### **Bibliographic data and full-text processing**

The total number of full-text searchable patent documents has now passed 19 million: Over 1.5 million were added in 2007, the most important addition being the Canadian collection of text-searchable claims.

In the non-patent literature area in 2007, emphasis was placed on extending and updating existing databases. In total, 37 updates were added to 15 full-text databases in EPOQUE, and corresponding images were loaded into the facsimile archive BNS. A total of 1.3 million publications.

Specdocs, the repository of incoming collections, saw the addition of 180 000 documents from various sources like standard drafts collections.

The EPO subscribes in total to more than 1 300 technical journals. Almost 1 000 titles (including 560 open-access ones) were added to EVL, the EPO Virtual Library, which held over 6 000 titles at the end of 2007. Publishers are starting to promote back file collections of their journals more actively, which enriches the internal collections.

On the data management front, over 3.6 million documents were added or enhanced in the bibliographic master database DOCDB, which now contains the bibliographic data for over 65 million documents. Quality was also improved by around a million corrections made by the Front File Corrections team.

One of the major projects in 2007 was the upgrading of LATIPAT data to the quality and delivery reliability required for uploading to DOCDB. As a consequence Argentinean and Uruguayan data collections were moved into production and the data loading process for Cuban data went into acceptance for production. A further achievement was the uploading of Singaporean bibliographic data.

At the end of the year, the EPO citation database REFI contained more than 83 million references relating to over 12.5 million applications or publications. Quality control and correction of the cited references is handled by the Citation Data Flow team, which in 2007 performed 265 000 manual corrections on over six million cited documents.

In the second half of 2007, a major release of DOCDB/XML ST.36 exchange was prepared. A number of new features were added, the most prominent being the exchange of family information with each publication. DOCDB/XML ST.36 release 2.0 went live, providing subscribers with an image similar to that provided in esp@cenet.

The Data Flow Operations rebuild project aims at rebuilding the processes that handle incoming data flows from the national offices. It will allow for faster and more flexible processing of data and faster implementation of business rule change requests.

The Data Transfer Hub project aims at rationalising and improving the efficiency of data handling procedures for the EPO's patent information resources. The defined roles and views are now being tested and optimised to enhance the overall process. The project has resulted in the automation of a large number of data handling processes in a service-oriented approach.

In October, the fourth edition of the EPO Worldwide PATent STATistical database PATSTAT was rolled out to the OECD Taskforce on Patent Statistics and other subscribers.

## **IV. Search file establishment and upkeep**

7.6 million patent documents were added to the facsimile archive BNS in 2007, bringing the total number of facsimile documents in the EPO digital library to 78.8 million complete patent and non-patent documents. A number of new acquisitions were made, such as the addition of new countries and the extension of existing coverage. More than two million documents from China, Japan and Taiwan were added to BNS in 2007, along with over 1.3 million NPL articles.

At the end of 2007, the paperless project came to an end with the final move to a fully electronic patent collection. Since the start of the project in 2001, about 22 million paper documents taking up 3 679 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space had been checked, and missing documents had been loaded.

The EPODOC database holds bibliographic data and abstracts from more than 81 countries or organisations issuing patents and provides access to more than 60 million published patent applications. As EPODOC is updated daily, a newly allocated classification code for example will already be present in EPODOC the following day.

EPODOC contains 23.5 million abstracts: 20.4 million in English, 1.86 million in French, 830 000 in German and 329 000 in other languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Dutch or Romanian.

The eight million English abstracts covering the Japanese collection in EPODOC allow users to search the Japanese collection for Japanese FTerms and/or FI Classification symbols in combination with words or keywords.

The patent full-text databases contain more than 21.7 million full-text descriptions and claims. New databases containing Canadian full-text documents were added in 2007.

At the end of 2007, the databases with the OCR full text of unpublished patent applications contained over 238 000 EP, 170 000 WO and 32 000 French applications.

With the addition of WPI (more than 16 million Derwent records and 14 million abstracts), the entire collection of databases in EPOQUE thus holds over 151 million searchable records pertaining to patents or patent applications.

In the area of NPL databases, the most important academic databases such as IEEE, IEE, AIP, IOP and Elsevier are included in the EPOQUE portfolio. Furthermore, since 2005, efforts have been concentrated on the loading of specific databases which are highly relevant in some smaller technical fields, and 20 of them are already available in EPOQUE. New NPL databases added in 2007 offer publications from Open Access Central, journal articles from Springer Verlag, and MPEG and IEEE standards.

