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Digital Transformation Task Force WIPO CWS 10 Meeting

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DTTF Status

- As leader of the Digital Transformation Task Force, the USPTO would like to thank the 40 IP Offices that responded to the C.CWS 155 circular issued by the Secretariat in March of this year.

- The work of the task force this year focused on analysis of the survey responses.

Survey Analysis

- The most commonly used file format is PDF, followed by paper and DocX. Additionally, Offices provide users with a function for a metadata scrubbing and most provide real time validation feedback to assist applicants during filing.

Survey Analysis (cont)

- The survey also highlighted the importance of the original submission of the patent application from applicants. Most consider this the authoritative copy and most respondents indicated that the original submission is preserved throughout the patent application processing workflow, for both administration purposes and for examination purposes.

- Many Offices also render the associated xml for users.

- There is a clear preference for Offices to always maintain the original submission in its original form, along with any conversions needed to process the data for internal workflow. The Digital Transformation Task Force will need to take this into consideration in any future plans.

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FURTHER ACTIONS

- From the results of the survey, it is clear Offices have varying practices and tools for their internal processing. Offices also have varying IT priorities and IT roadmaps for future work.

- Based on this information, the Task Force Leader recommends to develop a plan for the Task Force to work on bringing uniformity to two areas of the patent application process:

  ✓ INTAKE

  ✓ EXPORT

These two areas are the most likely to be workable in terms of commonality between Offices and will also be helpful to the applicant.

Intake

Most Offices require similar information on Intake, with the basics such as bib data, claims, specification, abstract and drawings. The Task Force should explore the use of DocX to XML conversion as an option for Offices.

At the USPTO, we highly encourage applicants to submit applications in DocX format.
As of Jan 1, 2023, there will be a surcharge for all filings which are not in DocX format. The benefits of this submission format include
>   *-Readily converted to XML*
>   *-Higher data quality: reduces conversion errors that can occur when converting to a PDF file*
>   *-Detection of common errors, such as formatting errors, and the ability to provide instant*
feedback to prevent unnecessary delays in processing applications.
>   *-There is improved application quality: provides content-based validations pre-submission,*
identifying issues up front and allowing for them to be addressed before examination begins.
>   *-Application Management: DOCX data allows future reuse of content and delivering new powerful*
features such as improved searching for patent applications and submissions due to direct access to
text

Our current plans are to begin discussions on the DOCX to XML conversion process. USPTO uses a converter for this function and would like to hear from other Offices that accept DocX and the conversion tool and process used.

We consider it would be beneficial to all Offices, for the DTTF to develop a common technical specification for DocX to XML conversion and to consider the use of ST.96 as the format for the XML. We look forward to continued discussions in the DTTF on sharing of existing conversion practices.

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Export / Publication

Most Offices offer publications in one or more formats.

The Task Force encourages all Offices to provide their publications in a common ST.96 format along with other existing formats.

This will help users of patent information to have at least one common format they can rely when using patent information.

Note: Several Offices (10) indicated that they plan to discontinue physical publication in the next five years. This would be the ideal time for these Offices to move towards publication in ST.96 format.

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Request for comments

- We also look forward to hear from CWS members on their existing tools and practices for the conversion of applicant submitted data to XML, more specifically in reference to conversion of DocX to XML.

- We look forward hear from CWS members on feasibility for the implementation of ST.96 at the Intake and at Export (publication) of application data.

Questions