

## Chapter 1700 Miscellaneous

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### 1701 Office Personnel Not To Express Opinion on Validity or Patentability of Patent

Every patent is presumed to be valid. 35 U.S.C. 282, first sentence. Public policy demands that every employee of the Patent and Trademark Office refuse to express to any person any opinion as to the validity or invalidity of, or the patentability or unpatentability of any claim in any U.S. patent, except to the extent necessary to carry out

- (A) an examination of a reissue application of the patent,
- (B) a reexamination proceeding to reexamine the patent, or
- (C) an interference involving the patent.

The question of validity or invalidity is otherwise exclusively a matter to be determined by a court. Members of the patent examining corps are cautioned to be especially wary of any inquiry from any person outside the Patent and Trademark Office, including an employee of another Government agency, the answer to which might indicate that a particular patent should not have issued.

When a field of search for an invention is requested, examiners should routinely inquire whether the invention has been patented in the United States. If the invention has been patented, no field of search should be suggested.

Employees of the Patent and Trademark Office, particularly patent examiners who examined an application which matured into a patent or a reissued patent or who conducted a reexamination proceeding, should not discuss or answer inquiries from any person outside the Pat-

ent and Trademark Office as to whether or not a certain reference or other particular evidence was considered during the examination or proceeding and whether or not a claim would have been allowed over that reference or other evidence had it been considered during the examination or proceeding. Likewise, employees are cautioned against answering any inquiry concerning any entry in the patent or reexamination file, including the extent of the field of search and any entry relating thereto. The record of the file of a patent or reexamination proceeding must speak for itself.

Practitioners can be of material assistance in this regard by refraining from making improper inquiries of members of the patent examining corps. Inquiries from members of the public relating to the matters discussed above must of necessity be refused and such refusal should not be considered discourteous or an expression of opinion as to validity or patentability.

#### 1701.01 Office Personnel Not To Testify

It is the policy of the Patent and Trademark Office that its employees, including patent examiners, will not appear as witnesses or give testimony in legal proceedings, except under the conditions specified in 15 CFR Part 15, Subpart B. Any employee who testifies contrary to this policy will be *dismissed or removed*. The reasons for this policy are set out in 15 CFR 15.13.

Whenever an employee of the Patent and Trademark Office, including a patent examiner, is asked to testify or receives a subpoena, the employee shall immediately notify the Office of the Solicitor. Inquiries requesting testimony shall be also referred immediately to the Office of the Solicitor.

Patent examiners and other Patent and Trademark Office employees performing or assisting in the performance of quasi-judicial functions, are forbidden to testify as experts or to express opinions as to the validity of any patent.

Any individual desiring the testimony of an employee of the Patent and Trademark Office, including the testimony of a patent examiner or other quasi-judicial employee, must comply with the provisions of 15 CFR Part 15, Subpart B.

A request for testimony of an employee of the Patent and Trademark Office should be made to the Office of the Solicitor at least **10 working days** prior to the date of the expected testimony.

If an employee is authorized to testify, the employee will be limited to testifying about facts within the employee's personal knowledge. Employees are prohibited from giving expert or opinion testimony. *Fischer & Porter Co. v. Corning Glass Works*, 61 F.R.D. 321, 181 USPQ 329 (E.D. Pa. 1974). Likewise, employees are prohibited from answering hypothetical or speculative questions. *In re Mayewsky*, 162 USPQ 86, 89 (E.D. Va. 1969) (deposition of an examiner must be restricted to relevant matters of fact and must avoid any hypothetical or speculative questions or conclusions based thereon); *Shaffer-Tool Works v. Joy Mfg. Co.*, 167 USPQ 170 (S.D. Tex. 1970) (deposition of examiner should be limited to matters of fact and must not go into hypothetical or speculative areas or the bases, reasons, mental processes, analyses, or conclusions of the examiner in acting upon a patent application). Employees will not be permitted to give testimony with respect to subject matter which is privileged. Several court decisions limit testimony with respect to quasi-judicial functions performed by employees. Those decisions include *United States v. Morgan*, 313 U.S. 409, 422 (1941) (improper to inquire into mental processes of quasi-judicial officer or to examine the manner and extent to which the officer considered an administrative record); *Western Electric Co. v. Piezo Technology, Inc.*, 860 F.2d 428, 8 USPQ2d 1853 (Fed. Cir. 1988) (patent examiner may not be compelled to answer questions which probe the examiner's technical knowledge of the subject matter of a patent); *McCulloch Gas Processing Co. v. Department of Energy*, 650 F.2d 1216, 1229 (Temp. Emer. Ct. App. 1981) (discovery of degree of expertise of individuals performing governmental functions not permitted); *In re Nilssen*, 851 F.2d 1401, 7 USPQ2d 1500 (Fed. Cir. 1988) (technical or scientific qualifications of examiners-in-chief are not legally relevant in appeal under 35 U.S.C. 134 since board members need not be skilled in the art to render obviousness decision); *Lange v. Commissioner*, 352 F. Supp. 166, 176 USPQ 162 (D.D.C. 1972) (technical qualifications of examiners-in-chief not relevant in 35 U.S.C. 145 action).

