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Annual Technical Report 2003 on Industrial Design Information Activities submitted by Japan (SCIT/ATR/ID/2003/JP)

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

The number of applications in 2003 was 39,267. The number of registrations was 31,342.

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

The total number of applications is up 5% from the previous year. Among them, the number of applications in E group of the Japanese Design Classification (Hobby and Recreation Goods and Athletic Implements) has significantly increased in recent years. To be more precise, the number of applications of amusement goods has shown an outstanding increase. Applications for the design of part of an article and for related design had been growing in number since this type of application was first accepted in 1999. Each of these two kinds of application accounted for just under 20% of the total number of applications filed in 2003.

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

Since January 2000, the Japan Patent Office (hereinafter referred to as the "JPO") has been accepting on-line design applications (electronic applications). The JPO electronically edits the collected data, acquired from electronic applications or electronic conversion of paper-based applications, and creates the Design Gazette on CD-ROM.

a) Design Gazette on CD-ROM

Starting from January 2000, the JPO has issued official gazettes that include Publication of Registered Design on CD-ROM under the title of "CD-ROM Design Gazette".

A single-volume Design Gazette on CD-ROM contained a total of 700 issues and was published 50 times in 2003.

Design Gazette on CD-ROM enables a search by using 13 keys, including a registration number, goods and service related to the design, Japanese Design Classification and D-term. The Design Gazette on CD-ROM contains mixed-mode type data, composed of text data and image data, thus text search using the text data part is available.

The JPO has been providing, free of charge, viewer software to use Design Gazette on CD-ROM.

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

The JPO published the following design documents in 2003:

Publication of Registered Design 31,204 issues

Decisions on Appeal / Trial Gazette 854 issues

Mass storage media and microforms used

Nothing particular

Databases and office automation

Nothing particular

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)

The JPO uses the Japanese Design Classification, a domestic classification revised in 1983. The Japanese Design Classification is based on the concept of usage of articles, and organized in 4 stages. The stages are, from top to bottom; groups, main classes, minor classes, and if necessary, subclasses based on shape/form/configuration or pattern. Thus, the Japanese Design Classification offers a total of about 5,100 classification branches.

In addition, approximately 330 items (publication: 86 items) have now been introduced into a search key list (D-term list) for machine searches, which are used if subdivision of categories of the Japanese Design Classification is needed or if a search across plural fields is required.

In 2003, design classification was assigned to 39,267 design applications and about 230,000 publicly known design reference documents, such as magazine/catalog/internet based new design information, used as reference material for design examination.

In order to deal with new concepts of recent articles in such fields as information and communication devices, the JPO is now preparing to revise the Japanese Design Classification which is to be put into force from January, 2005.

Bibliographic data and processing for search purposes

As bibliographic data for searches, application number, filing date, registration number, registration date, article, design classification, D-term (classification symbols for search purposes based on a classification system different from the design classification) and others are used in reference documents related to applications. Disclosure date, acceptance date, publishing date, article, design class, D-term and others are used in reference documents related to disclosure.

These data are stored on hard disk document by document for use as search references.

In 2001, "article" was included as one of the search keys.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

File building

The JPO has stored in search files the following: reference documents related to applications; designs presented in magazines published in Japan and abroad, in catalogs, on home pages on the internet and elsewhere; image data (including color image data) gained by electronic processing foreign design gazettes; and bibliographic data (including design classification and D-term). These are used as base data for the JPO's design examination.

On January 1, 2000, the JPO started receiving design registration applications on-line. Accordingly, information on designs whose registration was applied for is automatically put into search files. The image data and bibliographic data in approximately 2,110,000 reference documents related to applications and approximately 2,980,000 reference documents related to publicly-known designs had been stored in search files by the year 2003.

Updating

The image and bibliographic data on 39,267 applications and about 230,000 publicly known design reference document were added.

Storage, including mass storage media

Hard disk.

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

Foreign Design gazettes.

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

In-house systems (online/offline)

a) Design Search System

It is an on-line system to search design application documents and publicly known design reference documents by using the Japanese Design Classifications and D-terms as search keys. The image data of the searched document on the image file server is displayed on the terminal (color image data is displayed in color), allowing fast screening.

In January, 2000, the system was downsized by conversion to a client-server system using no computer, thus enabling faster and more reliable searching and screening.

After the downsizing, in 2001 article, applicant identification number, etc. were added as search keys. To support more effective searches, the JPO developed in 2002, on the basis of past examination results, a function for displaying design classes, applicant identification number, etc. which are likely to lead to the discovery of cited documents, as search information.

b) Appeal and trial decision search system (J-term search system)

Gazettes and other documents on appeal and trial decisions are converted into electronic form and search keys, called J-term, are assigned to them; thereby enabling search and browsing by using J-term. A full-text search is available for appeal and trial decisions issued after January 2000.

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

In January 2000, the design paperless system was started and the administrative and examination procedures were completely moved to the system based on electronic data. Therefore, a total system, covering from design application filing, formality check and substantive examination, dispatching, registration, publishing the gazette, requesting inspection of files, to requesting certification, was completed. The effect of this system is far reaching, such as more efficient drafting based on the close link between the administrative system and the design search system, more efficient examination by implementation of electronic approval, faster design gazette publication and separate management of each application. Based on the realization of the above system, the JPO started to receive electronic applications of designs in January 2000. The high percentage of on-line applications has been kept since the introduction of the on-line application system, and the ratio of on-line applications of designs is currently as high as 91% (on average in 2003). As the JPO's system is a comprehensive system, the data processing and search system of designs are merely a part of all the JPO's system. Therefore the whole system should be referred to the "Annual Technical Report on Patent Information Activities".