2007 figures for bibliographic, full text and facsimile databases:

117 different databases (110 in 2006) are available internally with a total of 371 million records, 11% more than in 2006.

Data relating to over 60 million published patent documents is available in the EPO master patent database DOCDB.

26 million full-text searchable records (21.7 million patent and 4.3 million non-patent literature articles) can be searched and accessed by EPO examiners, a 13% increase over 2006.

78.8 million facsimile documents are available in the EPO digital library.

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

The new structure "Information Management (IM)", regrouping all automation services for the EPO, including the setting up and maintenance of information systems and the production and management of tools for the Office, was introduced in 2007. IM is a merger of the former Principal Directorate (PD) Information Systems and PD Tools and Documentation. The former PD Tools and Documentation has now become PD Patent Grant Automation (PG).

To support the Office in its mission, the new PD is focussing on two key services indispensable in the patent granting process: One of the world's most comprehensive collection of technical documentation requires continuous management and extension to meet the ever increasing trends in documentation growth from Asia, or other evolving regions, while ensuring accessibility, highest quality standards and providing data enhancement to the benefit of the users.

Secondly, the specialised automation tools for search, examination and formalities tasks around the patent granting workflow require regular adaptation and update for the daily work of both, our internal and external users. Providing the needed end-to-end functionalities while observing ergonomics and usability puts a high demand on innovation and excellence in the development and continuous improvement of these tools.

EPOQUE is the EPO's search tool. The EPOQUE retrieval service is growing steadily in number of available databases and the number of records. By the end of 2007, more than 371 million records in 117 EPOQUE databases were fully searchable in the INTERNAL session.

### **In-house systems (online/offline)**

Three new versions of SEA (Suite of Examiner Applications) were rolled out to examiners in 2007, adding further functionalities in various applications and improving ergonomics.

The number of EPOQUE users rose by 4.3% in 2007 compared to 2006. 60% of the search activity in the EPO was done in EPODOC, 8.3% and 10.6% in the NPL databases. Search activity in full-text databases grew by 10%.

An even more significant picture of EPOQUE usage is provided by the number of displayed documents, which increased by 6.6% compared with the 2006 figure. Nearly 390 million BNS pages were displayed in 2007.

EPOQUE World, used by the EPO member states and accessed via PATNET, saw major releases as well. Full production access was provided to Brazil, Mexico and Norway. The USPTO, the JPO, WIPO, the EAPO, Rospatent and the patent offices of Canada, the Ukraine and Australia have test access for five users, with Croatia and Thailand showing interest in obtaining test access.

The EXTCOM system that went into production in April 2006 has improved logon management and the preparation of statistical information on usage per external host. In 2007, as in 2006, 98% of external searching was done in STN, primarily in the CAS databases.

As regards the rebuild of a new EPOQUE back-end search engine, the first incremental roll-out took place in early 2007 as scheduled, followed by progressive migration of all EPO users. The EPOQUE World service was migrated in June 2007. Both services have been running in production ever since with remarkable stability and performance. Every day, more than 2.55 million EPOQUE transactions are handled, with an average response time of less than 400 ms. Full migration to the new engine is expected in 2008.

Usage of the EPOQUE Viewer to display data

EPOQUE and BNS Main display increased by 6.6% in 2007.  
390 million pages were viewed in 2007.  
There were 5 409 monthly users on average.

### **Administrative management systems (e.g., register, legal status, statistics and administrative support)**

The role of directorate Examination and Formalities (EF) is to maintain and improve the key systems which provide end-to-end support for the EPO's patent granting business processes. This includes administration of formalities work on all files from initial receipt through to file completion and the management, production and dispatch of all examiner actions. All examiners and formalities staff use these systems on a daily basis. The improvements implemented by EF are usually negotiated and specified by application managers appointed for that task who report directly to business management.

The PIPS Rebuild, known under the project name MASAI (Main Administration Support for Activities in International Applications) went into production in March 2007 as a major component of the AMES-5 release.

The entry into force of EPC 2000 on 13 December 2007 had a major impact on many EPO systems, and on EPASYS in particular. Customer requirements were formulated and analysed with a view to preparing detailed specifications for the development teams. The bulk of these requirements went into production in November 2007 as a major component of the AMES-6 release.

FICO, which handles file inspection and the provision of certified copies, was one of the last smaller transactions to be converted from IDMS to DB2 and incorporated in JDEWP within Madras. It is scheduled to go into production as a component of the AMES-7 release in the second quarter of 2008.

The AERO project focuses on high-priority remediation work undertaken within the context of Computer Ergonomics Task Force and the Office health policy. Analysis, design, specification and build for Phase 1 were carried out in 2007 for development and implementation in 2008.

