

# SCIT.ATR.PI.2002.IE

## Annual Technical Report 2002 on Patent Information Activities submitted by Ireland (SCIT /ATR/PI/2002/IE)

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

#### Changes experienced in terms of application filings and grants with respect to the previous year

In 2002 the Irish Office received 982 patent applications, a decrease of 16% compared to 2001. 914 of these applications, i.e. 93%, were received from applicants within the State and 278 claimed priority under the Paris Convention. The Patents Act, 1992, offers applicants the choice of a ten year (short-term) or twenty year (full-term) patent – in 2002 approximately 47% of applicants opted for the full-term patent.

The Office acts as a receiving office for European (EP) applications and also for applications filed under the Patent Co-operation Treaty (PCT). The number of EP applications filed in 2002 was 119, a reduction of 24% over the 2001 figure. The number of PCT applications filed went up slightly from 162 to 175, an increase of 8% over the same period.

The number of European patent applications filed with the EPO in 2002 and designating Ireland was 96,779, a reduction of almost 7% on the 2001 figure.

The Office granted 617 national patents, an increase of almost 12% over the figure for 2001.

In 2002, the number of granted European patents designating Ireland was 13,573, an increase of 71% over the 2001 figure.

A total of 35 applications for Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPC's) were received in 2002 and 11 SPCs were granted.

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

The Office publishes the Patents Office Journal once a fortnight and this contains bibliographic information (applicant name, title of invention, date of filing, priority date where applicable and the application number) on new applications, published patent applications (i.e. 18 months after the priority date) and granted patents. The list of granted patents includes those granted both by our Office and by the EPO having Ireland as a designated state.

Since 1995, the Office has begun to publish patent applications on a series of CD-ROMs, the ESPACE-IE series, in co-operation with the EPO and using the MIMOSA software. This series contains searchable bibliographic data and abstracts with the complete document available in facsimile format. At present the collection covers the years 1995 to 1999 inclusive and it is expected that the disks covering the period 2000 to 2002 inclusive will be available before the end of 2003, with the 2003 disk itself appearing early in 2004. All patent applications are also published in paper form. The Office also sends bibliographic data and abstracts of all published applications in electronic form on a fortnightly basis to the EPO for incorporation onto the esp@cenet search facility.

Since June 2000, granted patent specifications are only published in pdf format on CD-ROM and are retrievable using the grant number. The Office is currently having its backfile of all granted specifications from 1927 to June 2000 scanned by the EPO and this is due to be available by the end of 2003.

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

All abstracts that are submitted in English by applicants are checked and modified if necessary by the patent examiners.

All patent applications are classified according to the latest edition of the IPC (Seventh Edition). No indexing schemes are used in the Office. At the present time no reclassification is performed whenever a new version of the IPC is published.

### IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

Because of the small number of patent examiners, the Office has contracted out the searching of national applications and no longer maintains a search file.

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

The Office maintains an internal Patents database that contains all bibliographic data and legal status for Irish patents. The database can be searched free of charge by the public at our Information Centres in Kilkenny and Dublin. The Office's website now offers 3 facilities for accessing Irish patent information online:- the Patent Register Search allows access to current register information using the application or grant number; the Patent Database Search provides access to the patent collection via the bibliographic data, title and abstract fields; the SPC Database Search provides information on all published SPC information via the bibliographic data, product type and product identity.

The Office has a CD-ROM/DVD jukebox network with a capacity of 4400 disks and this contains the major collections of patent documents e.g. EP-A, WORLD, GlobalPat, etc. These collections may be searched using the MIMOSA software and are available to public visitors to the information centres in Kilkenny and Dublin. The patent examiners and the information centre staff also have access via an ISDN line to the EPOQUE search and BNS document retrieval systems of the EPO.

Since the latter part of 2002 the Office Journal has been published electronically in both HTML and pdf versions on the Office's website and a search/browse facility is also available.

The Office uses the PTOLEMY administrative management system with the application server running under Microsoft Windows NT linked to a SQL database and client workstations running under Windows 2000. The network uses Novell and TCP/IP.

## **VI. Administration of the industrial property office library 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)**

The Office has two Information Centres, one at the headquarters in Kilkenny and the other in Dublin. The centre in Dublin also serves as a Receiving Office for national, EP and PCT patent applications. Both centres provide general information concerning intellectual property rights to the public as well as dealing with specific queries such as the provision of certified copies of documents, etc. Workstations are available giving access to the Register of Patents, the Patents Public Search facility and the jukebox CD-ROM/DVD network. Paper copies of patent documents going back to 1920 for most major countries can be supplied on request.

The Office website is linked into the EPO esp@cenet search facility offering the possibility of accessing over 30 million documents online including Irish patent information.

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

The Office supplies national bibliographic data in electronic format to the EPO for loading onto their EPOQUE database, for esp@cenet and for processing related to the production of the ESPACE-IE CD-ROM series.

The Office also provides and receives electronic renewal fee and legal status information for EP granted patents designating Ireland from the EPO via the SPIRIT data exchange software.

Copies of all published Irish patent applications are sent to the United Kingdom Patents Office which maintains a comprehensive collection of Irish documents for search purposes.

At the present time, priority documents may be exchanged only in paper form. Similarly, there is no current provision for the electronic filing of applications, although an evaluation of the possible demand for such a facility is planned to be carried out during 2003.

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

In 2002, the Office participated in the annual Young Scientist and Technology exhibition in January and at the National Ploughing Championships in September. The Office hosted the annual EPO EUROTAB patent examiner seminar in Kilkenny in May.

The Office again hosted visitors from several other industrial property offices interested in our PTOLEMY administrative management system.

## **IX. Other relevant matters**

The Office is currently embarking on a major e-commerce project which will provide a fully electronic payment system for renewal fees on the Office's website – it is hoped to have this facility available by the middle of 2004.

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.
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.