

WIPO/INV/ALP/99/7

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: May 1999



SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC



WORLD INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

**WIPO REGIONAL SEMINAR
ON THE PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND THE
COMMERCIALIZATION OF INVENTIONS**

organized by
the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

in cooperation with
the Ministry of Supply and Home Trade

and
the Association of Syrian Inventors

Aleppo, May 24 to 26, 1999

The Importance of Technological Information Contained in Patent Documents
for Inventors and Industry

Document prepared by the International Bureau of WIPO

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INTRODUCTION

1. Economic progress requires a constant stream of new ideas and products to improve quality of life, regardless of whether the innovation is a simple gadget or a sophisticated invention. Today it has become evident that innovation and creativity bring competitive advantage to companies and nations. *Per capita* economic growth of countries is driven increasingly by innovation, not by aggregate capital investment *per se*.
2. At the same time we are witnessing the information revolution penetrating every single aspect of private and professional life. Information, which always has been a very important basis for any decision making process, today has become also a marketable product.
3. Technology and inventions are important parts of the innovation process, which transforms inventions into marketable products. The innovatopn process is most complex and as such requires a lot of specialized expertise and professional knowledge. The marketing and commercialization phase of the innovation process is crucial for the success of any invention and innovation. Knowledge and information (not to say intelligence) are crucial for the whole innovation process. Finding, identifying and using relevant information is very important for inventors and innovators, since the success of their invention on the market will depend to a very large extent on their capacity to handle information.
4. Today, the World Wide Web, or Internet, as it is more commonly known, offers extraordinary opportunities for the dissemination and distribution of information, but also, and what is more important, for almost unlimited access to information.

GROWING ROLE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

5. Intellectual capital is often of considerable value because it is unique. It comprises, *inter alia*, patents for inventions, trademarks, industrial designs, utility models, appellations of origin, integrated circuits topographies, copyrights, but also know-how, trade secrets, proprietary technology, talents, skill and knowledge of the work force, training systems and methods, customer lists, distribution networks, quality management systems, etc.
6. Intellectual property comprises creations of the human intellect and it basically relates to information that can be incorporated in tangible objects and reproduced in different locations. Furthermore, unlike immovable or movable tangible (material) property, intellectual property can be used simultaneously by many persons without loss to any person, and without further investment in re-creating it for new users.
7. The role of intellectual property rights (IPR) is significantly increasing in the new international economic and commercial set up. Intellectual capital is increasingly being recognized as one of the most important asset of many of the world's largest and most powerful companies.
8. The classical economic theory assumed the technology progress essentially as an exogenous phenomenon and technology was considered as a "free good." Current understanding of economic growth is at variance with this view. It is now widely acknowledged that technological progress occurs precisely as a result of entrepreneurial activities in anticipation of profits from innovations. A sound patent system contributes to the

practical use of technology and research results by providing a legal environment that is conducive to encouragement of technology transfer and application.

9. According to recent WIPO statistics, the number of patent applications filed each year in the world is well over one and a half million. Those applications result in the grant of more than half a million patents. The number of inventions which are covered by those patent applications and grants is much smaller since each invention gives rise to an average of two to three patent applications in different countries. The number of patent documents published each year, both applications and granted patents, is over two million, in many different languages.

10. There are no exact statistics on the number of patent documents published so far from the beginning of the times when patents were first published. They can, however, be estimated at over 36 million. Normally, only the recent ones are of practical importance for those searching technological information; the older ones are frequently only of historical interest. Nevertheless, access to the older ones is an absolute necessity for any Industrial Property Office whose law requires it to pass a judgement on the question of whether a given patent application related to an invention is, objectively, new, since such a judgement requires looking at all the existing patent documents likely to disclose a similar invention.

INVENTORS, INVENTIONS, INFORMATION AND THE REAL WORLD

11. Successful marketing of inventions and technology means to marry a new invention to a real existing need. It demands an extensive and very close collaboration and cooperation between three groups of people: those who create inventions and technology, those who explore and create markets and those who use inventions and technology. Such cooperation depends to a very large extent on their capacity actively to collect, select, analyze and exchange information.

