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Annual Technical Report 2006 on Industrial Design Information Activities submitted by United States of America (SCIT/ATR/ID/2006/US)

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

The USPTO issues design patents and does not register industrial designs. However, US design patent information is included in this report since WIPO has requested that Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in this series of Annual Technical Reports.

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

In calendar year (CY) 2006, the USPTO granted 20,965 design patents, an increase of 62 percent from the number granted in CY 2005. The share of grants having foreign origin, as determined by the residence of the first-named inventor, was 44.2 percent for CY 2006, up from 41.7 percent for CY 2005. The top patenting organizations receiving design patents in CY 2006 were Nike, Inc. (295 design patents), Hannspree, Inc. (268 design patents), Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. (261 design patents), Toyota Jidosha K.K. (175 design patents), Hon Hai Precision Ind. Co., Ltd. (174 design patents), Sony Corporation (172 design patents), Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (169 design patents), and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (162 design patents).

There were 25,515 design patent applications filed at the USPTO in CY 2006, essentially the same amount as were filed in CY 2005. The CY 2006 share of applications having foreign origin, as determined by the residence of the first-named inventor, is 44.2 percent, up from 43.1 percent for CY 2005.

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

Among the highly active design patent areas for calendar year (CY) 2006, the number of design patent grants in Environmental heating and cooling; fluid handling and sanitary equipment increased by 97 percent, Recording, communication, or information retrieval equipment increased by 87 percent, Tools and hardware increased by 76 percent, and Equipment for production, distribution, or transformation of energy increased by 75 percent.

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

There are no new developments to report for calendar year 2006.

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

There are no new developments to report for calendar year 2006.

Mass storage media and microforms used

In 1998, USPTO established an Internet database with access to the full-text and images of patents from 1976 forward, consisting of two terabytes of full-page images and 120GB of searchable full-text. In 2000, USPTO acquired an additional 2 terabytes of storage and added images of all US patents from 1790 through 1975. Presently, almost four terabytes of full-page image data for all patents from 1790 to the present is stored on these devices at USPTO and accessible from the Internet, along with 200GB of patent numbers and current US classifications for all patents from 1790 through 1975, as well as searchable full-text for all patents from 1976 to the present. In addition, 4.5 terabytes of storage have been deployed for patent pre-grant data (PGPub). The PGPub storage is needed to meet legislative mandates issued in 1998, in the American Inventor Protection Act (AIPA), which requires the timely granting of patents and the early publication of applications.

Each year the USPTO produces nearly 200 Cassis optical disc masters containing a wide variety of patent and trademark information including design patents. It is possible to search exclusively in the design patents by selecting designs as the document type for the search tool.

Databases and office automation

EAST and WEST search clients provide access to text information available back to 1920. Images of all USPTO Design Patents are available in either EAST or WEST with access through domestic and/or international classification assignments.

Search Clients

Design examiners have access to the same two search clients used by utility examiners, both of which provide text and image search and display capabilities. One is a browser-based client called WEST (Web-based Examiner Search Tool); the other is a coded client called EAST (Examiner Automated Search Tool). WEST is designed for ease of use and rapid deployment of new functionality. EAST has a more complex interface, designed for greater user customization, more rapid retrieval of images, and greater use of the keyboard. Through these search clients, all USPTO patent examiners have access to full U.S. patent images from 1790 and full U.S. patent text search from 1920. The 1920-1970 segment of the U.S. database is the U.S. Patents OCR database. Access to another segment of the U.S. Patents OCR database covering the period from 1790 to 1919 was planned for 2005. Since the introduction of U.S. Published Applications in March 2001, the full text and images of these documents have been made available. Also available are the contents of the First Page DataBase (FPDB) project, IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletins, and Derwent World Patents Index (WPI). The FPDB consists of the English-language Patent Abstracts of Japan (PAJ) from 1976, and five European Patent Office (EPO) member states (EP patent documents, France, Germany, Great Britain and Switzerland), and WIPO patent documents (PCT Publications), from 1978. Additionally, examiners have access to full patent document images from 1920 for these same intellectual property authoring countries and organizations. The addition of full English-language text of EPO documents and full patent document images for additional intellectual property countries and organizations is planned.