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

Please refer to the "ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT ON PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES."

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)

a) Providing industrial property rights information via the Internet

The JPO has been providing the Industrial Property Digital Library service since March 1999. This service is accessible through the Internet and covers 53 million items of industrial property information by using document number and/or classification as search keys.

Main services relating to design information that the JPO provides are as follows:

1) Design Gazette database search

Design Gazette published in and after 1889 can be searched by using document number.

The English service will be available from March 2004.

2) Use of assigned number when searching for design documents

The various kinds of Design Gazettes published since 1964 can be searched by using an assigned number and so forth.

3) Japanese Design Classification and D-term

Searching for flash report on registration of the establishment of design rights and Design Gazette documents by using Japanese Design Classification and/or D-term is available.

Search of data before 1955 by registration number will be made possible from March 2004.

4) Searching of Design Gazettes by text search

The Design Gazette and the gazette of applications of design whose registration was disagreed on consultation, after 2000, can be referred to by free-word search and document number.

5) Classification lists

Japanese Design Classification, the cross-reference table of International Classification for Industrial Designs and Japanese Design Classification, and D-term list can be referenced.

Further, the published appeal and trial decisions in 1940, and after, and as related information, the information on appeal and trial decisions, the legal status on applications, registrations and decisions, the collection of cases on suit against appeal/trial decisions, the list of examiners in charge and others can be referenced.

b) Providing JPO data

In March 1999, the JPO began providing the JPO's bibliographical and progress information to outside users by organizing and converting it in the standard format for better usability for the users. About twice a month, the data is provided.

c) National Conservancy of Industrial Property Information (NCIPI), an independent administrative institution

NCIPI, which became an independent administrative institution in April 2001, supplies industrial property information including patent gazettes. Its major activities are listed below:

1) Reference to design gazettes, etc.

Gazettes on CD-ROM, etc. as well as the JPO's "IPDL Service" are available to the public free of charge in the gazette reading room on the second floor of the JPO building. There are approximately 150 such reading devices in the room.

Reading devices for this purpose are provided at eight other places in Japan (Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, Hiroshima, Takamatsu, Fukuoka and Naha) where similar reference services and so forth are provided.

A total of approximately 85,000 persons used the services at the above facilities in 2003.

2) Reference to examination and trial documents

Various technical documents (books, etc.) to be used for the JPO's examinations and trials are collected both domestically and from abroad and made available to the public.

d) Intellectual Property Centers

59 Intellectual Properties Centers throughout the nation have widely implemented support operations for users including regional companies.

They have given advice to users, provided them guidance in retrieval methods of patent information, etc. according to their purposes, regularly conducted workshops and prepared booklets relating to retrieval methods of patent information.

To support the above activities, NCIPI dispatches to the centers its electronic patent library search advisors with specialized knowledge of patent information and methods of searching for such information.

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 JPO mutually exchanges official gazettes, etc. with 102 organizations (including international organizations) in 88 nations, out of which it sends the CD-ROM Design Gazette to 25 organizations.

As part of the exchange of data between two countries, the JPO will send to China and the Republic of Korea Design Gazette image data and analyzed D-term data prior to the first publishing of gazettes on CD-ROM, recorded on an electronic medium (DVD-R or the like).

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

Since January 2000, design gazettes on CD-ROM have been sent.

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

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

The JPO held briefing sessions at the following places to explain to users of industrial property information on how to conduct design searches at the Industrial Property Digital Library (IPDL):

October, 2003 Osaka and Aichi

November, 2003 Tokyo and Fukuoka

December, 2003 Hokkaido, Miyagi, Hiroshima and Kagawa

Training courses for national and foreign participants

See previous/next items

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

a) Activities and assistance through WIPO Funds-in-Trust/Japan

1) Training for government officials

In cooperation with WIPO, the JPO held training course on the Use of Information Technology.

b) Assistance to developing countries using other institutions

1) Modernization of Intellectual Property Administration

Under the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) scheme, the JPO carried out the following projects in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and in Malaysia;

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: From April 2000, the JPO has launched the "Modernization of Industrial Property Administration Project in Vietnam", a project for the modernization of administrative procedure at NOIP, and will continue the project until June 2004. This cooperation aims at developing human resources through the automation of administrative work.

Malaysia: From 2002, under the JICA development study scheme, the JPO is going to support establishing a design application processing system and enhancing further modernization of industrial property administrative procedures to promote human resource development and information processing cooperation.

2) Training for government officials

The JPO sent expert officials to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and invited 3 counterparts and also invited 1 counterpart from the Republic of Malaysia from these countries for specialized training such as lectures on computer-related technology and practical training.

IX. Other relevant matters

a) A Cross-reference table between International Classification for Industrial Designs (Locarno Classification) and Japanese Design Classification (concordance data)

In order for effective use of the Japanese Design Gazette as examination reference documents in foreign countries, the JPO established the cross-reference table between International Classification for Industrial Designs and Japanese Design Classification (concordance data). As reference information, the JPO lists International Classification in the gazette in addition to Japanese Design Classification.

b) English translation of the Japanese Design Classification

In order for effective use of Japanese Design Gazette and concordance data in foreign countries, the JPO established English translation of the Japanese Design Classification.

c) Information on reference design documents

The JPO provides in Design Gazettes information on reference designs which were referred to by the examiner in the examination process of each registered design.