12. The crucial point in the innovation process is the production, marketing and commercialization stage, when the invention or the new product or process based on it will meet the test of the market. It is only when it is accepted on the market by the consumers and users that the invention or new product will begin to generate income, which will compensate inventors and manufacturers for the investment made and eventually generate also some profit. One should never forget that an invention has more chances of success if it has been developed in response to real needs.

13. Patent documents contain descriptions of scientific and technical concepts as well as practical details of processes and apparatus. Before the full technological value of patent documents can be appreciated, it is necessary to understand why patent documents are published and the role they play in the economic and technical development of a country.

14. An invention will have an economic value if and when it is used in industry. Inventions enable industry to make new products, or make products more economically (faster, more cheaply), or to improve existing products (by making them more precise, yielding better or faster results when they are used).

15. Inventions are rarely the result of an accidental or an instantaneous stroke of genius. Most inventions are usually the result of methodical research, comprising long and hard

thinking, detailed analyses, combined with experimentation with the precise aim and hope of arriving at a new solution amounting to an invention.

16. Technology, and inventions, as a fundamental part of it, are, by nature, both private goods in creation and public goods in productive use or consumption. They are private goods in so far as their creation consumes both mental and physical resources, which are thereby diverted from other production or consumption activities. Once technology or inventions become available in the form of information, however, they lose their characteristics as private goods.

17. These characteristics of technology and invention create a dilemma. If all are free to use technology and inventions, which have been created, who will be willing to bear the cost associated with their creation? One of the basic rationales of the patent system is to provide such an incentive for the creation of new technology and inventions. It does this by offering to inventors exclusive rights to commercially exploit patented inventions for a limited time in return for the disclosure of the inventions to the public.

18. Patents are granted on technical criteria and not on the basis of commercial or market criteria. The exclusive rights, which are conferred by the patent, relate to the commercial exploitation of the invention, and do not preclude another person from experimental work using the technological information contained in the patent specification. In other words, while the patent owner can prevent others from using, for commercial purposes, the same technology as is revealed in the disclosure of his invention, he is not protected against those who derive from his disclosed invention a perception of a market need which may be satisfied by the legitimate adaptation or improvement of his technology, or through the discovery of a different technical solution to satisfy the same market need.

INFORMATION ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY SYSTEM

19. The patent system always had and still has two functions: the so-called “exclusivity function” and “the information-function.” The fact that a patent gives an inventor an exclusive right on a special knowledge and by doing so limits the possibilities of access to this special technology for other enterprises is compensated by the information about the newly developed technology which is to be laid open by the inventor. This second function of the patent is very important for the continuous development of the technology.

20. Each publication of a patent document could be the base for new technical developments by other inventors. Without publication there would be no chance at all for the public to get information about new technical development. It is therefore not surprising that today providing information for the public is part of the tasks of an industrial property office. In the last 30 years a change took place: with the growing use of information many industrial property offices realised that providing information to the public might in future be of equal importance to the granting of patents, trademarks and designs itself. Thus most industrial property offices decided to build up greater information capacities for the public.

21. The patent system contributes to economic growth and development by creating the conditions for the marketing and commercialization of inventions in several ways:

(a) it gives an incentive to the creation of new technology, which will result in, *inter alia*, new products, inventions and commercial opportunities;

(b) it contributes to the creation of an environment that facilitates the successful industrial application of inventions and new technology, and the legal framework, which encourages investment, including from foreign countries;

(c) by publishing the information on new inventions, it acts as a catalyst for the commercialization of inventions and their transfer to productive use;

(d) it is an instrument of commercial and industrial planning and strategy.

22. Creation and permanent upgrading of high quality information systems have become one of the main tasks of national industrial property organisations. For research and development activities this new task might be of more importance than the original main function of a patent office, namely the granting of patents. Information is now one of the main products of national economies. A growing number of IP offices and organisations are using the Internet to offer access to their patent documents databases.