In view of the discussion above, if an employee is authorized to testify in connection with the employee's involvement or assistance in a quasi-judicial proceeding which took place before the Patent and Trademark Office, the employee will not be permitted to give testimony in response to questions which seek:

- (A) Information about that employee's:
  - (1) Background;
  - (2) Expertise;
  - (3) Qualifications to examine or otherwise consider a particular patent or trademark application;
  - (4) Usual practice or whether the employee followed a procedure set out in any Office manual of practice (including the MPEP or TMEP) in a particular case;
  - (5) Consultation with another Office employee;
  - (6) Understanding of:
    - (a) A patented invention, an invention sought to be patented, or patent application, patent, reexamination or interference file;
    - (b) Prior art;
    - (c) Registered subject matter, subject matter sought to be registered, or a trademark application, registration, opposition, cancellation, interference, or concurrent use file;
    - (d) Any Office manual of practice;
    - (e) Office regulations;
    - (f) Patent, trademark, or other law; or
    - (g) The responsibilities of another Office employee;
  - (7) Reliance on particular facts or arguments;
- (B) To inquire into the manner in and extent to which the employee considered or studied material in performing a quasi-judicial function; or
- (C) To inquire into the bases, reasons, mental processes, analyses, or conclusions of that Office employee in performing the quasi-judicial function.

Any request for testimony addressed or delivered to the Office of the Solicitor shall comply with 15 CFR 15.14(c). All requests must be in *writing*. The need for a subpoena may be obviated where the request complies with 15 CFR 15.14(c) if the party requesting the testimony further meets the following conditions:

- (A) The party requesting the testimony identifies the civil action or other legal proceeding for which the testimony is being taken. The identification shall include the:
  - (1) Style of the case;
  - (2) Civil action number;
  - (3) District in which the civil action is pending;
  - (4) Judge assigned to the case; and

(5) Name, address, and telephone number of counsel for all parties in the civil action.

(B) The party agrees not to ask questions seeking information which is precluded by 15 CFR 15.16(b);

(C) The party shall comply with applicable provisions of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, including Rule 30, and give 10 working days notice to the Office of the Solicitor prior to the date a deposition is desired. Fifteen working days notice is required for any deposition which is desired to be taken between November 15 and January 15;

(D) The party agrees to notice the deposition at a place convenient to the Patent and Trademark Office. The Conference Room in the Office of the Solicitor is deemed to be a place convenient to the Office; and

(E) The party agrees to supply a copy of the transcript of the deposition to the Patent and Trademark Office for its records.

Absent a written agreement meeting the conditions specified in paragraphs (A) through (E), a party must comply with the precise terms of 15 CFR 15a.4(c) and the Patent and Trademark Office will not permit a deposition without issuance of a subpoena.

## 1702 Restrictions on Former Examiners

### 37 CFR 10.10 Restrictions on practice in patent cases.

(a) Only practitioners who are registered under § 10.6 or individuals given limited recognition under § 10.9 will be permitted to prosecute patent applications of others before the Office.

(b) No individual who has served in the patent examining corps of the Office may practice before the Office after termination of his or her service, unless he or she signs a written undertaking.

