CWS.ATR.PI.2012.GB

Annual Technical Report 2012 on Patent Information Activities submitted by United Kingdom (CWS/ATR/PI/2012/GB)

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

Applications for national UK patents went up from 22,259 in 2011 to 23,235 in 2012 (+4.2 %). Applications from UK residents rose slightly from 15,343 to 15,370 (+0.2 %). The number of Patents granted decreased from7,173 in 2011 to 6,864 in 2012 (-4.3 %).

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

We do not have an entry for this information for 2012.

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that provide statistics related to patents

Statistics related to patents at the Intellectual Property Office can be accessed through the annual reports, annual reviews and facts and figures at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/ourpublications-review.htm

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.)

(1) PDF

A-documents

These are prepared in-house in a 5 week publication cycle using a new bespoke IT system linked to Phoenix (the IPO's electronic case management system). The front page is compiled by downloading bibliographic data (XML format) from the corporate database OPTICS and is married with the abstract text from our internal examiner database (PROSE). The abstract drawing is extracted from Phoenix and merged to finalise the front page. The finished front page is added to the rest of the specification pages from Phoenix and reproduced in a single PDF image. The PDF image is then loaded onto the IPO's publication server on our external website for customer download. The IPO no longer publishes "A" documents in paper format, the official publication means being electronic (please see the following link: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-os /p-find/p-find-publication.htm).

The PDF A documents are then transferred via Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) to the EPO. This is done on a weekly basis and includes a separate ST.36 XML file for the bibliographical and full text abstract data.

B-Documents

These are prepared in-house in a 5 week publication cycle using a new bespoke IT system linked to Phoenix (the IPO's electronic case management system). The front page is compiled by downloading bibliographic data (XML format) from the corporate database OPTICS and merged with the rest of the specification pages from Phoenix and reproduced in a single PDF image. The PDF image is then loaded onto the IPO's publication server on our external website for customer download. The IPO no longer publishes "B" documents in paper format, the official publication means being electronic (please see the following link: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-os/p-find/p-find-publication.htm).

The PDF B documents are then transferred via Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) to the EPO. This is done on a weekly basis and includes a separate ST.36 XML file for the bibliographical data.

Corrected 'Errata'-Documents (A8, A9, B8 & C)

These are prepared in-house in a 2 week publication cycle using a new bespoke IT system linked to Phoenix (the IPO's electronic case management system). The front page is compiled by downloading bibliographic data (XML format) from the corporate database OPTICS and merged with the rest of the specification pages from Phoenix and reproduced in a single PDF image. The PDF image is then loaded onto the IPO's publication server on our external website for customer download. The IPO no longer publishes "errata" documents in paper format, the official publication means being electronic (please see the following link: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-os/p-find/p-find-publication.htm).

The PDF Errata documents are then transferred via Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) to the EPO. This is done on a weekly basis and includes a separate ST.36 XML file for the bibliographical data.

(2) CD-ROM

In association with the EPO, we publish GB "A" documents on CD-ROM on a fortnightly basis, ESPACE-UK. The CD-ROM collection covers the years 1979 to date, i.e. for GB serial numbers in excess of 2,000,000.

(3) Patents and Designs Journal (PDJ) and the new on-line e-Patents Journal

Up until 26th March 2008 the official notices and selected bibliographic data relating to UK patent applications and granted patents were published in the official weekly electronic newspaper called the Patents and Designs Journal (PDJ) on the date of publication, and are available on our website in PDF format. From 5 March 2008 the new e-Patents Journal became searchable online, and may be downloaded in PDF or XML formats. It also includes a back-file of the UK applications filed section from 26 July 2006. The new Patents Journal and archived PDJs may be accessed from:

http://www.ipo.gov.uk/pro-types/pro-patent/pro-p-os/pro-p-journal/p-pj-data.htm

(4) ESPACENET, EPOQUE etc

The full text, drawings and bibliographic data of all newly published UK patent applications and granted patents is published on the EPOQUE system soon after the domestic publication date.

Esp@cenet is a free internet service which contains a number of different patent collections. GB patents published from 1895 and Granted from 2002 are available through the worldwide database, please see http://worldwide.espacenet.com/

Main types of announcements of the Office in the field of patent information

Our website (www.ipo.gov.uk) plays an important role in the dissemination of notices regarding patents and other IPR. In particular, we frequently hold consultations with our community of users. However, we continue to place such announcements in our on-line e-Patents Journal, which is available without charge on our website.