23. The patent system plays an important role in the process of matching technology suppliers and recipients. In addition to the valuable technological information, a published patent document contains details of the names and addresses of the applicant, patentee and inventor, and thus provides a means whereby the owners of rights in relation to technology may be located; finally patent documents contain information on the legal status of IPRs in the invention, to which they relate.

24. The patent system stimulates invention and innovation through the accumulated pool of technological information contained in patent documents. The information contained and classified in patent documentation constitutes the single most valuable and comprehensive source of technological information available in the world today: the technology disclosed in patent documentation might serve to stimulate ideas for further invention and innovation.

25. The effective searching of patent documentation can indicate the state-of-the-art, which exists in relation to any particular field of technology, which will be of particular importance to the individual enterprise. Awareness of the state-of-the-art in a particular technical field can avoid duplication in research work by indications that the desired technology already exists. Also it can provide ideas for further improvements; and can give an insight into the technological activities of competitors and, by reference to the countries in which patents have been taken out, the marketing strategies of competitors. A state-of-the-art search can also identify newly developing areas of technology in which future R&D activity should be monitored.

26. The aforementioned advantages characterize the information available through the patent system as an extremely valuable and comprehensive source of technological, commercial and legal information that can be used directly for scientific and experimental purposes and as a basis for stimulating the adaptation and improvement of the technology described in patent documents immediately after its publication, provided the user has the necessary basic and specialized knowledge.

27. It should be noted that the information contained in patent documentation provides merely the skeleton of a particular technology, and needs to be supplemented from other sources in order to represent a functional body of technology. In every case the raw source of technology disclosed in a patent specification is supplemented after the grant of a patent by know-how derived from the accumulated experience of the use of the invention.

28. Analyzing patent applications or patents for the same invention in different countries will permit conclusions concerning the commercial interests of the patent owner.

29. As a tool for industrial planning and strategic decision making, the industrial property system may be very useful through analyses of the statistical aggregation of patenting activity as revealed through published patent documents. Since the degree of patenting activity provides an index of the degree of technological activity in a given technical field, the statistical analysis of patent documentation can indicate which countries or companies are active in various fields, in which industries technology is moving at a rapid pace and in which the technology is stable, and which are the enterprises active in particular sector. Registered trademarks witness a clear commercial interest in the market of a country or group of countries. Analyses of IPR and their presence in different countries provide a means of forecasting future industrial developments, identifying areas in which market demand is increasing, monitoring general technological progress, and testing the soundness of policy and investment decisions.

30. The patent system must be understood as a policy instrument that encourages developing indigenous technological capabilities by providing an incentive to local inventors, research and development organizations and industry. The patent system does not constitute an instant remedy, but rather a long-term infrastructure investment in development of the national market. Without any patent system, inventors, entrepreneurs and companies would have no effective protection against the imitation of their inventions, and less incentive to invest in the development and strengthening of their technological capacities. It might therefore be expected that the number of inventions produced by local inventors would be even less in the absence of a patent system.

ADVANTAGES OF PATENT DOCUMENTS AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR INVENTORS

31. Patents generally disclose technological information by describing the inventions in accordance with the requirements of the applicable patent law and by indicating the claimed novelty and inventiveness by reference to the existing state-of-the-art. They are thus sources of information, and in many cases furnish a history, in summary form, of the technological progress in the field of technology to which they relate.

32. Patent documents generally convey the most recent information, which, generally speaking, is not divulged in any other form of literature. It is wrong to believe that relevant information contained in patent documents will come to one's notice by other means. An investigation made by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office shows that as much as 70% of the technology disclosed in U.S. patent documents published between 1967 and 1972 had not been found in non-patent literature.

33. The main user groups of patent information are:

- industry, and in particular R&D intensive industry;
- research and development institutions;
- governmental authorities;
- small and medium-size enterprises;
- individual inventors;
- professionals in the field of industrial property, e.g. administrators of technical libraries, patent agents, researchers, producers of data banks;
- educational institutions and university students.

