

SCIT.ATR.PI.2003.DE

Annual Technical Report 2003 on Patent Information Activities submitted by Germany (SCIT/ATR/PI/2003/DE)

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

The term "patent" covers utility models and Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in their Annual Technical Reports on Industrial Design Information Activities.

I. Evolution of patent activities

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

In 2003, 56 938 patent applications were directly filed with the German Patent and Trade Mark Office as against 56,909 in 2002. Compared to the previous year, the number of direct applications stayed flat. There was another rise in the number of PCT applications in the international phase, the first part of the PCT procedure; they increased by almost 7 000 applications over the previous year and reached 84 096 in 2003.

In 2003, 7 580 international applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) entered the second part of the procedure, the national phase at GPTO. This is a rise of 16% against last year. A total of 64 518 patent applications show the consistently high levels of filing activity, observed in the past few years.

The data on the applications with the European Patent Office, effective in Germany, must be added to the applications with the German Patent and Trade Mark Office in order to get a complete picture of the patent applications effective in Germany. For pursuing their interests in the European market, many foreign applicants use the European patent system in order to obtain patent protection in Germany.

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

The applications from the IPC area B 60 "Vehicles in general" have been in the lead since 1995. In 2003, 4 953 applications were filed in this area, followed by the areas:

F 16 Engineering elements or units (ranked second since 2001)

H 01 Basic electronic elements (ranked third since 2001)

G 01 Measuring, testing (ranked fourth since 2001)

With about 3 600 applications each, the number of applications of these three important technical areas are so similar that they can actually be regarded as equally important.

The following areas, which have retained their positions for a long time, are also interesting:

5th position since 1996: A 61 medical or veterinary science, hygiene

6th position since 1997: H 04 electric communication technique

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.)

All patent documents including the patent gazette are published weekly on Thursdays.

The following numbers of documents were published in 2003:

43 819 Offenlegungsschriften
(Unexamined patent applications, A1)

16 625 Patentschriften
(Patent specifications, C1, C2, C3, C4)

17 814 Gebrauchsmuster
(Utility models, U1)

27 970 Translations of European patent specifications (T2, T3, T4).

These documents are available in paper form on request. Since January 1995 the German translations of European patent specifications (T2) have been published weekly on CD-ROM.

328 Translations of claims of European applications (DE/EP-T1)

1203 Translations of international applications (DE/WO-T1)

9 Patent specifications relating to applications filed before October 3, 1990 with the former DD-Office (first and second publications).

For these documents the range of publication numbers of the former DD-Office is maintained. The number is preceded by the letters "DD" to identify these documents.

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

a) Patent Gazette ("Patentblatt")

Pursuant to German Patent Law, the GPTO advertises the following in the Patent Gazette:

- First publications of patent applications
- Granted patents
- Registered utility models
- EP patent applications designated for Germany
- German translations of claims of EP patent applications
- Granted EP patents designated for Germany
- PCT applications published in German language
- German translations of PCT applications published by the GPTO
- Applications, grants and rejected applications of supplementary protection certificates (SPCs)
- Publications based on patent applications filed with the patent office of the former German Democratic Republic
- Topographies of microelectronic semiconductor devices
- Weekly published register of names of applicants and patentees

Apart from the mentioned items, all major changes of the legal status and all major procedural steps of national patent and utility model applications, EP patent applications and granted EP patents which take effect in Germany are published in the Patent Gazette. In addition to the "Patentblatt" editions on paper and CD-ROM, the private company Bundesdruckerei GmbH offers the Patent Gazette on the Internet on a commercial basis.

b) Patent Register ("Patentrolle") via DPINFO (<https://dpinfo.dpma.de>)

Bibliographic data, changes of the legal status and information about procedural steps of national patent applications, national and EP patents, SPCs and utility models are available in the Patent Register pursuant to both the Patent and the Utility Model Law. Certain data of EP patent applications with DE as a designated state and of WO patent applications with DE as a designated state, published in the German language, are contained in the Register, too. The access to the Patent Register is freely provided on the Internet via the DPINFO database. (See also item III)

c) DEPATISnet (<http://depatisnet.dpma.de>)

With DEPATISnet vast resources of information stored in the DEPATIS system are available to users of patent information, free of charge, on the Internet.

Like DEPATIS, DEPATISnet provides access to all German patents since 1877. In addition, patent offices of many other countries agreed to make their documents available on the Internet. Austria, Australia, France, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States are among the information pools listed.

The sophisticated search options allow users to access the vast pool of technical information for research and development. A special search software has been developed for subject-indexing patent information which is designed to meet the needs of both casual users (newcomers) and professional patent searchers. DEPATISnet offers a large variety of options for searching patent office publications and up to five different search modes, accommodating users with different levels of experience. The user interface fulfils the requirements of a modern Internet search and allows comfortable and targeted searches for subject-indexing patent data.