In 2006, the full text search databases for US Patents and Published Applications migrated to using the International Common Element (ICE) Red Book for Patent Grant Data/XML and Patent Application Data/XML publication format as the input source content. See <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/oeip/sgml/st32/redbook/rb2004/rb2004.html> for more information. Both search clients were updated to facilitate search and display of additional data content.

The USPTO Internet Patent search web site (<http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html>) was transitioned to being hosted on the USPTO campus.

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 design patents that issued between 1970-1984 and from 1997 onward include both a US Patent Classification designation and a Locarno International Classification designation. The EAST and WEST search systems available within the USPTO and at selected Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries provide the capability for searching for US design patent documents issued from 1997 onward with either a US or a Locarno classification designation.

The USPTO maintains a concordance between the United States Patent Classification System and the Locarno International Classification System, 8th edition. This concordance is updated to reflect new subclasses established in the design patent search file as part of the reclassification of US design patent documents. The USPC Index is also updated to reflect new subclasses established as part of the reclassification of US design patent documents.

Formal definitions have been published for all mainline subclasses and will be published for any newly established subclasses in design classes. The purpose of formal definitions is to clarify the type and scope of subject matter contained in a class or subclass. Formal definitions may include search notes that aid in locating additional areas in the USPC system pertinent to specific subject matter. Classification definitions are available at the URL below:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/oeip/taf/def/index.htm>

Further information about the use of the US Patent Classification System is available at:
<http://www.uspto.gov/main/patents.htm>

Bibliographic data and processing

Currently, USPTO provides full text search of US patents back to 1970. Additionally, patent search capabilities provide text search of US Patent Applications (PGPub), US Patents, JPO and EPO abstracts, Derwent World Patent Index database, IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletins, and OCR text of US Patents issued between 1920 and 1971. For the OCR file, examiners identify relevant documents by text searching the OCR file and use the document images to determine applicability to applications under review.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

File building

By the end of calendar year 2006, the total number of US Design Patents increased by 20,963 for a total of 548,865 documents. An average of 403 design patent documents issued each week and were added to the search file.

OCR File

Using Optical Character Recognition, the USPTO has captured the text of all U.S. patents back to 1790, which is approximately 3.9 million additional documents. This text has not been perfected and contains mistakes in reading letters, and does not associate the data with the fields in the search system. It is being characterized as the dirty OCR data. The dirty OCR text of the U.S. patent backfile was provided to the Computer Search System (CSS) project and loaded into the EAST and WEST search systems in 2000-2001. Initial examiner access to the OCR backfile was provided via the WEST (Web-based Examiner Search Tool) interface in October 2001; it was available in EAST (Examiner Automated Search Tool) in January 2002. In FY 2002, the USPTO added clean bibliographic data to the backfile. The OCR patent back file will be made available for exchange with USPTO International partners and for sale to commercial customers.

NPL

Development of a database of examiner-identified NPL continued. The database currently contains NPL on business methods, telecommunications, designs and nanotechnology. Each document in the database has been assigned an EPO XP number, to facilitate potential inclusion in the EPO's NPL database. The types of documents submitted by examiners include journal articles, portions of books, documents from the Internet, advertisements, press releases, and standards. The database has been available to examiners since 2002.

USPTO examiners have desktop access to over 17,000 journals in electronic format as well as 6,000 thousand electronic books.

In 2001, registered industrial design images of CD-ROM from the International Bureau and the Japan Patent Office became available for access by design patent examiners.

Updating

Concurrent with the publication of each new Design Patent in the Official Gazette, copies are added to the electronic search files.

Also, see File Building, above.

Storage, including mass storage media

In FY 1997 and FY 1998, the USPTO installed 42 terabytes of Redundant Arrays of Independent Disk (RAID) magnetic disk storage systems to process patent, trademark, and other business data electronically. In FY 1999 through FY 2001 additional capacity was acquired that doubled the amount of online magnetic storage available. USPTO is continuing its partnership with EMC Corporation for server attached and Storage Area Network (SAN) storage devices. With a long-term lease agreement, USPTO had acquired over 400 TB of raw disk capacity at the end of FY 2004. Managing this storage will require continued vendor support, and implementation of storage management tools. In FY 2004 and FY 2005 USPTO extended the SAN to support the agency move to Carlyle and enhance disaster recovery capabilities.