34. The practice has shown that information contained in patent documents can be very useful to:

- avoid duplication of R&D work;
- identify specific new ideas and technical solutions, products or processes;
- identify the state-of-the-art in a specific technological field in order to be aware of the latest development;
- assess and evaluate specific technology and to identify possible licensors;
- identify alternative technology and its sources;
- locate of sources of know-how in a specific field of technology or in a given country;
- improvement of an existing product or process;
- development of new technical solutions, products or processes,
- identify existing or prospective industrial property rights (validity, ownership, ...), particularly to avoid infringement actions;
- assess novelty and patentability of own developments with a view of applying for a domestic or foreign industrial property right;
- monitor activities of competitors both within the country and abroad; and
- identify a market niche or to discover new trends in technology or product development at an early stage.

35. Patent information can also be exploited to monitor technology trends as well as competitor's R&D activities. Since patents must be applied for before any public disclosure and are normally published after 18 months, information, contained in patent documents,

represents an early warning of future trends in an organization's activities. While the publication of an individual patent does not in itself tell you much about a competitor's intentions, taken together with several similar patents however provide a strong indicator of that company's likely intention to commercialize a product or process. For example, for a particular company and new technology area, a patent analysis may give results suggesting that the company has a continuing and firm interest in this area, likely to be leading to marketable products.

36. Patents represent not only an incomparable source for the history of technology, but also a mirror, less of the technology of a given era than of the generation of technology for the following era; at any given time, it reflects the direction taken by researchers' endeavours at all levels, from the ingenious craftsman to the advanced laboratory. However, it should not be forgotten that it takes time to push inventions to the market.

37. Since the technological information contained in patent documents is not secret, it can be freely used to support research and development activities.

38. The cost of obtaining protection varies, but is never negligible. This means that a patent is only requested for a given country if there is an economic interest in doing so.

39. The nature of the invention will determine whether protection will be sought in some countries and not in others. The first reason to file a patent application for a given country is that the invention could be reproduced by the industry of that country, and hence create competition for the inventor's own production. The number of applications for patents in a specific branch of industry and for a given country is therefore an indicator for the level of technological development of that country in such field.

40. Another reason for applying for a patent in a given country is that the country constitutes an important market for the subject matter of the patent, even if it is not in a position to produce it itself.

41. The capacity for innovation may be studied either in respect of a company or in respect of a field of industry or again as regards one country. In the first case, the number of patents filed by a company and the development of those patents over time will show the innovative capacity of the company. The same applies if we study the overall innovative capacity of a country. It is only the number of domestic applications that will indicate the inventive possibilities of the country concerned.

42. Hereafter are given brief descriptions of specific characteristics of patent documents, which make them extremely useful sources of technological information, with some clear advantages over other sources of information.

Description, Claims, Drawings

43. Patent documents generally have a fairly uniform structure that facilitates the extracting of information: the claims give the essence of what is new; the description gives the background to the invention (what was known before the invention, i.e., the "prior art"), and defines the difference between the pre-existent technology and what the invention contributes, as a new matter, as a step forward, to technology development; often patent documents contain also drawings, that illustrate the invention that is claimed.

44. Technological information is disclosed by describing the inventions in accordance with the requirements of the applicable patent law and by indicating the claimed novelty and inventiveness by reference to the existing state of the art. Certain patent documents are published together with a search report showing a series of references found at the occasion of a documentary search made to establish in a first instance the level of novelty of the claimed invention.

Abstracts

45. Many patent documents contain an abstract. Abstracts allow a general idea to be formed of the contents of the document within a few minutes, and in any case a much shorter time than would be required to read the full text of the patent document.

Classification

46. Patent documents bear "classification symbols" which facilitate very much finding and extracting relevant information from them. For the purposes of maintaining search files and performing searches for the state of the art, patent offices classify patent documents according to the field or fields of technology to which their contents relate. Although several classification systems exist, over the last 10 - 15 years the International Patent Classification (IPC), which was established by an intergovernmental agreement, is now most widely applied by at least 50 industrial property offices.