The enhanced version of DEPATISnet is offered, above all, to universities, research institutions and patent information centres. It is called DEPATISnet-Premium and provides a more comfortable access to the data stored in the DEPATIS system for these user groups.

d) The German patent database PATDPA

Bibliographic data, abstracts, main claims and main drawings of German patent documents and bibliographic data, main claims and main drawings of German utility model documents are available to the public in the PATDPA database, which is produced by the GPTO and hosted by STN International. With a short delay after the entry in the Patent Register, also legal status data and certain procedural steps are contained in PATDPA. (For details see item III.)

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

a) Conventional carriers

Customers may subscribe to DE patent documents in the form of paper. The service of submitting DD documents on microfiche to former subscribers and exchange partners was terminated in 2001.

b) Current CD-ROM publication practice

The publication of the German CD-ROM series DEPAROM as commercial products was continued. This CD-ROM series was developed in cooperation with Bundesdruckerei GmbH in 1994 and continues the publication of the earlier product ESPACE-DE, which was first issued in July 1991.

The retrieval software for DEPAROM is permanently being improved, suggestions by the customers are being taken into account. Two points of utmost importance, the development of a 32bit software and final solutions for the problems caused by the change to Year 2000, have been successfully implemented. At present, the DEPAROM series consists of the following CD-ROM products (all except DEPAROM-CLASS are commercially distributed by Bundesdruckerei GmbH for the purpose of exchange and commercial use):

- DEPAROM-ACT

Facsimile CD-ROM containing first publications and patent specifications (A and C documents) of the GPTO as well as the claims of European patent applications in German translation and international applications in German translation (T1); published weekly; starting with the 13th publication week of 1996, the CD-ROM also includes the full texts of first publications and patent specifications in character coded form.

- DEPAROM-U

Facsimile CD-ROM containing utility models (U1) of the GPTO; published every three weeks.

- DEPAROM-T2

Facsimile CD-ROM containing the German translations of European patent specifications (T2-T4); published weekly; the CD-ROM also includes the full text in searchable form.

- (DEPAROM-CLASS)

This CD-ROM product was discontinued at the end of 2002. In substitution, the DEPATISnetPremium service was launched especially for the use at the Patent Information Centres.

- DEPAROM-KOMPAKT

Index CD-ROM containing published unexamined applications (A1), patent specifications (C1-C4) and utility models (U1) of the GPTO as well as claims of European patent applications in German translation (T1), international applications in German translation (T1) and translations of European patent specifications designated for Germany (T2-T4); comprising bibliographic data and abstracts (as far as available) in searchable form; published every two months; starting with the 27th publication week in 1994.

- DEPAROM-PROFIL

Facsimile CD-ROM containing bibliographic data and complete patent documents, tailored to the customer's specific profile (IPC symbols); published at customer-specified intervals. DEPAROM-PROFIL CD-ROMs may contain DE, EP and WO documents according to the demands of the customers.

A uniform user interface is provided for all the CD-ROMs of the series.

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

It is planned to issue all official publications (gazettes of all German IP rights and patent documents) exclusively in electronic form via a new internet service. This service is to start in 2004.

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

Abstracting, reviewing, translating

Patent applicants have to provide an abstract drafted according to national rules similar to WIPO Standard ST.12/A. This abstract is subject to the examination as to formal requirements. The abstracts are published on first publications (DE-A1 and DE-C1 documents). If no abstract was submitted by the applicant, the main claim (together with a drawing) will be published on the first page of the first publication of a granted patent. Title pages of second publications contain main claims instead of abstracts. In the Patent Register the abstracts can only be viewed. In the database PATDPA (STN) they can be searched as well.

German patent documents are reviewed by Derwent Publications Limited (London). These abstracts are available through the Derwent World Patent Index databases.

The GPTO publishes, as patent documents, German translations of PCT applications filed in languages other than German after entry of the national phase (DE/WO-T1).

On request of the applicants, the GPTO publishes, as patent documents, German translations, provided by the applicants, of the claims of EP patent applications filed in English or French (DE/EP-T1).

Translations of granted EP patents originally published in English or French must be provided by the holders before the patents take effect in Germany. These translations are published by the GPTO as patent documents (DE-T2, T3, T4).

Classification and reclassification 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)

The GPTO classifies patent documents (applications, patents and utility models) according to the current IPC, i.e. to the 7th edition of the IPC. The patent documents issued by the office contain only official IPC symbols whereas documents of the search file are reclassified according to the so called DEKLA (IPC + internal subdivisions) if necessary. The GPTO regularly participates in the revision activities of the IPC.

