

A Patent and Trademark Office Review

Century of American Invention



FISCAL YEAR 1999

®

All forms of intellectual property protection—patents, trademarks, and copyrights—uphold the philosophy of rewarding individual effort as the best way of utilizing the talents of creators to advance public welfare. Intellectual property is a potent force in the competitive free enterprise system. By protecting intellectual endeavors and encouraging technological progress, we seek to preserve the United States' technological edge, which is a key to our current and future competitiveness.

The U.S. patent system establishes a contract between the government and the inventor. In exchange for the temporary right to exclude others from practicing the invention, the inventor must disclose the invention, thereby enabling further innovation and progress. Equally as important, trademark protection is essential to the marketing of new products and services. Businesses need a presumption of ownership and of the right to use their trademarks before committing millions of dollars through their production and marketing decisions, and consumers rely on trademarks to ensure that they get what they pay for.

In addition to processing patent and trademark applications, we disseminate patent and trademark information. By doing so, we promote an understanding of intellectual property protection and facilitate the developments and sharing of new technologies world-wide.



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

United States Patent and Trademark Office
Q. Todd Dickinson
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Innovation

Patented Apr. 21, 1885

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touching the lives of every American.
Bicycles to biotechnology, each
new idea transforming the way we
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