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

Gazette type publications of design registrations from over 37 nations or international organizations are available to examiners. These publications are generally maintained in the Design Library located in the USPTO Scientific and Technical Information Center (STIC).

A collection of non-patent literature is available to examiners in the Design Library. Non-patent literature includes commercial publications, catalogs, magazines, advertising fliers, technical publications and other information pertinent to the 33 classes for industrial designs in the United States Patent Classification system. Additionally, the Scientific and Technical Information Center provides complete library services that include links to libraries nation-wide, literature acquisition as requested, and cataloging of literature received. The literature in the collection can be searched via an on-line catalog maintained by the STIC.

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

In-house systems (online/offline)

Design examiners at the USPTO have the same search tools as utility examiners. The International Patent Classification field that is part of the text search system can also be used to search Locarno classifications for industrial design patents but is not frequently used by USPTO examiners.

External databases

The STIC performs searches for the design examiners on commercial online databases when requested. They also search for resources on the Internet that are appropriate for design examiners.

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

Patents Location and Monitoring System (PALM) Migration

PALM continues to constitute the backbone for management information throughout the USPTO. Throughout 2006, the main emphasis was on making changes to provide services to other projects such as TDA:PDX.

PALM on PTOnet

All Patent Examiners have been provided further access to the current Management Information System on their desktop PC via barcode readers and a Web browser interface. This system has been found to provide increased case tracking accuracy. No future enhancements are planned until PALM migration is completed.

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

PTOnet has an architecture consisting of a campus wide Gigabit Ethernet switched backbone with closet switches providing switched Ethernet connection to individual workstations. Currently, PTOnet users have dedicated 100 Mbps switched Ethernet connections.

PTOnet provides examiners and other staff with access to the Internet through dual-redundant firewalls. Access zones implemented via firewalls and proxy servers have been implemented to provide a limited amount of controlled access to PTOnet resources for external users. Additional external access capabilities are being developed through implementation of a variety of access control mechanisms including digital certificate based authentication supported by a full Public Key Infrastructure (PKI).

VI. Administration of industrial design information products and 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

These functions are provided by the Scientific and Technical Information Center.

Collection management, preservation

The Foreign Documents Division processes and distributes all foreign patent documents and journals received at the USPTO. The majority of foreign documents are now received in CD-ROM format.

The collections consist of print monograph and serial titles and millions of foreign patent documents in print and micro formats. Those portions of the collection maintained in Main STIC are open to the public. In accordance with the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), STIC meets minimum documentation requirements for foreign patent documents and non-patent literature and makes these documents available to the public.

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).

Patent and Trademark application status information are both available from the USPTO website. Both of these databases are searchable and are updated on a daily basis.

In November 1995, the USPTO began providing access to patent grant bibliographic information and abstract text on its Web Site. This raw data is available for FTP downloading with updates occurring each Tuesday issue date.

In March 2001, the USPTO began providing access to patent application bibliographic information and abstract text on its Web Site. This raw data is available for FTP downloading with updates occurring each Thursday publication date.

In November 1998, the USPTO began providing access to the searchable, full text of US patents granted from January 1976 to the present. Updates occur each Tuesday issue date.

In March 2001, the USPTO began providing access to the searchable, full text of US published patent applications from March 15, 2001 to the present. Updates occur each Thursday publication date.

Copies of Design patents continue to be provided to the 83 libraries in the USPTO Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL) Program in optical disc formats and online access to Design patents is available via Pub WEST. All PTDLs also provide public access to the USPTO web site that contains a searchable database of Design patents. A list of current PTDLs can be found at the PTDL Web site located at www.uspto.gov/go/ptdl. The Web site includes information about the Program mission, history, background, services, and core collections, as well as links to Program publications, materials, and reference tools. Each of the 83 PTDLs is linked from the PTDL List available from the USPTO Web site.

Automated Information in Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries

Web-based online searching for the patent text and image database via PubWEST is available at all 83 PTDLs. All PTDLs also provide public access to the USPTO web site.