Coordinate indexing (domestic deep indexing systems, keyword indexing)

The GPTO maintains four databases of the ICIREPAT type. These databases for Cosmetics, Detergents, Glass Compositions and Metallic Materials contained, at the end of 2003, a total of about 160 000 material compositions from more than 134 000 patent documents. They are accessible to every patent examiner within a self-guided search mode and were used for about 1 650 searches in 2003.

Hybrid system indexing

For all German patent applications, the use of Hybrid Classification is obligatory, i.e. classification symbols in association with indexing codes are allotted to the DE documents. The indexing codes allotted are contained and searchable in the online database PATDPA (STN). Indexing codes have been assigned to about 5% of the patent applications published in 2003.

Bibliographic data and full-text processing for search purposes

Patent Register: DPINFO / DEPATIS

The Bibliographic data of each DE document are loaded in the patent register, searchable via DPINFO as well as under DEPATIS. When preparing the DE documents for publication the full text of each document is generated. This full text is loaded in the database of DEPATIS together with the facsimile document; this information is updated weekly.

Databases:

The German Patent and Trade Mark Office produces three German language databases: PATDPA, PATDD, and PATDPAFULL, distributed worldwide by the host STN (Scientific and Technical Information Network). PATDPA and PATDPAFULL are updated on a weekly basis.

PATDPA was made available to the public in June 1986, containing the bibliographic data of all kinds of patent documents and utility models published by the GPTO since 1968, as well as all kinds of patent documents published by the EPO and WIPO since 1978 and designated for Germany. The records of PATDPA contain application and publication data along with legal status information and citations, updated by any information published in the German Patent Gazette as well as in the European Bulletin and in the PCT Gazette. German file numbers for granted European patents as well as German translations of European patent specification abstracts, drawings of the first page, main claims, and supplementary protection certificates (SPC) information were added subsequently. By the end of 2003, PATDPA contained about 4.3 million records.

The database PATDD, introduced in June 1992, covers the patent publications based on applications filed with the Patent Office of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). It contains the bibliographic data, titles, abstracts, and keywords of patent documents published between 1981 and 1990. In 2003, the contents were substantially supplemented and corrected. PATDD contains more than 120 000 records.

In 2003, the new database PATDPAFULL was implemented. By the end of the year 2003 it contained the searchable full texts of about 1.3 million German patent documents of the past 17 years and the claims of utility model applications since 1999, also searchable in full text.

The German Patent and Trade Mark Office on the Internet:

Since November 1996, the GPTO has presented itself on the Internet (<http://www.dpma.de>). Increasing access rates reveal the attractiveness of the service. Compared to the year 2000 access figures have tripled. For DEPATISnet (<http://depatisnet.dpma.de>) see item VI; for Patent Register DPINFO see item II.

A general part lists the ways of contacting the GPTO: addresses, ground plans and telephone numbers. Various e-mail addresses allow to directly contact the GPTO. The information area provides information on the various types of industrial property rights for new users. Several leaflets are available online. The FAQ area gives answers to the questions most frequently asked. The current press releases of the GPTO can be viewed.

The download area provides forms, factsheets and ordinances/regulations for downloading. Applicants may obtain the necessary application forms directly via the Internet. In addition to the forms, the corresponding factsheets are available to provide information and assistance. An update page provides specific information on the changes in the data stock.

In the search area the GPTO Web pages can be searched by means of a search engine.

Further links refer to the websites of other patent offices.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

File building

The DEPATIS (in-house patent information system of the GPTO) project was successfully implemented on 1 January 2003 so that all examiners of the GPTO have been equipped with special DEPATIS PCs. Since access is provided to patent documents in electronic form, the examiners are no longer dependent on the supply of paper documents. The supply, distribution and archiving of paper documents was abandoned after a short transition period. This saves printing of approximately 3 million pages annually.

DEPATIS is a tool for examiners to conduct searches in internal, external, full text and IPC databases and combined searches. When a search has been performed, the result list will be displayed. If required, documents can be printed out on high-performance printers. The core of DEPATIS is an archive with over 40 million bibliographic data records and 30 million documents.

Since 2001, the archive has not only been available to GPTO examiners but also to the public via DEPATISnet (<http://depatisnet.dpma.de>). This service is offered free of charge.

The Beginner's mode is suitable for simple queries using provided search fields. The Expert mode assists users in creating complex queries. In this mode, users may use all defined criteria in a free query input field and combine terms to form long and complex queries using Boolean Operators. The Patent family search mode makes it possible to ascertain documents related to a specific document (members of a patent family).