(1) Not to prosecute or aid in any manner in the prosecution of any patent application pending in any patent examining group during his or her period of service therein, and

(2) Not to prepare or prosecute or to assist in any manner in the preparation or prosecution of any patent application of another (i) assigned to such group for examination and (ii) filed within two years after the date he or she left such group, without written authorization of the Director. Associated and related classes in other patent examining groups may be required to be included in the undertaking or designated classes may be excluded from the undertaking. When an application for registration is made after resignation from the Office, the applicant will not be registered if he or she has prepared or prosecuted or assisted in the preparation or prosecution of any patent application as indicated in the paragraph. Knowingly preparing or prosecuting or providing assistance in the preparation or prosecution of any patent application contrary to the provisions of this paragraph shall constitute misconduct under § 10.23(c)(13) of this part.

(c) A practitioner who is an employee of the Office cannot prosecute or aid in any manner in the prosecution of any patent application before the Office.

(d) Practice before the Office by Government employees is subject to any applicable conflict of interest laws, regulations, or codes of professional responsibility.

See also MPEP § 309.

## 1703 The Official Gazette

The *Official Gazette of the United States Patent and Trademark Office—Patents* reports every Tuesday the re-examination certificates, reissues, plant patents, utility patents, and design patents issued and statutory invention registrations (if any) published on that day. As to each patent, the following information is given:

- (A) Applicant's name;
- (B) Applicant's city and state of residence and, if unassigned, applicant's Post Office address;
- (C) Assignee's name, city and state of residence, and Post Office address, if assigned;
- (D) Filing date;
- (E) Application number;
- (F) Patent number;
- (G) Title of the invention;
- (H) Number of claims;
- (I) U.S. classification by class and subclass;
- (J) Selected figure of the drawing, if any, except in the case of a plant patent;
- (K) A claim or claims;
- (L) International classification;
- (M) U.S. parent application data, if any;
- (N) Foreign priority application data, if any; and
- (O) For reissue patents, the original patent number and issue date, and the original application number and filing date.

The *Official Gazette of the United States Patent and Trademark Office—Patents* also includes notices of patent and trademark suits, indexes of patents, disclaimers filed, Certificates of Correction issued, lists of applications and patents available for license or sale, notices of 37 CFR 1.47 applications, and general information such as orders, notices, changes in rules, changes in classification, certain adverse decisions in interferences, the condition of work in the Office, registration of attorneys and agents, reprimands, suspensions, and exclusions of registered attorneys and agents, and notices to parties not reached by mail.

*Official Gazette of the United States Patent and Trademark Office—Trademarks*. The official journal of the Patent and Trademark Office relating to trademarks is published every Tuesday. It contains an illustration of

each trademark published for opposition, a list of trademarks registered, a classified list of registered trademarks, and Patent and Trademark Office notices.

Orders should be addressed and remittances made payable to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

## 1704 Application Records and Reports

The PALM (Patent Application Locating and Monitoring) System is the automated data management system used by the Patent and Trademark Office for the retrieval and/or online updating of the computer record of each patent application. The PALM System also maintains examiner time, activity, docket, and technical support staff backlog records.

Information retrieval from PALM is by means of video display terminals or the PALM intranet. Information update is by means of video display transactions and, predominantly, by means of transactions entered via bar code readers (BCR). Among other items, classification, examiner docket, attorney, inventor, and prosecution history data as well as the location of each application can be retrieved and updated online with PALM.

### DOCKET REPORTS

The recording of changes to examiner dockets is accomplished by PALM simultaneously with the recording of incoming and outgoing communications, transfers of applications to and from dockets, and other types of updating of the application record. The status of each examiner's docket can be determined by means of online video display transactions or the PALM intranet and is supplemented by periodic printed reports. Docket reports that are generated by PALM include the individual examiner; new, special, and amended docket which lists applications in priority order; the individual examiner rejected application docket; the individual examiner new application profile, which lists the totals of new applications in each docket, sorted by month of filing; and various summaries of the above reports at the group art unit, group, and corps levels.

## BIWEEKLY TIME AND ACTIVITY REPORTS

All reporting of examiner time and activity is on a bi-weekly basis. Each examiner's examining and non-examining time, as listed on the examiners' Biweekly Time Worksheet, PTO-690E, is entered into PALM for use in the computation of productivity data. The biweekly reports produced include the individual Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report which lists, by application number, all applications for which actions have been counted during the biweekly period. The type of action counted for each application is also indicated on the report. This report also includes examiner time data, an action summary, and cumulative summaries to date for the current quarter and fiscal year. Various summary reports at the Art Unit, Group, and Corps levels are also produced.