Due to the pressures of EPC 2000, fewer maintenance releases took place in 2007. Nevertheless, a total of 350 issues were resolved.

The Build Server project delivered a common build process for SEA and MADRAS applications and an implementation in the form of a build server that automates this process.

Changes were required to support several interfaces for DG 3, procedural administration and the rebuilt RFAC (Refund management for Finance).

Major progress was made in the EPODOS project that aims at integrating the tools for drafting a search report with the examination tools. The GUI design and core business functions were delivered in 2007. The first group of users will start working with EPODOS in 2008.

During 2007, the EPO started to issue English language Written Opinions with the search reports prepared for four more national offices: NL, TR, LU and BE.

## **VI. Administration of the industrial property office library, and information products 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)**

Patent information services:

esp@cenet:

The esp@cenet developments during 2007 concentrated on measures to ensure availability and ease of maintenance of the back-end systems. These developments are resource intensive, but are vital for the continuation of the esp@cenet service against the background of database rebuild and implementation of a new search engine. The dependency on the final deployment of the new search engine caused significant delays in the implementation of this major re-engineering project.

According to the present planning, the new search engine will be available only at the end of 2nd quarter 2008, thus allowing for a release of the esp@cenet rebuild only during the 3rd quarter 2008. Within this rebuild, a number of new features will be implemented, including:

- an increase in the number of documents that can be stored in my patents list,
- a relaxation of the page limit for PDF files downloaded from esp@cenet
- extended citations to other authorities than EP/WO export and saving of displayed lists
- complete bibliography display of all the publication steps (A2, A3, B1, etc.)
- date range search
- one line search form (à la google).

Open Patent Services (OPS):

In 2003 the Open Patent Services (OPS) were introduced, a web service giving access to the same data as esp@cenet but catering for machine-to-machine communication, thereby allowing automated (robot) access to be shifted from the human dedicated esp@cenet service to a more specific platform.

Meanwhile the OPS usage reached levels beyond our expectation and the users themselves made it clear which missing features OPS should provide additionally, possibly with a more modern architecture. This led the EPO to start developments in 2007 aiming at completely revising and enhancing the OPS (OPS V.2), following the evolution of standards in patent information and web services practices. These developments include:

- complete revision of INPUT XML (going to "document literal")
- complete revision of OUTPUT XML (adapting to WIPO St. 36 whenever possible)
- adding new services, notably:
  - introduce a search or filter function similar to esp@cenet (BIBLIO SEARCH)
  - provide the list of equivalents (also known as "simple family") of a specific document (EQUIVALENTS INQUIRY)
  - provide indication whether for a certain document description and/or claims are available (FULL TEXT INQUIRY)
  - change of the domain name: the new URL for the production environment will be <http://ops.epo.org>
  - further implement the "fair use" policy so as to be able to enforce the principles as expressed in the "fair use" charter
  - improve data delivery (extended citations coverage; provision of "family-ID")

The release plan for OPS V.2 saw an extended public beta testing phase by the end of 1st quarter 2008 and a production release towards the end of the year.

It is clear that users will need some time to adapt the current programs and software codes to the revised OPS. For this reason it is planned to provide the existing OPS V1 in parallel for about 6 months after the V2 release.

3. International Patent Documentation (INPADOC):

In 2007 patents and utility models from Uruguay were added to the patent family database. For legal status, the necessary modifications for EPC2000 were implemented. Concerning the validity of European patents in the EPC member states, the inclusion of information from the fee administration system took place. This covers all EPC member states. The bibliographic database now contains 78 patent issuing authorities and the legal status database contains 48 patent issuing authorities.

The WIPO-EPO project aimed at making available as much data as possible for the PCT entry and non-entry into the national phase has become a regular process of data exchange between EPO and WIPO.

Week 10/2007 saw a new release of DOCDB XML (also known as bibliographic patent data resource). Release 2.0 introduced a patent family identifier and extended the abstracts coverage beyond the official languages of the EPO. All abstracts available at the EPO form now part of the DOCDB XML exchange.

## **VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information**

### **International or regional cooperation in the exchange of machine-readable information, e.g., bibliographic data, abstract and/or full text information**

EPO Front Office continued to be a valuable partner for data exchange and acquisition activities for more than 100 national and regional patent offices. It continued to strive for increased efficiency and timeliness of data delivery, which has already had a positive effect on the avoidance of delays. It acquired new collections for the EPO, for example Chinese OCR full-text documents and Croatian images in BNS, the facsimile repository.