The USPTO continues to provide optical disc products to PTDLs for direct public use. This includes all Cassis optical disc products; Patents BIB, Patents CLASS, Patents ASSIST, Patents & Trademarks ASSIGN, Trademarks BIB, Trademarks ASSIST, USAPat, USAApp, and USAMark.

Automated Patent Information in Public Search Facilities

The USPTO Public Search Facility provides public users with access to over 20 types of software applications that provide full-text search and/or document retrieval. When logged onto one of the over 300 Universal Public Workstations located in the Public Search Facility users search multiple sources of patent information using common interfaces. The primary information delivery channel in the Public Search Facility is the Universal Public Workstation (UPWS).

The Universal Public Workstation (UPWS) is a secured access computer providing a single platform and consistent interface to all databases. Public versions of the patent examiner search systems EAST and WEST, and document image print WALK-UP are the heaviest used applications provided on UPWS. Other patent applications on UPWS include the USPTO Web site, DVD-ROM Cassis titles, Assignments Historical Database (AHD) and Patent Assignment Information Retrieval (PAIR). Both EAST and WEST retrieve all U.S. patent images and word search the text contained in U.S. patents granted since 1971. The Optical Character Recognition application allows searching of U.S. patents both text and images back to 1920. EAST and WEST also provide text searching of English language patent abstracts from the European Patent Office and Japan Patent Office, and a set of foreign patent images formerly available only on CD-ROM. Public users search Re-exam file information by logging onto the UPWS Patent Assignment Information Retrieval (PAIR) application.

UPWS now provides access to World Patents Index (WPI), a proprietary database that is also available to USPTO patent examiners. This search tool is accessed through PubEAST. UPWS users also access new text search indexes to retrieve U.S. patents and U.S. published applications associated with International Patent Classification (IPC) data in accordance with IPC reform.

The Public Search Facility recently became one of the USPTO wireless hot spots whereby facility customers may use their personal computers or

communication devices in the facility to access Internet resources. This capability allows users to supplement or expand their intellectual property researching activities as they search/retrieve information using the Universal Public Workstation.

Online search/retrieval system use during FY05 totaled over 196,000 hours. An eight-hour training course for novice or first time patent users is available to the public on the WEST system. A four-hour course for advanced users is available on the EAST system. Courses are scheduled once a month for a nominal fee, or more often as needed. Special one-page guides and Helpful Hints are available in the on-line search areas. Individual assistance is always available from staff.

Public users have opportunities throughout the year to participate in Beta testing of updated versions of software applications. Public users provide comments on how to improve access to patent information by making changes to software applications.

Automated Products Provided to the Public

The USPTO Electronic Information Products Division continues to provide patent information products and services to the public in a variety of formats. The Products and Services Catalog on the USPTO website describes USPTO products and services, and contains details on how to obtain them.

The following CD-ROM products are available for purchase by the public:

Patents BIB: Selected Bibliographic Information from US Patents Issued 1969 to Present

This Cassis DVD-ROM contains bibliographic information for utility patents issued from 1969 to the present, and for other types of patent documents issued from 1977 to the present. It includes inventor names and addresses (if unassigned at time of issue), assignee at time of issue, status (i.e., withdrawn, corrected, expired for failure to pay maintenance fees, reexamined or term extended), current classifications, patent title, and patent abstracts from September 1988 to date. Patents BIB also refers to patent image locations on USAPat, described below. This DVD-ROM product is updated every two months.

Patents CLASS: Current Classifications of US Patents Issued 1790 to Present

This Cassis DVD-ROM contains current classification information for all utility, design, plant, reissue and X-numbered patents, as well as defensive publications and statutory invention registrations issued from 1790 to the present (over 6 million documents). Indexing of classification information has been optimized for rapid retrieval. This DVD-ROM product is updated every two months.

Patents and Trademarks ASSIGN: US Patents and Trademarks Assignments Recorded at the USPTO 1980 August to Present

This Cassis DVD-ROM includes data derived from assignment deeds for issued patents and registered trademarks, which were recorded at the Patent and Trademark Office after August 1980 for patents, and since 1955 for trademarks. The disc includes assignments recorded before and after the patent issued. This DVD-ROM product is updated every two months. This product is the combination of two previous titles, Patents ASSIGN and Trademarks ASSIGN, now no longer published.