## 1705 Examiner Docket, Time, and Activity Recordation

Actions prepared by examiners are submitted to their respective legal instrument examiners for processing in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

### PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AN EXAMINER'S ACTION

(A) The examiner completes an Examiner's Case Action Worksheet, Form PTO-1472, which identifies the type of action prepared. The worksheet is attached to the application for processing by the legal instrument examiner;

(B) The legal instrument examiner checks the worksheet to verify that the examiner provided all necessary information relating to that action;

(C) The legal instrument examiner enters the type of action and the count date thereof on the Contents flap of the file wrapper; and

(D) The legal instrument examiner enters the examiner's action for the application directly into PALM using a bar code reader (BCR).

Each examiner's action that is counted and reported to the PALM system will be listed by application number on the Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report. The examiner should check his/her Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report to verify that all applications worked on for the biweekly report period are properly listed.

Examples of examiner's actions that are reported to PALM by the legal instrument examiner, but are not listed on the Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report, include examiner's amendments, actions in

reexamination proceedings, interview summaries, transfers of applications, and supplemental Office actions and miscellaneous Office letters which do not set a period for reply.

FORM PTO-1472  
(Rev. 3-95)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

**EXAMINER'S CASE ACTION WORKSHEET**

Application No. _____		Legal Instrument Examiner _____
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CHECK TYPE OF ACTION

DATE OF COUNT \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Non-Final Rejection</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Restriction/Election Only</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Final Rejection</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ex Parte Quayle</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allowance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Advisory Action</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Examiner's Answer</b> <small>(Including Supplemental)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reply Brief Noted</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Non-Entry of Reply Brief</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Notice of Defective Appeal Brief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Interference SPE</b> _____ <small>Approval for Disposal</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Suspension SPE</b> _____ <small>(Initial)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allowance After Examiner's Answer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>SIR Disposal</b> <small>(use only after FAOM)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Post-Allowance Communication</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Miscellaneous Office Letter</b> <small>(With Shortened Statutory Period Set)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Notice of Non-Responsive Amendment</b> <small>(With One Month Time Limit Set)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Miscellaneous Office Letter</b> <small>(No Response Period Set)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Letter Requiring Formal Drawings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Supplemental Action</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Response to a Rule 312 Amendment</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Restart Time Period</b> <small>(e.g., Missing References)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Interview Summary</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Authorization to Change Previous Office Action</b> <b>SPE</b> _____ <small>(Initial)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Abandonment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Express Abandonment</b> Date: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Abandonment After Examiner's Answer</b>

Examiner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ GAU: \_\_\_\_\_

### COUNTING OF FIRST ACTION ON THE MERITS (FAOM)

Office actions on the merits consist of rejections (final and non-final), *Ex parte Quayle* actions, and allowances.

The first time an examiner performs one of the above merit actions, he/she receives credit for a First Action on the Merits (FAOM) on the production reports.

A second/subsequent but First Action on the Merits (FAOM) action usually occurs when the first action is a restriction/election only action and the second action is a merit action. The examiner indicates the type of second action on the Examiner's Case Action Worksheet, and the PALM system will automatically determine if it is a FAOM. If the second action is a FAOM, the action will be listed and credited on the Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report as a Second/Subsequent FAOM.

### COUNTING OF DISPOSALS

An examiner receives a "disposal" count for the following actions:

- (A) Allowance;
- (B) Abandonment;
- (C) Examiner's Answer;
- (D) International Preliminary Examination Report;
- (E) SIR disposal (only after a FAOM; see MPEP § 1101); and
- (F) Interference wherein the application would be in condition for allowance but for the interference.

These same items constitute the "disposals" for performance evaluation of examining art units and groups. However, disposals at the Office level consist only of allowances and abandonments.

For either an allowance or an abandonment after an Examiner's Answer or decision by a court or the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, no disposal credit is received, though these actions are indicated on the Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report.

