

WIPO



IPC/WG/2/2

ORIGINAL: English only

DATE: November 22, 1999

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

GENEVA

**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION
(IPC UNION)**

IPC REVISION WORKING GROUP

Second Session

Geneva, November 23 to December 3, 1999

DEVELOPMENT OF A GENERAL QUESTION AND
ANSWER PAMPHLET ON THE APPLICATION OF THE IPC

prepared by the International Bureau

The Annex to this document contains a report submitted by the United States of America on the development of a general question and answer pamphlet on the application of the IPC.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office
ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND COMMISSIONER
OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

28 October, 1999

Mr. Mikhail Makarov
Head, IPC Section,
Classification and Patent
Information Division,
World Intellectual Property Organization
34, chemin des Colombettes
1211 Geneva 20
SWITZERLAND

Re: Development of a General Question And Answer Pamphlet on the Application of the
IPC

Dear Mr. Makarov:

US was designated as Rapporteur for the Task of developing a general "Question and Answer Pamphlet on the Application of the IPC" that is included in the Committee's work Program (IPC/WG/1/2, paragraphs 19-21, & 29). It is our understanding that the current scope of this task is merely to develop an introductory level training tool that concentrates on frequently asked questions (FAQ) about basic IPC concepts. This pamphlet is intended primarily for non-initiated users of patent information and should contain basic introductory material.

As of today, the US has not received any material relating to this task from other IPOs as requested in paragraph 21 of the Report. Consequently, there has been no progress on elaboration of this task by our Office at this time. To help encourage other IPOs to provide information for this task, we are sending the attached letter to those IPOs that attended our last meeting. Hopefully this will generate some interest.

However, we believe that while it is useful to collect this training material, there is a basic flaw in the suggested approach to creating a booklet. The material we are currently collecting from IPOs is for training people in the use of the IPC, the booklet we are tasked to write will be on using the new IPC (NIPC). The questions and answers that would be developed based on this older material, if reform is successful, would frequently be useless, or incorrect, for the future NIPC. Much of the past practice of the IPC will be significantly altered. Accordingly, the main benefit of using this older IPC training material is to create a basic outline for the NIPC booklet of useful topics. This material may also be helpful in locating deviations in training answers among the IPOs for existing problems. Corrective action would need to be taken in these situations by the Reform WG to clarify problem areas and designate future policy.

For example, how definitions are used in the NIPC is a useful question to include within the NIPC Question and Answer Pamphlet. However, the answer to this question currently has a different answer in the existing IPC and the information must be modified. Another example would be the portion of the information currently included in the IPC schemes/schedules that may be relocated to other areas (e.g., references or formulae may be separately provided for with the definition of a group).

Nevertheless, the most difficult training questions to answer will obviously be related to the use of the two levels of the NIPC. There is no current information directly related to the training needs for this subject. Some useful training information may need to be incorporated from FI/F-terms and ECLA training material for the second level. However, it is premature to analyze this material until the content and rules for the second level progress closer to their final stage of completion. For example, are placement rules going to be the same for the two levels?

With this in mind, perhaps the task should be expanded. The expansion might include having the Rapporteur do the following steps:

1. Analyze the approved changes to the IPC made by the Reform Working Group.
2. Collect and review existing IPC training material to see where new material needs to be added and old material deleted.
3. Generate a draft of a proposed policy for the change after each change has progressed beyond a certain level of finality in the WG, (e.g., group definitions are located at and include the following information).
4. Submit the draft policy to the Reform Working Group who will modify it when needed.
5. Include the finally approved policy in Question and Answer Pamphlet.

The finalized developed policy for each change would also need to be included by the WG in either the NIPC Guide or in the "Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation" when more detailed explanations on use are required. These would of course use more official terminology, specificity, and format than the training pamphlet.

While the approach we suggest is somewhat unconventional in that the training material for the pamphlet would be 'finalized' prior to the wording in the Guide, it is probably the most expeditious method to follow. It has the advantage of having the WG solve the most common searching questions in simple clear language for the new user prior to developing more extensive material for the experts in the Guide that will be more complex and difficult to understand.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Saifer, Director
International Liaison Staff

Enclosure
cc Reform WG Members

Re: Development of a general question and answer pamphlet on the application of the IPC

As Rapporteur of the task assigned to the IPC Reform Group to develop a general question and answer pamphlet on the application of the NIPC (geared toward non-initiated users of patent information), the following suggestions are proffered to initiate the influx of information we are anticipating from other offices.

As for presentation, we suggest that the pamphlet have the IB's name and logo on the front cover and the address and contact telephone number(s), e-mail addresses, etc., on the back.

We further suggest including, at the beginning of the pamphlet, a synopsis setting forth a brief history of the IPC and NIPC, along with some basic information about the system. The remainder of the pamphlet will be devoted to "Frequently Asked Questions About The NIPC" along with the answers.

To assist in developing the synopsis and questions and answers to be included, we feel that referral to the WIPO publication, "General Information on the Sixth Edition of the International Patent Classification" (1995 edition) and other training material from the IB will be helpful. We also feel that informative questions and answers can be elaborated from training modules that offices have developed for new users of the IPC. Also actual questions on the IPC that have been received from users of the system, (e.g., patent examiners, classifiers; patent attorneys and agents; personnel and users of patent depository libraries; inventors and other patent practitioners) could be a good source.

Suggestions from other offices on the style and content are encouraged and will be incorporated upon agreement and acceptance by the IB and participating offices.

[End of Annex and of document]