Patents ASSIST: Full Text of Patent Search Tools

This Cassis DVD-ROM is a compilation of many patent search tools including the following: Manual of Classification, Index to the US Patent Classification, Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, IPC - USPC Concordance, and Attorneys and Agents Registered to Practice Before the US Patent and Trademark Office. In addition, Classification Definitions, a Patentee-Assignee Index, and a Classification Orders Index are included. The Patentee-Assignee Index shows ownership at time of issue for utility patents 1969 to present; for other patent types 1977 to present; and inventor names 1975 to present. The Classification Orders Index is a list of classifications abolished and established since 1976 with corresponding Classification Order number and effective date. This DVD-ROM product is updated every three months.

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP)

This Manual is published to provide US Patent and Trademark Office patent examiners, applicants, attorneys, agents, and representatives of applicants with a reference work on the practices and procedures relative to the prosecution of patent applications before the Patent and Trademark Office. The MPEP is available in electronic form as an ASCII text file downloadable (no charge) from the USPTO Web site on the Internet at <http://www.uspto.gov/>, and as a searchable text file on the Patents ASSIST DVD-ROM product, which includes many other useful files. Each revision is fully incorporated into the base edition and republished as a whole.

USAPat: Facsimile Images of United States Patents

This Cassis DVD-ROM product contains facsimile images of US patents from 1790 to present. An image is an actual page of the patent, including all drawings, and looks just like the original printed document. The purpose of USAPat is to serve as a document delivery system, not as a search system. Retrieval is by document number only from a cumulative index. Excellent printed copies of actual documents can be obtained directly from a laser printer. Delivery of weekly discs is usually within 15 days from issue date.

USApp: Facsimile Images of United States Patent Application Publications

USApp contains facsimile images of the U.S. patent application publications filed on or after November 29, 2000 and published weekly beginning March 15, 2001. A new law effective November 29, 1999, requires publication of patent applications approximately 18 months after the effective filing date. All utility and plant patent applications will be published unless the application is not filed in another country and the applicant expressly requests that the application not be published, or the patent has been granted. Design patent applications will not be published. An image looks like an actual page of the application, including all drawings. USApp is a document delivery system, not a search system. Retrieval is by document number only from a cumulative index. Excellent printed copies can be obtained directly from a laser printer.

Trademarks BIB: Bibliographic Information from Abandoned, Canceled, Expired, Pending, and Registered US Trademarks

This Cassis DVD-ROM contains the text of all abandoned, canceled, expired, pending, and registered trademarks from 1884 to present with 30 searchable fields. This DVD-ROM product is updated every two months. Trademarks BIB also refers to trademark image locations on USAMark, described below.

USAMark: Facsimile Images of United States Trademark Registrations

This Cassis CD-ROM contains facsimile images of U.S. trademark registration certificates issued from 1870 to the present. An image is an actual page of the trademark, including renewals and modifications, and looks just like the original printed document. USAMark is a document delivery system, not a search system. Retrieval is by document number only from a cumulative index that covers all issued discs. Excellent printed copies

of actual documents can be obtained directly from a laser printer. USAMark is published monthly.

Electronic Official Gazette of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office – Patents (eOG:P)

The eOG:P began publication in July 2002 on both the USPTO Web site (free) and on CD-ROM (subscription). In September 2002, the eOG:P replaced the paper Official Gazette that had been published since 1872. The eOG:P contains the OG record, including exemplary claim and a representative image (if applicable). Indexes by type of patent (e.g., utility, design), patentee name (both inventor and assignee), geographical location of the first listed inventor (U.S. state or country), and classification are provided. The eOG:P is available each Tuesday.

The USPTO maintains World Wide Web (WWW) and File Transfer Protocol (ftp) sites on the Internet, which permit the public free access to selected information related to patents and trademarks.

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

The USPTO maintains exchange agreements with many intellectual property offices for the exchange of industrial design registrations and gazettes and continually seeks to expand the number of such exchanges.