47. The main part of the high cost of processing and classifying patent documents for building up search files, and of keeping the classification system up to date, is borne directly by the patent offices which publish large numbers of patent documents; users other than the Patent Office itself thus have access to patent documentation without incurring, in addition to their costs as users, the cost of maintaining, developing and classifying their own patent documentation collections.

48. Patent documents belonging to a given classification subdivision contain a highly concentrated supply of usually technically advanced information on a given technological field.

Date

49. Patent documents bear several dates (date of application, priority date, date of grant) from which conclusions can be drawn as to the age of an invention and to the question of whether the inventions they describe are still under legal protection. If they are no longer legally protected, they can be used without the consent of the patentee.

Inventor, Applicant, Owner

50. Most patent documents indicate the name and address of the inventor, applicant, the patentee (the owner), and the inventor, or at least one or two of those persons. The information contains also the legal address of at least the owner and/or the applicant. These indications allow any potential licensee to contact the persons concerned in order to find out under what conditions the technology may be transferred.

INSUFFICIENT USE OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN PATENT DOCUMENTS

51. Irrespective of the advantages and possibilities of patent documents as a source of technological information, its use is unexpectedly low. A 1985 survey dealing with this problem and technology and innovation in Austria found that only 4% of the enterprises used patent literature as an innovative instrument. It is interesting to note that the influence and use of patent information increases in relation to the size of the research and development institution or the enterprise; 18.5% of companies with more than 100 staff reported to actively use patent literature. Only 2-3% of enterprises with less than 100 staff use patent literature in the first stage of an R&D project. This result correlates with a much more intensive patent activity in larger enterprises. Only 5% of the enterprises of this study had 500 and more employees but 55% of the patent applications originated from this group.

52. The low utilisation of patent information is regrettable, because it is a fact that in the EC countries billions per year—the UK Patent Office spoke of about 20 billion Pounds—are wasted to develop things that are already developed and documented in the description of patent specifications. Another study confirmed that a lot of redundant research takes place, since it was found that 30% of all R&D in Europe duplicates work already done.

53. Many users of patent information are not informed about patent literature. It is a general misunderstanding that only basic inventions are protected. This is also one of the reasons why some people believe they have no chance receiving a patent for their new development.

54. People are not aware that also small improvements are disclosed in the patent documents. Even when people know patents as industrial property rights, there seems to be no logical connection between the function of protection and information.

55. Without information about the state of the art the risk is extremely high that the same product is developed a second time. It is a special task of the national industrial property offices to assist small and medium size enterprises and to guide them to more intensive use of patent documentation for information purposes. The question therefore arises what kind of services industrial property offices should offer.

56. Industrial property offices offering information services have to actively publicise their existing services and to introduce new ones, based on the latest achievements of information technology. They should also actively promote the knowledge about the usefulness of technical information and about the importance of information concerning trademarks, designs and patents on the market. There is no use in having an excellent service nobody knows about and which therefore nobody can demand.

VARIOUS TYPES OF SEARCHES USING PATENT DOCUMENTATION

57. In practice, there are various more or less typical reasons for performing searches in collections of patent documents, each of them requiring a slightly different approach in the search method used. Some of the search types are basically concerned with technological information as such, while others are directed towards the processing of patent applications, or relevant to the legal state of a new technology. In the following subparagraphs the individual types of searches are listed separately, whereas it is a well-known fact that many items of bibliographic information may be combined in searching.

58. In general, searches performed by inventors search are usually not as exhaustive as the searches done by professionals at patent offices. However, such insights into patent documents are often very useful for the inventor to determine whether someone has already patented a similar invention, or to obtain relevant information about other patents in the same category as his invention.

(i) Pre-Application Searches (PAS)

59. At first, an invention is just an idea. Many details are not even known or recognized as relevant parts. A novelty search based on a vague idea can only result in a vague picture of the prior art.