### CORRECTION INFORMATION

(A) If any information is either missing from or incorrect on the Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report, the examiner should promptly notify the legal instrument examiner by providing all the pertinent information necessary to make the changes to the PALM

system (e.g., examining hours, application number, type of action, etc.).

(B) The legal instrument examiner will report the necessary changes and corrections directly into PALM. These changes will be listed on the next Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report.

(C) If any information is missing from the last Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report of a quarter (except at the end of a fiscal year) or is incorrect, the examiner should promptly notify the legal instrument examiner and his/her Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE). The legal instrument examiner will make the appropriate changes directly into the PALM system. The changes will be listed on the next Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report. However, these changes will not be reflected in the last Quarter's Report; the examiner's SPE may manually make an adjustment to the records to show these changes.

(D) In order to ensure that all PALM reports are correct at the end of the fiscal year (rating period), a special correction cycle is provided on the PALM system. If any information is missing from or is incorrect on the last Biweekly Examiner Time and Activity Report, the examiner should immediately notify the legal instrument examiner and his/her SPE. These changes will be reflected in the examiner's final biweekly report for the entire fiscal year.

### 1706 Disclosure Documents

The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) maintains for 2 years "Disclosure Documents" as evidence of the dates of conception of inventions.

#### THE PROGRAM

A paper disclosing an invention and signed by the inventor or inventors may be forwarded to the PTO by the inventor or inventors, by the owner of the invention, or by the attorney or agent of the inventor(s) or owner. The Disclosure Document will be retained for 2 years and then be destroyed unless it is referred to in a separate letter in a related application filed within those 2 years.

Disclosure Documents may also be filed at selected Patent and Trademark Office Depository Libraries, presently including the Sunnyvale Center for Innovation, Inventions, and Ideas; the Detroit Public Library; and the Fondren Library at Rice University. A current listing is available from the PTO's Patent and Trademark Depository Library Program office. The

documents are date-stamped and numbered at these PTDLs. One copy of the document is retained at the PTDL for its records. Original documents are sent to the PTO for fee collection, processing, and retention.

The Disclosure Document is not a patent application, and the date of its receipt in the PTO will not become the effective filing date of any patent application subsequently filed. However, like patent applications, these documents will be kept in confidence by the PTO.

This program does not diminish the value of the conventional witnessed and notarized records as evidence of conception of an invention. It should provide a more credible form of evidence than that provided by the popular practice of mailing a disclosure to oneself or another person by registered mail. A Disclosure Document is available to the public when a patent application which refers to it issues as a patent.

#### CONTENT OF DISCLOSURE DOCUMENT

The benefits provided by the Disclosure Document will depend upon the adequacy of the disclosure. It is recommended that the document be a clear and complete explanation of the manner and process of making and using the invention. This description must be in sufficient detail to enable a person having ordinary knowledge in the field of the invention to make and use the invention. When the nature of the invention permits, a drawing or sketch should be included.

#### PREPARATION OF THE DOCUMENT

To facilitate the PTO's electronic data capture and storage of the Disclosure Document, it must be on white paper having dimensions not to exceed 8½ by 11 inches (21.6 by 28.0 cm.) with each page numbered. Text and drawings must be sufficiently dark to permit reproduction with commonly used office copying machines. Oversized papers, even if foldable to the above dimensions, will not be accepted. Attachments such as videotapes and working models will not be accepted and will be returned.

#### OTHER ENCLOSURES

The Disclosure Document must be accompanied by a separate signed cover letter stating that it is submitted by, or on behalf of, the inventor and requesting that the material be received into the Disclosure Document Pro-

gram. The inventor's request may take the following form:

**"The undersigned, being the inventor of the disclosed invention, requests that the enclosed papers be accepted under the Disclosure Document Program, and that they be preserved for a period of two years."**

The original submission will not be returned. A notice with an identifying number and date of receipt in the PTO will be mailed to the customer, indicating that the Disclosure Document may be relied on only as evidence and that a patent application should be diligently filed if patent protection is desired.