Intellectual property offices have access to the US patent documents, including design patents, on USAPat DVD-ROM. The USPTO began distributing its Official Gazette for Patents only in electronic format (eOG:P) on CD-ROM and on its website (see above for details) in 2002. Design patents are included in the Official Gazette for Patents.

The USPTO Electronic Official Gazette eOG allows Internet users to browse through the issued patents for the week. The eOG:P can be browsed by classification or type of patent, for example, utility, design, and plant. Specific patents can be accessed by class/subclass or patentee name.

Exchange of machine-readable information, e.g., data contained on CD-ROM or magnetic tape

CD/DVD ROM products including, but not limited to, design patent images and information are sent to 96 intellectual property offices (see descriptions of the products above).

The USPTO currently exchanges patent images and information on magnetic computer tapes with the EPO and JPO as part of a Trilateral Agreement.

VIII. Matters concerning education and training 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

The USPTO provides technical training relevant to intellectual property law and patent and trademark practice for all attorneys and patent examiners. Additionally, a variety of technical classes are available dealing with search techniques on the USPTO automated system and methods of using a variety of custom computer software to assist in the examination process.

The Office of Patent Training participates in a two week Visiting Scholars Program. Here the USPTO hosts patent professionals from offices worldwide and presents them with training on patents, trademarks, copyrights, and related procedural and operational issues.

The Office of Patent Training also operates a televideo-conference facility. This has been used to broadcast live meetings and lectures with officials in foreign countries.

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

The USPTO offers various programs to provide technical assistance to developing countries and to countries moving to a market economy. Programs focus on establishing adequate systems in these countries for the protection of intellectual property rights. They also provide intellectual protection enforcement training. The goal of the various programs is to provide advice and expertise to these countries with the desired outcome being the reduction of losses resulting from piracy of U.S. Intellectual Property.

A Global Intellectual Property Academy (GIPA) was created allowing the USPTO to increase its training and capacity building initiatives on intellectual property protection and enforcement. This Academy also encompasses the USPTO Visiting Scholars Program that was created in 1985 and provides participants from foreign countries with classroom and hands-on study of the United States system for protecting intellectual property. Through GIPA, USPTO brings foreign government officials including judges, prosecutors, police, customs officials, patent, trademark, and copyright officials and policy makers to the U.S. to learn, discuss, and strategize about global IPR protection and enforcement. The goals of the program are to foster a better understanding of international intellectual property obligations and norms; to expose participants to at least one method of providing TRIPs level protection for a variety of intellectual property disciplines, and to promote discussion of intellectual property issues in a friendly and supportive environment.

In FY 2006, the USPTO conducted 17 GIPA programs for foreign officials at its headquarters. One of these included an additional four-city study tour for 21 judges and prosecutors from seven different countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa that highlighted U.S. government and private industry/rights holder initiatives to combat IPR theft and infringement. The program also provided the participants the opportunity to interact with U.S. judges, prosecutors, and private rights holders to learn more about the harm caused by IPR infringement. Another initiative, with 19 Middle Eastern and Northern Africa librarians and legal advisors participating, continued its program by touring seven U.S. cities where participants were provided information on how to modernize their libraries and implement library information management in their countries while balancing the needs for stronger intellectual property protection and enforcement to stimulate research and education.

The USPTO partnered with numerous international and non-governmental organizations in designing and delivering technical assistance programs including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), International Intellectual Property Institute (IIPI), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Secretariat for Central American Integration (SIECA), Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), and carried out a range of capacity-building programs under the auspices of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

The USPTO conducted programs in Europe and central Asia including: UNECE Intellectual Property Advisory Group consultations with Romania and Turkey; Commercial Law Development Program Workshop on the Implementation and Coordination of IP Border Enforcement for 35 customs officials from Russia and Ukraine; Intellectual Property Enforcement program for government officials in Lithuania; Intellectual Property Enforcement program for government officials from new EU member states on copyright infringement in the digital environment in Estonia; and a joint USPTO-Patent Office of the United Kingdom-Slovenian Intellectual Property Office workshop on IPR border and market enforcement in Slovenia.