60. The patent application process is difficult, time consuming and expensive; therefore, the inventor should conduct a “Pre-Application Search” (PAS) before filling a patent application. In this search, the inventor should look for any printed publications, public knowledge, or patents already issued in his country or a foreign country that may relate to the particular invention.

(ii) State-of-the-Art Searches

61. This kind of search, also referred to as “Informative Search,” is made to determine the general state-of-the-art for the solution of a given technical problem as background information for R & D activities and in order to know what patent publications already exist in the field of the technology or research. Further reasons for undertaking this kind of search could be the wish to identify alternative technologies which may replace known technology or to evaluate a specific technology which is being offered for licensing or which is being considered for acquisition.

62. State-of-the-art searches are especially useful for technology development or technology transfer purposes.

(iii) Novelty Searches

63. The objective of a “Novelty Search” is to determine the novelty or lack of novelty of the invention claimed in a patent application or a patent already granted, or of an invention for which no application has yet been filed. The aim of the search is to discover relevant prior art.

64. An early novelty patent search is usually discouraging. Normally, the basic inventive ideas are formulated in such an unspecified way that many publications will apply to this broad description.

65. Dependent on the outcome of the novelty search, the next decision will be whether to stop or to go ahead in developing the invention. If nothing of relevance was found, it is easy and you should go ahead. The decision becomes more difficult if one or several pertinent documents have been found.

66. Most important is to restrict the search to the appropriate area. If an invention can be used in a different field, the patent office will classify it in various classes. It is, however, more important to study the patents classified in the most relevant area.

(iv) Patentability or Validity Searches

67. A “Patentability or Validity Search” is made to locate documents relevant to the determination not only of novelty but also of other criteria of patentability, for example, the presence or absence of an inventive step (i.e., the alleged invention is or is not obvious) or the achievement of useful results or technical progress. This type of search should cover all the technical fields, which may contain material pertinent to the invention.

68. Novelty and patentability searches are mainly being carried out by industrial property offices in the course of the examination of patent applications.

(v) Name Searches

69. These are searches for locating information about published patent documents involving specific companies or individuals, as applicants, assignees, patentees or inventors.

(vi) Technological Activity Searches

70. They are to be understood as searches for identifying companies and/or inventors who are active in a specific field of technology. These searches are also suitable for identifying countries in which a certain technology is being patented, so as to know where to turn to for obtaining particular information in a given field of technology. The technological activity searches are carried out by company or with respect to a specific territory).

(vii) Infringement Searches

71. The objective of an “Infringement Search” is to locate patents and published patent applications, which might be infringed on by a given industrial activity. In this type of search the aim is to determine whether an existing patent gives exclusive rights covering that industrial activity or any part of it.

(viii) Patent Family Searches

72. This kind of search is carried out to identify a member of a “patent family.” Patent family searches are used in order to:

- find the countries in which a given patent application has been filed (if published);
- find a “patent family member” that is written in a desired language;
- obtain a list of prior art documents or “References Cited”; and
- estimate the importance of the invention (by number of patent documents relating to the same invention and being published in different countries or by industrial property organisations).

(ix) Legal Status Searches

73. A search for this type of investigation is made to obtain information on the validity (status) of a patent or a published patent application, on a given date, under the applicable patent legislation in one or more countries. Such information can assist in making decisions on, for example, exporting, or in the negotiation of license agreements. It can also give guidance on the value attached to a particular patent by the patentee.

WIPO PATENT INFORMATION SERVICES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (WPIS)

74. One of the principal functions of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is to offer technical assistance to developing countries. This also includes the access to and use of technological information contained in patent documents in order to accelerate their economic, social and cultural development. In the following paragraphs we will give a brief presentation of the WIPO Patent Information Services for Developing Countries (WPIS).

75. Since 1975, WIPO has been operating a program for providing free of charge state-of-the-art searches to governmental institutions and individuals in developing countries.