Our website received, on average, 2.5 million page views per month during 2012, of which 14,600 were for the e-Patents Journal.

Mass storage media used (paper, microforms, optical storage, etc.)

The Office has SAN disc, DVD and CD-ROM collections containing published/granted US, WO, EP and GB patent applications on CIMS (Computerised Image Management System). CIMS can be used to produce paper copies of these documents for internal use.

The Office previously maintained a paper collection of GB documents, with some WO and EP documents classified according to the (now discontinued) UK Key between certain dates. However, this collection has been disposed of in favour of online searching and retrieval using EPOQUE.

Word processing and office automation

We use Microsoft Windows XP which provides an integrated and extensive network of applications that are available to all staff. In 2012/13 we will migrate to Windows 7. All staff have their own personal computer (PC) on which numerous applications are available. Word processing can be carried out using Word 2007; and all other MS Office applications, including Outlook for e mail and PowerPoint and Excel are available; all major classification keys that are used by the examiners are accessible via their PCs, as are office notices, manuals, search tools including access to online databases, internal and external telephone directories, translation software, management and administration information etc. There is also a corporate mainframe database (OPTICS), a VB.NET database (PAFS) for recording file movement data and examining group statistics, and automated production of search and examination reports using the PROSE system. We also have PECS system (which uses the EPO's Phoenix s/w) of electronic case files, whereby all the documents relating to patent applications are available electronically to examiners at their desktop. The Office intranet contains a very large collection of essential information for staff, including search and classification tools.

Copies of US, EP, WO and GB documents cited in search reports are produced by the in-house Computerised Image Management System (CIMS) for supply to applicants, and in addition this system has been extended to enable the ad hoc ordering by technical staff of any types of patent documentation, direct from their desktop. All staff have access to the Internet and to the office intranet and have their own e-mail (via Microsoft Outlook) and official e-mail address.

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

See "Publishing, printing, copying etc.".

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

The e-Patents Journal is available online (see "(3) Patents and Designs Journal (PDJ)" - above).

The IPO's publication server is accessible online and enables A, B and corrected publications to be searched by publication number or publication date and viewed or downloaded in PDF format:

http://www.ipo.gov.uk/patent/p-find/p-find-publication.htm

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

Abstracting, reviewing, translating

Our staff can translate any document to or from English, French or German along with other languages using translation software that is available at the desktop. Patent examiners check all patent abstracts provided by the applicant, and amend them where necessary to ensure that the abstract printed on the front page represents a useful search tool.

Classification[1], preclassification[2] (if applicable), and reclassification[3] 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)

All UK patent applications are classified to the IPC. The office does not reclassify documents. Since 2005, the office has also classified patent applications to ECLA and will transition to CPC during 2013. Preclassification is done manually at an administrative level in accordance with ECLA subclasses, which provides the basis for the structure of examining divisions and groups.

Coordinate indexing (domestic deep indexing systems, keyword indexing)

UK patent applications are no longer indexed to any domestic deep indexing schemes.

Hybrid system indexing

Double-purpose indexing, currently a feature of the IPC, is searchable in the usual manner in which the IPC is searched.

Bibliographic data and full-text processing

Bibliographic data, abstracts (checked by examiners) and full specifications of GB documents are uploaded via Secure File Transfer Protocols (SFTP) to EPO databases such as EPODOC on a weekly basis. This information can be searched there.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

File building

The office does not possess paper search files (see "Mass storage media used" - above). GB patent bibliographic data is available electronically, and may be searched, on our OPTICS database. Published GB patent specifications may be accessed and searched via EPOQUE and from our on-line publication server see "Publishing, printing, copying etc." above.

Updating

Usually updated every Wednesday.

Storage, including mass storage media

See "File building" above and "Mass storage media used" above.

Documentation from other offices maintained and/or considered part of the available search file

See "File building" above. Patent collections are searchable by online search techniques.

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

In-house systems (online/offline)

The OPTICS (Office of Patent and Trademarks Integrated Computer System) database is the only in-house system we have for searching (see "Equipment used" – below). OPTICS is no longer used for technical searching .