#### DISPOSITION

The Disclosure Document is retained by the PTO for 2 years. After that time, it will be destroyed unless referred to in a separate letter in a related patent application filed within the 2-year period. A letter must be filed in the related patent application, identifying not only the patent application but also the Disclosure Document by its title, number, and date of receipt. Acknowledgment of such letters will be made in the next official communication or in a separate letter from the PTO. Unless it is desired to have the PTO retain the Disclosure Document beyond the 2-year period, it is not required that it be referred to in a patent application.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When a paper referring to a Disclosure Document is filed in a patent application within 2-years after the filing of a Disclosure Document, the examining group technical support staff member either prepares (1) a memorandum indicating that a reference to Disclosure Document No. -- has been made in Patent Application No. --, or (2) a copy of the paper filed in the application referring to the Disclosure Document. The memorandum or copy is forwarded to the Customer Contact Team of the Office of Initial Patent Examination (OIPE).

Upon receipt, the Customer Contact Team of the OIPE prepares a retention label (PTO-150) and attaches it to the Disclosure Document, so indicates on the forwarded memo or copy, and returns the memo or copy to the group. The returned memo or copy is stapled to the inside left flap of the file wrapper so that the examiner's attention is directed to it when the next Office action is prepared. If prosecution before the examiner has been concluded, a separate letter indicating that the



Disclosure Document will be retained should be sent to the applicant by the examining group technical support staff member.

After the acknowledging letter is mailed, the paper number of the acknowledgement is noted in the application file. The returned memo or copy is stapled to and retained with the original paper referring to the Disclosure Document in the file wrapper.

#### FEE

The fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.21(c) is \$10. Full payment must accompany the Disclosure Document when it is submitted to the PTO.

#### NOTICE TO INVENTORS

The 2-year retention period should not be considered to be a "grace period" during which the inventor can wait to file his or her patent application without possible loss of benefits. It must be recognized that in establishing priority of invention an affidavit or testimony referring to a Disclosure Document must usually also establish diligence in completing the invention or in filing the patent application since the filing of the Disclosure Document.

Inventors not familiar with the requirement of "diligence in completing the invention" or "reduction to practice" under the U.S. patent law are advised to consult an attorney or agent registered to practice before the PTO. A publication, *Attorneys and Agents Registered to Practice Before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office*, is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Patent attorneys and agents may be found in the telephone directories of most major cities. Also, many large cities have associations of patent attorneys that may be consulted.

Inventors are also reminded that any public use or sale in the United States or publication of the invention more than 1 year prior to the filing of a patent application on that invention may prohibit the granting of a patent on it.

There is a nationwide network of Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries (PTDLs), which have collections of patents and patent-related reference materials available to the public, including automated access to PTO data bases. Publications such as *General Information Concerning Patents* are available at the PTDLs. To find out the location of the PTDL closest to you, please consult the complete listing of all PTDLs that

appears in every issue of the *Official Gazette* or call the PTO General Information Services Division at (703) 308-HELP/4357 or 1-800-786-9199. To ensure assistance from a PTDL staff member, you may wish to contact a PTDL prior to visiting to learn about its collections, services, and hours.

#### 1711 U.S.—Philippines Search Exchange

The United States—Philippines search exchange program involves patent applications filed in the United States which are subsequently followed by corresponding applications filed in the Republic of the Philippines and patent applications filed in the Philippines subsequently followed by corresponding applications filed in the United States.

The program operates as follows:

The applicant files his or her application in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office which will process the application in the normal manner and examine the application in the usual time sequence.

If the applicant should later file a corresponding application in the Philippines Patent Office, he or she may elect to use the special filing procedure. Under this special filing procedure, applicant files his or her application in the Philippines accompanied by a notice of election to participate in the special procedure, which notice of election contains a certification that the description (excluding references to related applications), claims, and drawings are identical to those of the corresponding application originally filed in the United States. The earlier filed application must be fully identified, and, in applications without a claim of priority, a certified copy of the earlier filed U.S. application must be submitted to the Philippines Patent Office. In addition, applicant must also agree that all amendments to his or her U.S. application will also be made with respect to his or her application filed in the Philippines.

In the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, applicant will regularly file two copies of each amendment. One copy must be marked "Copy for Philippines Patent Office." Upon termination of prosecution, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office shall remove all copies so marked from the U.S. file and promptly forward the same to the Philippines Patent Office.

Election forms for participation in this special program must be signed in duplicate and simultaneously accompany the application to be filed in the Philippines.