Updating

The archive is updated weekly to include additional German and foreign documents. Data are imported into DEPATIS in the original language (eg JP abstracts in English, title and abstracts of French documents in French).

In a next step, it is planned to fill in the gaps in the holdings of German documents of the DEPATIS archive. In addition, the full text database of German and foreign documents will be upgraded.

At present the full texts of German documents are available from 1978 to 2004. In 2005 we intend to include the full texts of DE documents back to 1877 (for examiners of the GPTO only).

Storage, including mass storage media

DEPATIS has an open client-server architecture. The server components such as the archive system and the search system with tools for efficient full text search and the file server with user-specific data are linked to clients via a high-speed net on the basis of optical fibres.

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

In addition to DEPATIS and external hosts the patent examiners of the GPTO have access to the patent collection of the EPO via EPOQUE/Java.

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

In-house systems (online/offline)

At present, the GPTO administers more than 40 million documents for the examining work of patent examiners or for providing information to the public, which is one of the statutory tasks of the GPTO. The enormous amount of information is growing each year by more than 1.5 million documents. In order to keep it in a form that can be handled with reasonable effort a patent information system, DEPATIS, was planned at the end of the 80s. To reduce the risks, this big project was implemented in several stages. In the years 1989 to 1994 the feasibility from the technical and operational point of view was tested in a pilot project, followed by the first stage of the production system - the basic stage - in the years 1995 to 1998.

When operation started at the end of 1998, the system was made available to 120 examiners for full use.

After completion of the basic stage, the GPTO planned to install more workstations for examiners as well as further workstations in the public search room of the GPTO in Munich and at the Technical Information Centre in Berlin. Since the end of 2003 each of the 800 examiners of the GPTO has his own DEPATIS PC and can use the full functionality of the DEPATIS system on a Pentium PC with two 18" LCD screens.

The core of DEPATIS is an archive with a capacity of approx. 14 terabytes. In this archive, about 23 million patent documents of the countries most important for examination and more than 7 million Japanese abstracts are stored in form of facsimile data in high resolution (300 dpi) for displaying, printing and zooming. The data are stored on magnetic disks. Especially with consideration to the high requirements as to response times, the archive system has a modular structure; if necessary, its performance can rapidly be adapted to new requirements. These measures were necessary to provide the required short flipping rate of less than 0.5 sec for the change from one facsimile page to the next.

The full text database of DEPATIS allows searching within all German application documents ("Offenlegungsschriften"), granted patents and utility models from 1978 onwards. The database also includes documents from US (since 1850), WO (since 1978), EP (since 1987), FR (since 1981) and GB (since 1979). Altogether the database contains the full text of more than 13 million documents. For these and all other documents, the searchable bibliographic data elements may vary, but the document number and the International Patent Classification (IPC) are always available.

The GPTO has used OCR software to convert images of approximately 1 million DE and DD documents issued between 1978 and 1986 missing in the current text file. In 2005 the GPTO will convert the DE backfile from 1977 to 1877 which comprises approximately 2.7 million additional documents.

Together with other data files such as technical dictionaries, IPC indexes, catchword indexes and external databases and due to the specifically developed standardized query language for accessing all these data stocks, an integrated access to all patent documents relevant for examination is available. The results of different searches can thus be summarized without changing the media, multiple citations can be eliminated and the documents displayed on the screen without delay.

DEPATIS has an open client-server architecture. The server components such as

- the archive system containing the document data,
 - the search system with tools for efficient full text search
 - and the file server with the user-specific data
- are linked to the clients via a high-speed net on the basis of optical fibres.

Clients components are

- more than 800 examiner PCs with 2 size A 4 LCD screens each for the display of two complete document pages,
- twenty workstations at the public search room of the GPTO,
- ten workstations at the public search room of technical information centre of the GPTO in Berlin
- several data collections and operator stations.

The implementation in stages was decisive for the success of the DEPATIS project. Interim objectives were set up and monitored continually, a necessary measure for planning and ensuring the transparency of such a large and complex project. Moreover, due to the implementation in stages, the technical progress could be taken into account for the respective subsequent stages.

With the implementation of DEPATIS the GPTO successfully initiated a challenging infrastructure project. Especially due to DEPATIS the GPTO succeeded in taking an important part in the international cooperation of the major examining patent offices and is well prepared to meet the requirements of an exchange of information taking place increasingly by electronic means.

External databases

The online search in external databases and in the Internet is a very effective and valuable supplement to the search in the in-house databases of DEPATIS and EPOQUE. In 2003, the examiners of the GPTO accessed these hosts for a total of about 7 000 connect hours and used more than 150 different databases.