External databases

We have a long list of external databases that we use regularly, including EPODOC, Derwent's World Patent Index, CAS ONLINE and other specialised chemical, biotech, electrical and other databases. We interrogate these databases using a number of online hosts that we subscribe to, including EPOQUEnet, STN and others. Our official policy is that a worldwide search should be carried out as part of every patent search done in this office. Examiners are encouraged to access National Patent Office Organisation websites as necessary to search collections of patent documents, or to retrieve family member search and examination reports (e.g. EPO, USPTO, WIPO).

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

Register and legal status information is stored on the OPTICS database, as are a number of types of statistics. Examining group statistics, file movements etc. are recorded using a VB.NET system called PAFS (see "Word processing and office automation" above). In addition, we use the EPO system 'Phoenix' (which we call PECS) to electronically store and access our patent application case files.

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

Our corporate database (OPTICS) runs on a Fujitsu mainframe. The internal network uses a client-server arrangement on an Ethernet LAN running Novell Netware and a Windows Domain. Windows XP and applications are installed on Pentium client PCs with 21" LCD space-saving screens. All Patents staff are provided with dual screens which can be configured for portrait or landscape orientation. During 2012/13 we will move to WYSE terminals linking to virtual PCs running Windows7 and to install dual 24" wide screens monitors.

Existing online thesauri; their structure, presentation and usefulness for computerized searches

We use some EPO tools such as EPOS for finding synonyms to aid keyword searches, and a number of other EPO and in-house preparations. Electronic and paper versions of the UK Key Catchwords Index and the IPC Catchword Index are available to examiners, together with other search tools, including internet-based search tools. All of these tools are used regularly.

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)

Planning, administration, automation, security, buildings

A collection of historical documents is located at our Newport office and maintained by the Documentation Unit. The available collections include: historical GB abridgements/abstracts (including Bennet-Woodcroft); historical copies of the UK Key and IPC; various pamphlets, manuals and other publications; law reports; name and subject-matter indexes for locating old historic patents; and historical official journals of the UK (Patent and Designs Journal) and of the EPO.. Much of this information is also available on the office Intranet. The collections are located in our main building and are therefore secure.

Our main office is located in Newport, Wales, where the public can obtain official publications and conduct searches using Espacenet for example. In addition we also have a front office in London where customers can file applications.

Collecting, acquisitions, preparation

All staff are free to suggest additional material for inclusion in our subscriptions.

Collection management, preservation

The Documentation Unit is charged with the task of maintaining our library.

Interlibrary lending, resource sharing, networks of patent libraries in the country

The British Library, located in St. Pancras, London, houses the national collection of patents, science and technology. It remains administratively separate from the Intellectual Property Office, and is funded by the UK Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport and by revenue from its services which are heavily used.

The library has telephone access to selected examiners in the Intellectual Property Office, to help with public enquiries on patent searching.

The library and the Intellectual Property Office jointly offer support to the PATLIB patent libraries, which include 12 libraries outside London, open to the public, which hold patent material. The PATLIB libraries collect most patent specifications in CD-ROM format rather than in paper or microform. Patents from over 25 countries are covered.

The British Library also continues to offer public access to commercial patent online databases. This is a priced service which handles a number of commissioned searches monthly, mostly for subject searches. It also offers public access to free databases such as esp@cenet.

Our office takes part in numerous exchange and grant programmes with other patent offices around the world as in previous years.

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

On 6 October 2011 the IPO ceased providing patentability, validity, prior art and freedom to operate patent searches to enable resources to be focussed on the processing of statutory patent applications. The IPO's commercial department, the Search and Advisory Service (SAS) continues to support the devolved governments of Scotland and Wales by providing patent based assessments of innovation on research and development grant applications. 121 such assessments were carried out in 2012 including 30 searches on behalf of the Irish Patent Office and 2 searches in pursuit of a patent application in Hong Kong. In addition the IPO has continued to offer Patent Informatics and mediation services.

Our Information Centre continues to provide a much needed service to customers handling on average 8500 telephone calls and 1000 emails per month. Call volume has remained the same as the previous year. The first call resolution rate and customer satisfaction remain high at 87.4% and 98% respectively.