Upon receipt of properly filed notice of election, the Philippines Patent Office will notify the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office of the election by forwarding one copy of the election forms to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The Philippines Patent Office will defer action on the Philippines application pending receipt of information as to the disposition of the application by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. If no such information is received by the Philippines Office within a reasonable amount of time from the date of filing in the Philippines, the Philippines Office may, either on its own initiative, or at applicant's request, inquire as to the status of the U.S. application and, if desired, proceed with its own independent examination.

Upon disposal of the application by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, appropriate information will be sent to the Philippines Patent Office which will include all necessary identifying data, whether allowed or abandoned, notice of allowance, copies of documents cited during examination, a copy of the last office action and, when necessary, any earlier actions which may be included by reference in the last action. The Philippines Office will then make their own complete office action based upon the claims as amended with U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, performing whatever checks desired and searching for copending interfering applications. Alternatively, the Philippines may request applicant to show cause why the results of the U.S. examination should not be accepted in the Philippines. All avenues of appeal will remain open to the applicant.

Where copending applications are cited and applied during examination in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, full examination will not be forwarded to the Philippines Patent Office, and the fact that a U.S. copending application was cited would be noted as a matter of information, since such references are inapplicable in the Philippines.

Where the application originates in the Philippines Patent Office and is subsequently filed in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, a similar procedure as outlined above, consonant with U.S. law, will be followed.

It is believed that this program will facilitate the handling of U.S. origin applications filed in the Republic of the Philippines resulting in a savings in time and expense of prosecution to U.S. applicants.

## **1720 Dissemination of Court and Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences Decisions**

### **COURT DECISIONS**

The Office of the Solicitor forwards to the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Patents copies of all recent court decisions in patent cases where a precedential opinion is issued. The Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Patents will routinely provide copies of these opinions to Group Directors, the Patent Academy, and the Director of the Office of Patent Quality Review.

Directors, in turn, are to make copies available to supervisors and other individuals as the Director determines to be appropriate. Directors are encouraged to discuss the contents of the opinions in their staff meetings, particularly where such meetings are being held to reinforce examination quality.

### **BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES DECISIONS**

A decision rendered by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (Board) is returned to the examiner through the Group Director and the examiner's supervisor. The examiner takes action consistent with the decision rendered by the Board unless reconsideration of the Board decision will be requested (MPEP § 1214.04). The Director may circulate and discuss the decision among some or all of the supervisors in the Group, and the supervisors, in turn, may circulate the decision among the examiners in their art units, depending on the subject matter or issues in the decisions.

## **1721 Treatment of Court and Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences Decisions Affecting Patent and Trademark Office Policy and Practice**

In the event the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (Board) or court decision is one that significantly adds to the body of law by, for example, addressing a new legal or procedural issue, or providing a new interpretation of a prior decision, such a decision may result in an internal PTO memorandum pointing out the significance of the decision to the examination process.

When any examiner or supervisor in the Patent Examining Corps concludes that a recent decision of the

Board or a court affects existing PTO policy or practice, he or she should bring the matter to the attention of his/her Group Director through normal chain-of-command procedures.

When the Group Director believes that guidance to the Corps is warranted as a result of a decision, the Director should consult with the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Patent Policy and Projects and provide a draft of the guidance that is recommended as appropriate under the circumstances. The Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Patent Policy and Projects will then consult appropriate Office officials, as necessary, to formulate a recommendation to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents on the policy implications of the opinion.

It may be necessary for the Commissioner, Solicitor, Chief Administrative Patent Judge, A/C for Patents, Deputy A/C for Patent Policy and Projects, Deputy A/C for Patents and Director making the recommendation to meet to review and discuss the policy ramifications of the case enabling the Commissioner to decide how the PTO will proceed.

Communication of the decision on the policy implications of the court or Board decision will normally take place by either notice in the *Official Gazette* and/or via memorandum to PTO personnel. Ultimately, the policy implications of the decision will be officially incorporated into the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure and Patent Academy curriculum materials during the next update cycle for these reference materials.