For state-of-the-art searches and the examination of patent applications, the GPTO uses the services of the following external hosts:

STN:.....STN International c/o FIZ Karlsruhe (Karlsruhe, Germany)
EPOQUE/Java:.....EPO Query System
FIZ Technik:..... Fachinformationszentrum Technik (Frankfurt a.M., Germany)
QUESTEL-ORBIT:..... Questel (Paris, France)
EPIDOS – INPADOC: .European Patent Office (Vienna, Austria)
DIMDI:.....Deutsches Institut für Medizinische Dokumentation und Information (Köln, Germany)

Details about these online search activities, such as the distribution of the total connect time to the different hosts and to the most important databases, may be seen from the attached table.

In addition to the databases containing technological and scientific information provided by the hosts listed above, the German Patent and Trade Mark Office has access to other information resources like the digital library Sciencedirect via the Internet. Legal information is available via databases of the Juris host (Saarbrücken, Germany).

[Connecthours2003](#) - Connect hours to external databases in 2003

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

The German Patent and Trade Mark Office is committed to offer up-to-date-service of a true service provider. This is why the DPMA2000 innovation programme, which encompasses several important projects, has been established. This programme has been set up to introduce full electronic file processing in all IPR areas by implementing future-oriented electronic systems on a step-by-step basis.

Patents and utility models

In the patents and utility models area, the GPTO intends to manage files electronically at all processing stages, including electronic receipt of applications, full electronic file processing and administration and electronic publication.

The year 2003 marked a huge progress towards this goal. The "electronic receipt of patent applications" sub-project was fully implemented. This means that any applicant can file a patent application electronically. For more information on this topic, please refer to our homepage at <http://www.dpma.de>, section "E-Dienstleistungen / Elektronische Patentanmeldung" (in German).

Moreover, we have prepared the ground for electronic file processing; the implementation of this project will start in 2004.

The publication platform of the GPTO was successfully established in 2003. From 1 January 2004, all official publications of the GPTO will be made available exclusively in electronic form at <http://publikationen.dpma.de>. This publication platform also enables the public to conduct searches for all types of IP rights.

Trade marks and industrial designs

In February 2003 the GPTO started to establish a new electronic trade mark system. The project aims at enhancing efficiency and quality of receipt, examination, registration and administration of trade marks. In 2003, the migration of data from the old systems has been prepared, application specifications consolidated and a so-called "lab demo" established, which presents the portal and the search functionalities of the new electronic trade mark system. In 2006 the new electronic trade mark system will be implemented and become fully operational.

Horizontal function services

Horizontal function services are services used by all GPTO departments, such as address administration, payment and library systems. In this area, the office has introduced a new library system in 2003.

Regarding payments, the preparatory phase will be concluded in the course of 2004 when full electronic data exchange will be established between Bundeskasse and Bundesbank. Development of an address administration system will start in 2004.

Cost/performance accounting

The overall implementation of the cost/performance accounting at the GPTO was successfully completed by introducing time accounting in the trade mark area, based on a product catalogue. In parallel, the capture software has been switched to a new system architecture. By introducing cost/performance accounting, office-wide management data have been made available for the first time, allowing the GPTO to enhance the focus on customer services.

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

The German Catchword Index (=Stich-und Schlagwörterverzeichnis) to IPC7 is available as a paper publication. Examiners can use a bilingual version (German / English) of this Catchword Index via DEPATIS.

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)

Planning, administration, automation, security, buildings

In 2003, the German Patent and Trade Mark Office selected ALEPH 500 (TM) as its new library management system, replacing the former in-house system. ALEPH 500 (TM), developed and marketed by Ex Libris Ltd., is a fully integrated library system used worldwide. It is based on a client/server architecture and enables the GPTO to handle all aspects of business. The new system became operational in November 2003. Modules for cataloguing, the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), acquisitions, circulation, serials management, user data management and Inter Library Loan are integrated in the system. The OPAC function is accessible to all examiners of the GPTO.

The collections consist of over 950 000 volumes and 1 370 journals currently subscribed to (without multiple copies). The online catalogue covers the post-1975 non-patent literature.

Collecting, acquisitions, preparation

The libraries in Munich and Berlin are among the largest technical and scientific libraries in Germany. They are a source of information on the state of the art and on industrial property protection and copyright. As reference libraries they offer a vast collection of patent documents, technical and scientific journals and monographic literature. For budgetary reasons the acquisition of non-patent literature is very restricted. Nevertheless it is intended to acquire more publications in electronic format.

Collection management, preservation

The ALEPH system (see above) is used for collection management. It is envisaged to launch a project for the preservation of the old part of the NPL collection in the coming years.