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

The Intellectual Property Office provides links to Intellectual Property Office web filing, epoline ™ and PCT-Safe at the following web page: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-os.htm

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

Information on filing, including Patents application guide and other materials, is available from the following web page: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-apply.htm

The procedure after filing, including publication, examination and grant is described at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-after.htm

Information regarding dispute resolution, including hearings, mediation and opinions may be found here: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-dispute.htm

Results of past patent decisions are available at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-challenge-decision-results.htm

Information on how applicants may appeal is provided at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-appeal.htm

Other business procedures such as the Patents Act, finding patents, how we classify and renewals are covered by web pages accessible from the main Patents portal: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/patent.htm

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

The Patent Informatics service, which delivers analysis and intelligence through patent mapping is described at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/informatics.htm

A link to the EPO search dataset Espacenet is provided from the online patent services portal: http://www.ipo.gov.uk//p-os.htm

The UK patent register may be searched by publication or application number at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-find-number.htm

The UK patent register may also be searched by publication date at: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-find-publication.htm

Information on when applicants can expect to receive their first examination report can be accessed from http://www.ipo.gov.uk/p-er.htm

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

We apply all relevant WIPO standards including ST.8 for machine-readable records and ST.36 for xml transfer of bibliographic data.

Medium used for exchange of priority documents

Paper. We can also accept priority documents in CD form provided they have the appropriate electronic signature.

In October 2009 we launched a Patents Digital Access Service for the digital preparation and transfer of patent priority documents to WIPO. The new service is free to electronic filers and will benefit both UK business and the IP community. The new service automatically prepares digital patent priority documents and securely stores them at WIPO for future use. This new service removes the financial burden on our customers who currently pay National IP Offices to prepare priority documents for filing at other IP offices. Please see the following link for further information http://www.ipo.gov.uk/pro-types/pro-patent/pro-p-os/pro-p-apply-online-pdas.htm.

Note: This service was enhanced this year with the introduction of security access codes.

Medium allowed for filing applications

Filings continue on paper, but electronic filing now accounts for over 75% of GB patent applications filed at the Intellectual Property Office. Electronically filed applications, amendments and other correspondence is loaded directly onto the PECS electronic case management system.

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)

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

Nothing new since the 2004 report.

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

The UK Intellectual Property Office has an active programme of cooperation with various countries, including a number of developing countries. In 2012, the Search and Advisory Service carried out 17 free patent searches for WIPO under the programme of Patent Information Services for Developing Countries.

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

Our Business Outreach and Education Team continues to raise awareness of IP giving businesses that could be more successful through better use of IP, access to informed advice and support that enables them to use, manage, and enforce their IP to its fullest potential. This is done via a portfolio of business tools including mobile and online resources, seminars, workshops and training, working with partners to deliver broader dissemination and understanding of IP."

We continue to communicate IP awareness to young people, partnering with Aardman to provide online resources for young people and educators to raise awareness of innovation, creativity and intellectual property amongst 4 - 16 year olds. This is delivered through the Cracking Ideas website in the format of resource packs with links to education curriculums, IP challenges, games and a nationwide competition designed to encourage children to be innovative, enterprising and create new ideas.

All marketing and PR is carried out within the BOE team and we are successfully achieving coverage in a variety of regional and national media channels.

Studies to identify trends in new technology, e.g., by the use of patent statistics and preparation of monographs

The Informatics team produces patent landscape reports on areas of technology which are of current interest. For example recent reports have looked at Regenerative Medicine, Stem Cells, 3D TV, Agrifood, and Graphene. Future work will include looking at 3D printing. These reports are freely available from www.ipo.gov.uk/informatics.

Assistance furnished by offices to facilitate the changing over of receiving offices to electronic data carriers for the exchange of patent documents (see also fourth sub-item of item VI, above)

Nothing new since the 2004 report.

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.ipo.gov.uk//p-law.htm

contain the Annual Report of the Office

All annual reports since 2003/2004 are available at:
http://www.ipo.gov.uk/ourpublications-review.htm

if necessary, provide further information related to the topics referred to in the current ATR

n/a

provide open source codes related to patent information systems

n/a

contain patent-related news regarding the Office

We publish a number of newsletters, which cover all aspects of IP, including patent related news: http://www.ipo.gov.uk/newsletters.htm

IPO press releases dating from 2006 are available at:
http://www.ipo.gov.uk/press-release.htm

X. Other relevant matters

Nothing new since the 2004 report.

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.