



Applicant name standardization

CWS/5, Agenda item 17

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Workshop on applicant name standardization

- Geneva, September 5, 2016
- Results
 - Discussion forum (IPOs, industry, providers)
 - Identified main issues (see par.5 of CWS/5/14)
 - Proposed possible solutions (see par.6 of CWS/5/14)
- Further actions
 - Study (see Annex to CWS/5/14)
 - Consideration at the CWS
 - Survey on the use of the identifiers
 - Standardization of applicant names

IP5 Global Dossier Initiatives

- Status report (see CWS/5/14 ADD.)
- prepared by the Korean Intellectual Property Office

Study on applicant name standardization

- Technical issues
 - correcting misprints in published applications
 - translations and transliterations of names;
- Procedural issues
 - one assignee per patent family
 - Registration of IP rights transfers;
- Legal issues
 - use of “variations” of a company name.

Stakeholders

- Patent information users
- Patent Offices
- Patent information providers

Current situation

- Lack of standardization of applicant names (especially coming from primary sources)
- IPOs recognize the difficulties, but they lack resources, guidance and legal power to accept and publish applicant names in a uniform manner providing “quality at source”

Existing practices and solutions

- The process of applicant name standardization has the following four levels¹

Normalization	correction of “trivial” errors (which leave open the possibility of multiple name variants for one applicant)
Harmonization	using one name variant for an applicant (which might not be the ultimate owner, as IP rights can be registered in the name of a subsidiary when the beneficiary is the parent company)
Bringing applicant name information in context by disclosing the corporate structure (at the time of filing the application)	
Keeping accurate dynamic ownership record	

¹ Adams, Steven. “Origins of the problem - why is this happening?”, presentation at WIPO Standards Workshop on applicant name standardization

Existing practices and solutions

- Existing solutions mainly focus on normalization and harmonization, leaving the issues of ownership aside.
- Three main approaches:
 - assigning applicant codes (KIPO)
 - including an additional field in patent information databases for normalized or harmonized names (EPO PATSTAT)
 - maintenance of a database of applicants which contains one single record per applicant with their harmonized name and address (EPO NACM)

Role of WIPO - CWS

- Task Force under the CWS
- Survey
 - How useful applicant identifiers can be,
 - What might be the problems in introducing them, and
 - whether the IPOs were using a “dictionary” of applicant names.
- Recommendations to cover, for example
 - normalization of applicant names
 - translation/transliteration issues
 - different name structure in different countries
 - inclusion of additional fields for data exchange (XML Standards, INID codes, etc.)

Role of WIPO – exchange of experience

- **Workshops on specific aspects** of name standardization can help IPOs identify changes to national legislation necessary to allow “cleaning-up” raw data or to facilitate the enforcement of the requirement to report the change in ownership.
- **Training sessions** on name normalization algorithms, or other IT solutions related to applicant names will assist IPOs in developing the infrastructure necessary to improve their patent information products.

Role of WIPO – exchange of experience (cont'd)

- **Exchange of practices (round tables)** related to business process will be useful to ensure “quality at source”. They can cover a broad range of issues, for example,
 - validation of the front page by the applicant before publication (already with the corrected data),
 - changes to application forms, and
 - the requirement to confirm the current owner when paying fees.



Thank you!