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

Besides the two patent depository libraries of the German Patent and Trade Mark Office in Munich and Berlin, there were 24 regional patent information centres (patent libraries) in the territory of the Federal Republic in 2003. These centres are run by the individual states ("Länder") of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The relationship between the GPTO and the regional patent information centres is determined by an agreement concluded in 1994. The patent information centres have access to an enhanced version of DEPATISnet ("DEPATISnet Premium"). In addition to the functionalities of DEPATISnet the Premium version allows, inter alia, to save search profiles and to download complete documents. Further on, the centres receive DE patent documents on CD-ROM (DEPAROM).

Since 1999 patent and utility model applications can also be filed with certain patent information centres.

The office library is integrated in the German national network of scientific and research libraries. Upon request of the examiners the library receives, from other network libraries, articles published in journals not subscribed to by the library and monographs. Articles are mostly received in electronic format. In return the library makes its resources available to the other libraries.

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)

DEPATISnet: (<http://depatisnet.dpma.de>)

The German Patent and Trade Mark Office has a vast store of information in the form of several million patent documents in the DEPATIS archive. Thanks to DEPATISnet, this information is available to users via the Internet. DEPATISnet includes all German patents since 1877. In addition, a large number of patent offices around the world, including those of Australia, Japan, the US, the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, France and Switzerland, have agreed to make their documents available through DEPATISnet. The core of DEPATISnet is the DEPATIS archive containing more than 23 million patent documents published worldwide, and about 7 million "Patent Abstracts of Japan". The archive is growing at a rate of more than 1.5 million documents a year.

This enormous pool of knowledge is accessible using highly advanced search tools, together with a search software tailored to the needs of both inexperienced newcomers and patent information experts. Full text searching is available for all German application documents

("Offenlegungsschriften"), granted patents and utility models from 1978 onwards. For all other documents, the searchable bibliographic data elements may vary, but the document number and the International Patent Classification (IPC) are always available.

DEPATISnet opens up a wide range of search options. It features five different search levels (or "modes"), depending on the level of prior knowledge of the user. The search form has been adapted to the requirements of a modern internet search system, making it easy to retrieve the patent data required.

DEPATISnet offers the following main features:

- choice of search mode (beginner, expert, assistant, IKOFAX or patent family)
- customised hit lists, i.e. the results lists comprise data fields selected by the user
- complex search statements using logical or numerical operators, truncation and proximity operators
- patent family retrieval using the special mode or directly from the hitlist
- refined searching in expert or IKOFAX mode for reducing the number of results in a hitlist for a more specific search result
- clear display of bibliographic data in tabular form
- display and page-by-page printout at various levels of quality
- easy navigation within a document with jump function to specific document parts, or "sub-documents" (first page, description, claims, etc)
- full-text searching where full text is available
- searches in the German version of the IPC
- optional encrypted or non-encrypted access

Patent information is very important. It forms the basis for innovation and progress. The DEPATISnet service is proof of the German Patent and Trade Mark Office's commitment to act as a modern service provider for all aspects of industrial property.

Public search rooms:

The general information services at the GPTO headquarters in Munich, the Jena sub-office and the branch office in Berlin (Technical Information Centre, TIC) answer questions of interested persons from the public, mainly from SMEs and individual inventors, concerning the application procedures of the various industrial property rights, the procedural steps, costs, right of appeal, priorities, term of validity, etc. First free-of-charge consultations with a patent attorney are being arranged for inventors upon appointment by telephone. The call centre received 600 calls daily, on the average. In addition to questions answered over the phone, inquiries in writing are answered by e-mail and by regular mail. Visitors are received at all three locations.

In the public search rooms in Munich and Berlin visitors have access to electronic and conventional search tools and data collections covering patent information from all over the world. 40 DEPATIS work stations in Munich and 10 in Berlin offer search options to the public which correspond to the options provided to examiners.

Some collections of foreign documents are not or not yet included in DEPATIS. These collections are still available in the public search rooms on paper, microfilm or on CD-ROM. The old numerical and classified collections of patent specifications from 23 countries are kept at the TIC of Berlin. Particularly, the collections from Eastern Europe and the USSR/ Russia (since 1924) are worth mentioning. As a rule, these documents are not available via DEPATIS.

Furthermore, searches in the German patent database PATDPA (STN) are carried out against payment of a fee.

The GPTO makes more than 46 million patent documents available via different media (DEPATIS, CD-ROM, micro films, paper documents).

The DPINFO IP information system is suitable for conducting searches in the patent and utility model register, in the trade mark register and the designs register for the legal and procedural status of IP rights applied for or granted in Germany.

