

SCIT.ATR.PI.2004.NO

Annual Technical Report 2004 on Patent Information Activities submitted by Norway (SCIT /ATR/PI/2004/NO)

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

In 2004 the number of patent applications received decreased to 5498, from 5861 in 2003. Hence, after the "all time high" number received in 2000 (6700), a decrease has been observed each year since. It is likely that this development reflects the economic difficulties seen in many industries in the period.

Norwegian residents filed 1142 patent applications, representing 21 % of the total number received (2003 figure: 1079, corrected from last years report). The fractions of applications from the various IPC sections remain fairly constant as before. However, a slight increase within Human Necessities (IPC-Section A, +1.5 % points) and a similar decrease within the field of Mechanical Engineering; Lighting; Heating; Weapons; Blasting (IPC-Section F, -1.4 % points) were the most marked changes seen as compared to the preceeding year.

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

The Norwegian Patent Gazette (Norsk Patenttidende) is published once a week, and contains bibliographic information on new applications (A0), published patent applications (A-publications, 18 months from earliest priority date) and granted patents (B1, B2, B3). The patent Gazette is generated from our internal database with bibliographic information. The patent Gazette is now published only electronically (from January 2001 onwards) and is made available on the Norwegian Patent Office's home page (www.patentstyret.no).

The Norwegian Patent Office prints and publishes an abstract document containing bibliographic information, abstract and drawing or chemical formulae, which also is published on the web site www.patentstyret.no. The published patent applications are made available to the public for inspection at our study, or can be supplied as a photocopy on demand.

Granted patents are published and printed as B1 documents, or B2 in case of changes experienced during opposition procedure, or B3 in case of restrictions in a granted patent at the patentee's request. The patents (B1, B2, B3) are produced as paper documents and distributed to a small number of customers for a charge and are also published free on our web site.

Our internal database contains bibliographic information of patents, patent applications and SPC's including changes in legal status and other information.

The Norwegian Patent Office uses Novell Network and TCP/IP communication. Client operating system is Windows 2000. We are now using MS Office 2000, i.e., MS Word 2000 text processing.

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

The NPO uses the IPC for filing new paper documents – including US patent documents. We seldom reclassify foreign documents, but file according to the IPC classification allotted at the beginning to the document by the publishing country. There is a more or less continuous activity to reclassify the Norwegian patents according to the latest IPC classification.

None of the Norwegian patents are translated by the NPO. Indexing of technical information is used to some extent in the chemical field. Patent applicants provide an abstract of the patent application, which is published after approval of the examiner.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

Most of the search files used by the examiners are stored on paper according to the IPC. Old files are not reclassified, that is, the examiners search the documents filed according to both present and previous versions of the IPC. US patents in the period of 1900 – 1980 are filed according to the US patent classification system, and other older patent documents are classified according to national classification systems. Most of the files are continuously updated.

Material contained in the PCT minimum documentation is normally searched electronically in external databases. Exceptions are made when access to all drawings published is necessary for conducting a proper search.

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

External database hosts used: Dialog, Questel Orbit, STN, (giving access to, e.g., Chemical Abstracts and Thompson Derwent World Patent Index.)

The Norwegian Patent Office regularly organises internal courses for our own examiners and other office staff in both industrial property rights and online searching.

The Norwegian Patent Office has an internal database, which can be searched on bibliographic data, with legal status, on patents and patent applications from 1976 and onward. The database also includes SPC's from 1994 onwards.

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)

Our Info Centre answers questions and inquiries and gives general information concerning industrial property rights to the public (including assisting clients on searching procedures). Most of the inquiries regard legal information from the patent and trademarks registers.

The public can visit the library and use dedicated workstations for searching patent literature on Internet and get assistance from qualified staff (to some extent, the public may also use several CD-ROMs). Visitors are also allowed to use the internal database for Norwegian patents and patent applications. The public can use a special dedicated classified file of Norwegian patents, and is to some extent allowed to use the examiners' classified documentation of other countries.

The public has access to any numerical document or gazette within industrial property, or they can order photocopies.

The public has also access to the holdings of the library which consist of subscriptions to over 300 different journal titles and at least 60 000 books and journals including a special collection on intellectual property literature, dictionaries and handbooks. The information on the collection is available in a Norwegian catalogue on book collections in Norway and thereby also available for inter-library loan.

The Preliminary Search Service undertook a total of 1789 paid commissions (within the fields of patents, trademark and design) to carry out searches and examinations in technical literature, bibliographic sources or in-house and online databases in 2004.

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information

The Norwegian Patent Office has made the patent publications available on the web site and does not distribute paper patent documents to many patent offices anymore. Bibliographic data of Norwegian patents and patent applications are provided in an electronic file to EPO, Epidos Inpadoc.

The only accepted medium at present for filing patent applications in Norway is paper. We will however in the future make possible electronic delivery of applications (see chapter IX).

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

The NPO has exhibits at fairs for industry, trade and oil/gas in order to promote protection of intellectual property, the use of design information and other industrial property rights. The NPO carried out 41 courses and seminars, covering all aspects of intellectual property rights, and NPO employees have been involved in courses and lectures at a range of educational institutions and universities.

In 2003, the NPO initiated a campaign to attract the attention of the media to the significance of industrial property rights. In 2004, 33 interviews/articles have been published in a variety of media.

The department of Communication was established in 2004, as a result of the importance of an increased awareness of industrial rights and IPR in general.

In 2004 we continued to provide technical assistance to developing countries by giving novelty searches (state-of-the-art- searches) free of charge. In 2004 we conducted 6 novelty searches. The assistance is administered by WIPO. There was no training activity for development countries this year.

IX. Other relevant matters

The Norwegian Patent Office introduced electronic application processing for patents and trade marks in 2004 (for design in 2003).

Using the electronic application processing and document flow system, the Norwegian Patent Office aims at supporting the following functions:

- New receipt of applications function for industrial rights and ordinary correspondence, including the recording, scanning and OCR treatment of received material. A parallel project paves the road for electronic submission of material as well.

- Electronic document archive with journal and archive management.

- Electronic application processing system, including electronic workflow and the facility for electronic checking of applications for previously registered rights.

- An Internet solution permitting storage of all relevant information in the document archive and access to all published applications for the general public.

- Electronic document exchange, including the transmission of Norwegian patents to patent offices in other countries, receipt of other countries' patents and also the transmission of applications for industrial rights through international applications systems

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| 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. |
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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.