### **VIII. Other relevant matters concerning education and training in, and promotion of, the use of patent information, including technical assistance to developing countries (please indicate URLs of web pages of the Office's website wherever appropriate)**

The EPO website:

The EPO website ([www.epo.org](http://www.epo.org)) continues to grow in popularity, recording around 400 000 visits per month from 200 000 different IP addresses. Many pages in the patent information area consistently rank among the most popular on the website.

The website was re-launched in April 2007, integrating a number of "microsites", including the one previously dedicated to patent information, and introducing a new "look and feel" in line with the Office's visual identity. A Content Management System (CMS) was introduced, allowing non-technical staff to edit and update content on the website.

Further enhancements are planned for 2008, including the introduction of PDF searching across the site, a searchable calendar of oral proceedings, video and audio broadcasts and the integration of Open Patent Services (OPS) into the main website.

The internet is a great medium for promoting patent information products and services, enhancing public patent awareness and introducing visitors to the concept of patentability. This should lead to an increase in the number of users of patent information and subsequently the patent system. The range of EPO services accessible online also includes [esp@cenet](mailto:esp@cenet) and the Online Services website.

### **Training courses for national and foreign participants, use of audiovisual means**

The benefits of e-learning modules were highlighted by the increased usage of the [esp@cenet](mailto:esp@cenet) assistant (<http://www.epo.org/wbt/espacenet/>), which was consulted more than 735 000 times.

Live online training ("Virtual classroom") courses which allow users around the world to take part in live instructor-lead sessions, connected to the trainer and other participants by internet, were relaunched (<http://www.epo.org/patents/learning/pi-training.html>) with courses about EPO online patent information products and services and [esp@cenet](mailto:esp@cenet) in particular.

On-site training continued, with the four-day patent information beginners' seminar held twice and the launch of an advanced patent information seminar. In all, some 1 500 people took part in 50 training events, including new courses such as a workshop on patent valuation tools, designed to help users assess their own strengths and weaknesses in patent portfolio management (<http://www.epo.org/topics/ip-events/patent-event-search.html>).

#### **PATLIB2007 Conference**

The PATLIB 2007 conference was held in Sevilla (Spain) from 14 to 16 May 2007 and was co-organised with the Spanish Patent Office and the Seville PATLIB Centre (IDEA).

456 participants from 41 countries, 29 of them being member states, presented projects, initiatives, and exchanged experiences under the conference slogan "PATLIB, your partner in innovation". Furthermore, the conference hosted an exhibition with 16 exhibitors. The PATLIB2007 proceedings are available on the EPO homepage.

PATLIB2008 will take place in Warsaw, Poland, from 28-30 May, 2008.

The PATLIB network currently has over 330 centres.

## **IX. Other general information related to the Office that is available on the Internet -- URLs of web pages of the Office's website that:**

### **provide information on legislation related to patents**

<http://www.epo.org/patents/law.html>  
<http://www.epo.org/patents/law/legal-texts.html>  
<http://www.epo.org/patents/law/legislative-initiatives.html>

### **contain the Annual Report of the Office**

<http://www.epo.org/about-us/office/annual-reports.html>

### **contain patent-related news regarding the Office**

<http://www.epo.org/topics/news.html>  
<http://www.epo.org/patents/updates.html>

## **X. Other relevant matters**

The aim of the life sciences programme is to provide means of handling biological data from filing to publication and to supply knowledge and scientific information in biotechnology. In 2007, about 5 500 patent applications containing biological sequences were handled. More than 40 000 sequence searches were performed in total, 98% of them by the EPO.

Under the FELICS project (Free European Life-science Information and Computational Services), progress was made towards the delivery of a new sequence submission tool and a non-redundant patent sequence database. In the field of chemistry, the foundations were laid for the extraction of chemical names from patents.

Further information on EPO data issues can be obtained from [DOCHELP@EPO.ORG](mailto:DOCHELP@EPO.ORG).

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | Classification is allotting one or more classification symbols (e.g., IPC symbols) to a patent application, either before or during search and examination, which symbols are then published with the patent application. |
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2.	Preclassification is allotting an initial broad classification symbol (e.g., IPC class or subclass, or administrative unit) to a patent application, using human or automated means for internal administrative purposes (e.g., routing an application to the appropriate examiner). Usually preclassification is applied by the administration of an office.
3.	Reclassification is the reconsideration and usually the replacement of one or more previously allotted classification symbols to a patent document, following a revision and the entry into force of a new version of the Classification system (e.g., the IPC). The new symbols are available on patent databases.