PCs with Internet connection are available in the public search rooms so that customers may access IP information provided on the Internet - including the websites of the GPTO, EPO, WIPO and of foreign patent offices and many patent and trade mark registers.

Search facilities are available on a self service basis. In the year 2003, we had about 25 000 visitors in Munich and 22 500 in Berlin; more than 120 groups attended guided tours of the public search rooms.

Anybody may use the information provided in the two public search rooms in Munich and Berlin. The staff is pleased to advise visitors when they have questions concerning the use of the information means including the user interfaces of the various electronic media.

Since 1 October 2003, a fee is charged for the use of electronic information facilities in the public search rooms in Munich and Berlin. A one-day ticket is € 4,50, a monthly card € 70, and a one-year card € 700. A fee of € 3 per hour is charged for the use of DEPATIS since December 2003. The first hour is free for new users. Fees are waived for schoolchildren and students using the electronic information facilities and DEPATIS within the scope of their education.

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

As a result of the "Statement of Principles concerning the changeover to electronic data carriers" of WIPO, the German Patent and Trade Mark Office has sent the patent documents as well as the official publications (Patentblatt(patent gazette) etc.) to its exchange partners on CD-ROM since 2000.

These CD-ROM series consist of DEPAROM-ACT, DEPAROM-U, Patentblatt - CD-ROM and DEMAS. The versions of these CD-ROM products are regularly being improved and extended.

The publications "Blatt für PMZ" and the GPTO Annual Report are provided as printed documents.

The GPTO provides 37 foreign patent offices with patent documents on CD-ROM as well as 63 foreign offices with official publications on CD-ROM or in paper form. GPTO informs the other patent offices that German patent documents comprising more than 300 pages of manuscript are published only in electronic form in facsimile. Most of these "mega documents" are patent documents with sequence listings.

In 2004 GPTO will publish its official publications exclusively in electronic form via the Internet. It intends also to present new Internet services in 2004.

Medium used for exchange of priority documents

The German Patent and Trade Mark Office receives priority documents in paper form.

Medium allowed for filing applications

The GPTO accepts the following modes of filing:

Paper filing

For all kinds of industrial property rights (patents, trade marks, utility models, designs,...)

Electronic filing

Since October 15, 2003, patent applications can be submitted to the GPTO via the Internet or using electronic storage media like CD-R or DVD. The German online filing system is based on the software PaTrAS (Patent and Trade Mark Application System), which was developed in cooperation with several European partners (UK, DK, CH, SE, DE) as the result of the MIPEX II project. The PaTrAS system checks all text data (XML) and drawings (TIFF, JPG, PDF) for compliance with office specific rules. The corresponding PDF files of the XML data are created by PaTrAS. The archive of all application files has to be signed by an advanced signature and sent to the office as an attachment of an email. Texts must be produced as XML data files which are based on office specific document type definitions (DTD). These DTDs describe the structure of usable elements. Correct XML data files can be generated by using special templates for standard word processing systems. These templates are offered by the GPTO.

In future the GPTO will use the proposed data structure of WIPO (Annex F, proposed WIPO St. 36) as a basis for its online filing activities.

Graphical data (drawings) have to be created by using standard image software. Accepted file formats for drawings are: TIFF, JPG and PDF. In the case of a patent application only b/w drawings are accepted and checked by PaTrAS.

After validation of all application data (text files, graphical files) by PaTrAS, an archive (type: tar.gz) containing all application files is generated.

This archive has to be signed by using an advanced signature. This signed application file can be sent to a special email address of the GPTO via the Internet. Alternatively, the signed file on CD-R or DVD (DVD±R) can be sent to the office by regular mail.

Future Steps:

In the near future the GPTO will expand its online filing activities to all available industrial property rights. In addition, the PaTrAS application system will allow to transmit EP (already implemented) and PCT patent applications.

Implementation of the Statement of Principles Concerning the Changeover to Electronic Data Carriers for the Exchange of Patent Documents (please make a status report on the extent to which your Office has changed over to electronic data carriers for the exchange of patent documents)

Since the year 2000 the GPTO has changed over to electronic data carriers, the DEPAROM CD-ROM products, and implemented the statement successfully.

Within the framework of international exchange the GPTO provides the CD-ROM products DEPAROM ACT (first publications and patent specifications, claims of European patent applications in German translation and international applications in German translation) and DEPAROM-U (utility models) to its exchange partners. Other official publications of the Office in the field of patent information like the "Patentblatt" (patent gazette) are also published on CD-ROM. From 2004 onwards, all publications will be published in electronic form. See also item II "Mass storage media used".

