

Fiscal Year 1997

A Patent and Trademark Office Review



Creating a
Patent and
Trademark
System for the
21st Century





U.S. Department of Commerce
William M. Daley, Secretary

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Bruce A. Lehman, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks



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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER



We are proud of the progress and accomplishments the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) has made over the last year. Our patent grants, trademark registrations, and information dissemination put us in the forefront of the effort to secure effective protection for the products of American minds. Our participation in international consultations and negotiations helps our nation develop and maintain intellectual property protection in the global marketplace.

Domestically, our increasing workload is a testament to the ingenuity and productivity of our innovators and clear evidence of the U.S. economy's vitality. In fiscal year 1997, we received 237,045 patent applications—a 14.9 percent increase over the previous year; trademark applications grew by 11.8 percent to 224,355; and general information requests from the public increased 52 percent! We look forward to continued growth in FY 1998.

Internationally, we successfully negotiated two treaties under the auspices of the World Intellectual Property

Organization (WIPO) in December 1996. When they enter into force, the treaties will promote the growth of international electronic commerce and help curtail infringement in cyberspace. The bipartisan ratification package and implementing legislation for the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty are now under consideration in the Congress.

Another bipartisan Congressional effort is the legislation to reform certain aspects of the patent laws and recast the PTO as a government corporation, under the policy guidance of the Department of Commerce. If enacted, the legislation would ensure that the patent system and the PTO could effectively promote the progress of useful arts into the next century.

To prepare for the years ahead, we continue to concentrate on customer-driven strategic planning and operations management. By focusing on efficiently issuing quality patents, registering quality trademarks, and providing up-to-date information, we are strengthening the intellectual property protection and awareness that is vital to our inventors, entrepreneurs, and the American people.



In FY 1997, Vice President Gore selected the PTO as a High Impact Agency under the auspices of the National Performance Review. The PTO established reinvention goals for the year 2000, and is committed to achieving many of these goals by the end of FY 1999.

The future for the Patent and Trademark Office holds many challenges that are not unlike those faced by businesses, families, and individuals. Money, space, staffing, time, and automation are issues that we must

grapple with in both the short- and long-term. I am confident that no matter how great the challenge or how sensitive the issue, the PTO will find opportunities to create new ways of improving our service to better serve our customers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce A. Lehman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce A. Lehman
Assistant Secretary of Commerce and
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

PTO HIGHLIGHTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

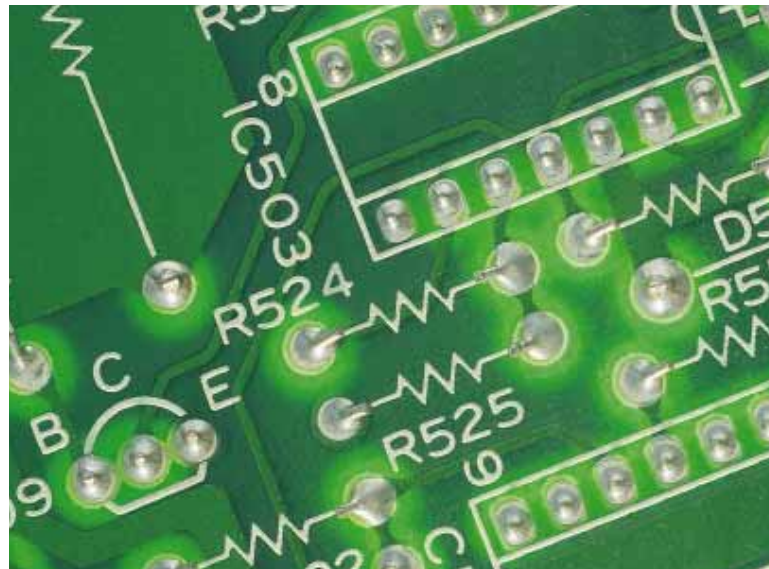


⚙️ THE PTO RECEIVED 237,045 PATENT APPLICATIONS AND 224,355 TRADEMARK APPLICATIONS.

✳️ THE PTO ISSUED 122,977 PATENTS AND REGISTERED 112,509 TRADEMARKS.

🌱 THE PTO DESIGNATED ITS THIRD PARTNERSHIP LIBRARY IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.

⚡ THE PTO INTEGRATED ITS INTERNAL E-MAIL WITH INTERNET E-MAIL, ENABLING EMPLOYEES TO COMMUNICATE ELECTRONICALLY FROM THEIR DESKTOP COMPUTERS WITH CUSTOMERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS.



↳ THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK DEPOSITORY LIBRARY (PTDL) NETWORK EXPANDED TO 81 LIBRARIES AND NOW COVERS ALL 50 STATES, WASHINGTON, DC AND PUERTO RICO.

® A PROTOTYPE OF THE TRADEMARK ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SYSTEM BECAME AVAILABLE ON THE PTO WORLD WIDE WEB SITE.



✦ THE PTO'S WEBSITE, CITED BY SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS AS ONE OF THE BEST ON THE INTERNET, WAS ACCESSED AN AVERAGE OF 400,000 TIMES PER MONTH.

⚗ THE INFORMATION DISSEMINATION ORGANIZATIONS (IDO) RESPONDED TO ALMOST 800,000 CUSTOMER REQUESTS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION, UP A TOTAL OF 52 PERCENT FROM FY 1996.