## 1730 Information Sources

### IN GENERAL

General information about patents, trademarks, products and services offered by the Patent and Trademark Office, and other related information, can be obtained 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, by calling PTO's automated message system at:

800-PTO-9199 or 703-308-HELP

(FAX) 703-305-7786

(TDD) 703-305-7785

For other technical patent information needs, the Patent Assistance Center can be reached through customer service representatives at the above numbers, Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST/EDT.

For questions or concerns relating to other technical trademark matters, the Trademark Assistance Center can be reached at 703-308-9000 or by facsimile at 703-308-7016.

In addition, the PTO web site (<http://www.uspto.gov/>) provides a wealth of information to all users. Of particular interest is the General Information page, which offers links to recent publications (including *Official Gazette* notices back to 1964, the MPEP, press releases, speeches, hearings, and public comments); a variety of searchable and browsable general references (notably PTO addresses and telephone numbers, an employee telephone locator, and the attorneys and agents roster); and major outreach programs (such as the PTDL, Technology Assessment and Forecast, and Public Search Room programs). In addition, the web site allows downloading of a variety of PTO forms (including PCT forms), information on ordering copies of patents and trademarks, a list of all current fees, access to various legal materials, links to related web sites, etc. The PTO web site also offers access to two database collections, i.e., the PatBib Patent Database and the AIDS Patent Database. The PatBib Patent Database provides the public with very flexible and powerful searching of the first-page bibliographic information and abstracts for all patents from January 1, 1976 to the present. It is updated each Tuesday as the O.G. is issued. The AIDS Patent Database is designed to provide AIDS researchers with a central reference to related text and image patent data from selected U.S., European or Japanese Patent Office patents which may be of value in their work. It is updated monthly, or as the contributing offices make data available.

### PCT

For questions and information concerning the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the PCT Help Desk is available to provide assistance and may be reached by telephone at (703) 305-3257 between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:30 pm (EST/EDT), Monday through Friday, or by facsimile at (703) 305-2919, 24 hours a day. In addition, helpful information is available through the internet at the PCT Legal Office page (<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapps/pct/>) and at the World Intellectual Property Office web site (<http://www.wipo.org/>).

### PTO SEARCH AND INFORMATION RESOURCE FACILITIES

The following PTO search and information resource facilities are accessible to the public:

(A) Patent Search Room (Crystal Plaza 3, 1A03) at (703) 308-0595

(Hours: Weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., EST/EDT);

(B) Patent Image Retrieval (Crystal Mall 1, 1A02) at (703) 308-6001

(Hours: Weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., EST/EDT);

(C) Patent Assignment Search Room (Crystal Plaza 3, 2C03) at (703) 308-2768

(Hours: Weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EST/EDT); and

(D) Scientific and Technical Information Center (Crystal Plaza 3/4, 2C08) at (703) 308-0810

(Hours: Weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EST/EDT).

### MISCELLANEOUS

For information and questions concerning recently filed patent applications and filing receipts, contact the Customer Service Center of the Office of Initial Patent Examination at (703) 308-1202 (hours: weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EST/EDT. For receipt of mail only: weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 12 midnight, EST/EDT). For information on the status of a patent application, or to order file histories for self-service copying, contact the File Information Unit at (703) 308-2733.

Inquiries regarding certified copies of documents, including patent applications—as-filed, patent related file wrappers, patent copies, and reproduced copies of individual replacement pages or previous revisions of the MPEP, should be directed to the Certification Division at (703) 308-9726 or 1-800-972-6382. Orders for certified copies may be placed by facsimile when paying by VISA/Mastercard or PTO Deposit Account at (703) 308-7048. Orders for uncertified copies of patents may be placed by phone at (703) 305-8716 or by fax at (703) 305-8759.

Information regarding maintenance fees may be obtained by contacting the Status and Entity Division at (703) 308-5068.

For matters decided by the Office of Petitions, the appropriate PTO personnel may be reached at (703) 305-9282 or by facsimile at (703) 308-6916.

Current patent classification information can be obtained by calling (703) 305-5227.

To obtain a list of registered patent attorneys and agents for a particular area, applicants may either write to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Box OED, Washington, D.C., 20231, contact a customer service representative through PTO's automated message system (see "In General" above), or acquire the information from the PTO web site.

For information regarding orders for the PatentIn software program, call the Office of Electronic Information Products and Services at (703) 306-2600. For assistance using PatentIn, call (703) 287-0200.

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