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

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

Project „Assistance in establishing a national system of industrial property protection in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia“:

The project, organised by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), progressed to its active phase in 2003. Since January 2003, a long-term expert of the GPTO has been working at the Saudi Arabia General Directorate of Patents (KACST). Furthermore a group of five patent examiners of the KACST attended a three-week training at the GPTO in July. The experts from the GPTO instructed their Saudi Arabian counterparts in patent examination in the field of chemistry.

The GPTO organises training courses for the staff of the regional Patent Information Centres on a regular basis.

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

In 2003 the GPTO has performed 80 state-of-the-art searches for developing countries within the framework of WIPO's search assistance programs. The search requests had been received from the following countries:

Argentina 1
Chile 77
Cuba 1
Uruguay 1

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

Visits:

Owing to the constantly growing importance of the Asian economic area for the German applicants a major point of focus of the GPTO was on cooperation with the authorities of industrial property protection in Asia, in 2003. Another aim is to further extend and thoroughly strengthen the European system of industrial property protection.

The GPTO takes part in the work of EPO bodies and is actively involved in shaping the European patent system. In the field of patent law the GPTO participated in work group meetings, e.g. "Technical Information" as well as the committee "Patent Law" of the European Patent Organisation.

The tried and tested technical cooperation with international organisations and other patent offices was continued and intensified. Cooperation focused, above all, on training courses for experts of other patent offices. For the third time a workshop on "Innovation Support Services and their Management" was held at the GPTO in cooperation with WIPO for experts from developing countries. In 2003, the eleven participants came from Honduras, Nepal, Tanzania and Zambia, inter alia. As in previous years, two law courses were organised for foreign experts from different countries of Asia, Europe, and the U.S.A., being interested in German industrial property rights. A seminar on the organisation and duties of the GPTO was held, attended by a study group consisting of experts from Iran, Latvia and South Africa. A study visit at the GPTO with the focus on biotechnical applications was organised for a patent expert from the Industrial Property Office of the Czech Republic.

A highlight of 2003 was the visit of the Deputy Commissioner of the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China (SIPO) and three of his colleagues. They talked about further cooperation and the electronic patent information system of DEPATIS. A delegation of high-ranking officials of SIPO and other staff members of the Chinese government, the Ministry of Finance and the Development and Reform Commission showed interest in the procedures of patent application and patent information. A Chinese delegation was interested in the system of patent attorneys and representatives in Germany.

There were also intensive contacts with Japan. In addition to a delegation of the Japan Patent Office (JPO) and the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), the President of the Japan Institute of Invention and Innovation (JIII) visited the GPTO. Other delegations from Japan were interested in tasks in the area of patent information and information services of the German Patent and Trade Mark Office. At the end of November, a delegation of representatives of the Georgian Judicial System, headed by the Chairman of the Supreme Court of Georgia, visited the GPTO. The judges attended a lecture on the responsibilities and legal basis of the GPTO. Other visitors came from Australia, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland.

The exchange programmes with the Japan Patent Office and the UK Patent Office were continued.

Exhibitions:

In 2003 the German Patent and Trade Mark Office was again represented at a number of exhibitions and trade fairs.

First Open Day at the GPTO:

Making industrial property protection easily understandable for everyone was the underlying idea of the first Open Day hosted by the German Patent and Trade Mark Office, on July 9, 2003. With roughly 700 visitors the Open Day proved to be a popular event.

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

The patent atlas of Germany "Patentatlas Deutschland"* comprises 389 pages and contains comprehensive and detailed regional analyses of German patent activity between 1995 and 2000. Patent data are particularly suitable indicators for applied research and development and for the innovation potential involved. Many enquiries about patent data come from business, the scientific community and the media industry. The patent atlas satisfies this constant demand for information.

The presented data and analytical results may form the basis for regional structural initiatives in the field of innovation policy. The regional patent data may assist in decision-making or indicate the effectiveness of political measures. The "Patentatlas Deutschland" was published at the German Patent and Trade Mark Office, but it is not an official publication and not published regularly.

The objective of the patent atlas is to provide information on regional inventive activity, down to district level. The breakdown of patent applications by the seat of the inventor allows to identify the location of the inventive activity, even for a more detailed spatial distribution.

* „Patentatlas Deutschland - Ausgabe 2002: Dynamik und Strukturen der Erfindungstätigkeit“ by Siegfried Greif and Dieter Schmiedl, Munich 2002

Assistance furnished by offices to facilitate the changing over of receiving offices to electronic data carriers for the exchange of patent documents (see also item 4 of Chapter VI, above)

Apart from ordinary helpdesk services, provided occasionally, no additional assistance was requested by the exchange partners.

IX. Other relevant matters

- | | |
|----|---|
| 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.