

SCIT.ATR.ID.2002.TT

Annual Technical Report 2002 on Industrial Design Information Activities submitted by Trinidad and Tobago (SCIT/ATR/ID/2002/TT)

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 expression "industrial designs" covers industrial designs and models. Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in this series of Annual Technical Reports.

I. Evolution of registration activities

Changes experienced in terms of application filings and grants (registrations) with respect to the previous year

As businesses are not yet fully aware of the value of industrial designs, there has typically been a very low use of it. In 2001, there were 4 applications while in 2002, there was a single application. The figure usually is less than 10 per year and there is as yet no clear pattern. However, 18 industrial designs were granted in 2002. Most of these were applied for since 1998 under the new law that came into effect on December 1, 1997.

Trends or areas experiencing rapid changes with respect to the previous year

There tend to be as many local as foreign applicants for industrial designs. The range of products for which protection was applied is quite extensive and includes water tank, perfume bottles, automobiles, watchcases and advertising fixtures. Only in 2003 did the Office receive applications related to clothing and costumes.

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

Publishing, including printing, copying techniques and electronic printing

The Intellectual Property Office of Trinidad and Tobago publishes industrial design in the government Gazette and a widely read newspaper only upon grant. Publication can be deferred up to 12 months. These publications contain bibliographic information and one representative drawing. The Office will also provide bibliographic information on applications upon request but minus drawings. Draft and certified copies of granted industrial design can also be ordered.

Main types of announcements of the Office in the field of industrial design information

The Office conducts public education exercises with visits to schools, businesses, institutions and interest groups in an attempt to promulgate the value and use of industrial design information. Officers also deal with individual requests.

Mass storage media and microforms used

The present intellectual property and other legislation require that the main records be submitted and stored on paper. The industrial design data is not as yet computerised.

Databases and office automation

The Office is fully computerised with nearly every member of the 35-member staff having access to PCs. It is a mixed network with Microsoft Windows NT and 2000 servers with Windows NT, 2000 and XP Professional clients. The main office productivity software is Microsoft Office 2000.

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

Classification and reclassification activities; Classification system used, e.g., International Classification for Industrial Designs (Locarno Classification), other classification (please indicate whether industrial designs are classified by your Office and, if so, which classification is used)

All industrial design applications are classified internally according to the Locarno Classification system. A national filing requirement is that English is the only language for filing therefore all non-English specifications have to be translated.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

File building

Presently there is a single file per application and this is available only to staff for searching purposes. Searches can be conducted on industrial designs registers and copies of filed documents subsequently ordered. Typically these filed documents exclude any certificates on file.

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

In-house systems (online/offline)

The industrial design data is not computerised as yet.

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

Planning, administration, automation, security

The Intellectual Property Office is located on an entire floor within a building housing other departments of the Ministry. The vault is on the ground floor next to another vault but the vault area is not shared. The operations of the Intellectual Property Office are situated "behind" the front desk or receiving office. From there inquiries for further information are funneled and persons directed to relevant members of staff or library facilities for searches of the registers to be conducted. Materials from the vault are requested by members of staff for the public to use. By and large the office is laid out to limit the unnecessary penetration by members of the public into the heart of the operations to minimize their possible contact with confidential case files and the data servers. Besides security personnel in the ground lobby, there are also security personnel on the Office floor. The entire building has 24/7 security. The automated system and the web servers are hosted in-house to retain control and security of the physical infrastructure.

Collection management, preservation

Physical documents are housed in an air-conditioned vault when not in use by staff. Industrial designs are arranged according to application number but specially tagged to indicate grant. Technical documents and case files do not leave the custody of the Intellectual Property Office for public lending or otherwise.

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

A technical library was recently established primarily to provide access to patent technical information in on-line databases and the CD and DVD-ROM collections loaded into a jukebox and procedural information on plant breeders' rights. There are no special facilities for industrial design searches. Some technical information is also available on the web site at www.ipa.gov.tt.

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

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

There is presently no exchange of industrial design documentation.

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

Promotional activities (seminars, exhibitions, visits, advertising, etc.)

Every year, about 4 national and/or regional activities are hosted, often in conjunction with WIPO. The weeks preceding World Intellectual Property Day are used to host several activities culminating in an open house display at the Office.

Assistance to developing countries (sending consultants and experts, receiving trainees from developing countries, etc.)

The Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office, because of its level of development, hosts, in an on-going fashion, many study visits by personnel from other countries both regional neighbours and from as far away as Mongolia. Also its professional and technical staff are frequently asked by WIPO to conduct missions to the other countries in the Caribbean to deal with needs assessment, trademarks, PCT and automation issues but not industrial design issues as yet.

IX. Other relevant matters