In Asia, the USPTO conducted intellectual property protection and enforcement programs that included: ASEAN-USPTO Workshop on Optical Media Regulation and Enforcement; Bangkok, Thailand; International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property Japan IPR Enforcement Symposia on Anti-Counterfeiting, Tokyo and Fukuoka, Japan; US-Vietnam Trade Council Program in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Combating Internet Piracy, Taipei, Taiwan; Intellectual Property Enforcement Program for 28 judges from Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; USPTO/ASEAN Workshop on IP Office Administration and Enforcement for 88 government officials from 12 countries in the Asian region in Bangkok, Thailand; IP training program for the Thai IP Court in Bangkok, Thailand; IPR Enforcement Program in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; a training program on IPR Enforcement for 29 government officials in Jakarta, Indonesia; International IP Enforcement training event in Delhi, India; four IP enforcement training seminars throughout India; and intellectual property protection and enforcement workshops and public awareness seminars in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia.

In addition, the USPTO participated in the following programs: IP Judicial Education Program for 36 judges from four Asian countries in Bangkok, Thailand; meeting and training with Government of Vietnam officials regarding amending intellectual property enforcement laws in Vietnam; ASEAN Regional Workshop on IP Enforcement for prosecutors in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; ASEAN Workshop on IP Enforcement on Optical Media Piracy for 85 regional government officials in the Philippines; U.S.-Malaysia Roundtable event on IPR enforcement with government officials and business in Malaysia; and Judicial Education Workshop on IP Law and Civil Procedures with USAID for 70 judges in Vietnam.

Through partnership with MEPI, programs were provided that focused on a variety of enforcement issues including: IPR Enforcement Seminar for Kuwaiti officials in Kuwait; Workshop on IP Enforcement for 70 enforcement officials in Kuwait; USPTO/MEPI Border Enforcement seminar for over 20 Moroccan Customs officials in Casablanca; and USPTO/MEPI IPR Enforcement program for copyright officials in Rabat, Morocco. The USPTO also participated in the following programs: USPTO/MEPI regional judicial workshop for judges on IP Enforcement in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; USPTO/MEPI regional workshop for prosecutors on IP Enforcement in Oman; and MEPI regional customs program for 43 government officials in Bahrain. In addition, a special program and study tour was conducted for Middle Eastern librarians and information legal advisors on copyright protection and library management in the digital environment.

Technical assistance programs were offered in Africa including a USPTO-IIPI Botswana program on Making IP Work for Development.

In the Americas and Caribbean, the USPTO organized and/or participated in intellectual property protection and enforcement programs that included: a program on the Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights at the border for customs officials in Lima, Peru; USPTO/SIECA intellectual property training for judges and prosecutors from seven regional countries in Antigua, Guatemala; a conference for police and prosecutors in San Pedro Sula, Honduras; and a conference for Honduran diplomats in Tegucigalpa, Honduras focusing on intellectual property enforcement obligations under DR-CAFTA.

Several enforcement programs were conducted in the Washington D.C. area for foreign officials including: USPTO Enforcement Academies; the USPTO-WIPO Academy for the Judiciary on the Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights; a week-long Enforcement seminar followed by a study tour of the United States for 21 judges and prosecutors from countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa; and Global Intellectual Property Academy (GIPA) training and seminars on intellectual property enforcement including those for the MEPI region and for DR-CAFTA countries plus Belize and Panama.

The USPTO continued technical assistance offered in China, with a focus on providing the provinces with capacity-building programs related to civil, criminal, and border enforcement. In addition to enforcement programs, the USPTO hosted various seminars on substantive intellectual property rights issues, including a seminar on the protection of geographic indications through use of a trademark system in Beijing and Xiamen and a seminar on Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources with the China State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) in Beijing and Kunming.

The USPTO hosted various delegations from China, both from Beijing and from the provinces. The visitors have included Chinese officials from Shanghai and Guangzhou, as well as intellectual property officials from Guangdong, Hubei, and Zhejiang provinces. These officials visited the USPTO to learn about our legal system, the administrative procedures followed by the USPTO, how IPRs are protected and enforced in the U.S., and the functions and responsibilities of the USPTO and other government intellectual property related agencies.

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

See <http://www.uspto.gov>

X. Other relevant matters