76. The WIPO Patent Information Services for developing countries are offered free of charge on the basis of contributions made by some 15 industrial property Offices in industrialized countries, as well the European Patent Office and the International Bureau of WIPO itself, and include the provision of:

- reports on searches and investigations carried out in patent document collections and on-line databases to establish the state-of-the-art in a specific technology;
- information on equivalent patent documents and patent literature cited in earlier examination procedures or identified in documentary searches carried out by other patent Offices;
- information on the legal status of published patent applications and granted patents;

- search and examination reports of applications for patents of the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO) under the Harare Protocol;
- search and examination reports of applications for patents under the International Cooperation in Search and Examination of Inventions (ICSEI); and
- copies of individual patent documents.

Procedures to Be Followed for Submitting a Request under the WPIS

77. All requests should be submitted to the International Bureau of WIPO in Geneva and should comply with a certain number of requirements that are to be found in the WIPO Information Brochure “WIPO Patent Information Services for Developing Countries WPIS.”

78. In order to facilitate compliance with the said requirements, a printed form must be used as the first page of the request. Search requests can be submitted in English, French, German, Russian or Spanish.

79. It must also be borne in mind that it depends to a large extent on the quality and clarity of the description, the summary, the drawings (if applicable), as well as the correct spelling of names and the completeness of bibliographical data, whether a search can be carried out and whether satisfactory results can be expected within a reasonable period of time or only after time-consuming investigations.

80. The search is carried out by a competent technical expert, mostly a patent examiner in one of the contributing patent offices. As a rule, this examiner uses the search files of his special field and other documentation available at the patent office library. The search is normally carried out without undue delay. Copies of relevant documents found in the course of the search are annexed to the search report. Samples search requests, and the corresponding search reports, are given in the WIPO Information Brochure “WPIS,” which contains some further guidelines on the formulation of search requests, including sample requests which have been properly formulated as well as the forms to be used when submitting requests to the International Bureau of WIPO.

THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY INFORMATION SERVICES

81. At present WIPO is preparing the first phase of the implementation of its global information network, the WIPONet, which will permit a more effective use of information technology in the activities of the worldwide intellectual property community. WIPO’s information technology initiatives should enhance the capabilities of *all* member States.

82. WIPO’s global information network, or the WIPONet, should:

- provide fast and cost effective communications for the intellectual property community worldwide, and taking advantage of available public networks;
- promote the use of intellectual property information by the intellectual property community and the public at large, thereby fostering the adequate protection and effective enforcement of intellectual property rights;

- facilitate access to intellectual property information by developing countries, thereby providing a tool for technology transfer and economic development to the benefit of these countries and their inventors, industry, universities, research and development institutions; and
- foster the exchange of intellectual property information between member States and will allow developing countries to benefit from the collected published technology and patent examination records of other countries.

83. The WIPONet will be based on the existing public Internet, which provides at least basic levels of connectivity to most countries.

84. The information to be made available on the WIPO global information network will be developed from collections of intellectual property information to be created by joint efforts of intellectual property offices in member States and the International Bureau of WIPO. The collections will be published on through Intellectual Property Digital Libraries (IPDL), maintained by the International Bureau and by other intellectual property offices. For example, in view of the growing importance of PCT data, WIPO will make available the full-text PCT data. Through these efforts, the WIPO will join other large industrial property offices, which already publish their patent, trademark, and copyright documents on the Internet.

85. The development of WIPO global information network will enable WIPO to enhance technical cooperation through the modernization of intellectual property offices in certain countries. The provision of organized, maintained network connectivity presents a valuable tool for human resources development in all IP Offices. Exposure to new distance learning methods and practices, as well as productivity tools, organized training activities, and IP office oriented discussion and information groups provide a new vehicle for the exchange of support information and materials between offices. It will also permit to broaden the audience of the WIPO Worldwide Academy by the introduction of on-line tutorial systems.

86. The WIPO global information network will strengthen the collective efforts by member States to create high-quality, high-value information collections, to be easily yet securely accessible on the network by the IP community. The exchange of such information in a networked environment will save duplicative investment and provide member states with powerful information search and publication tools suitable for many purposes.

87. Access to intellectual property information represents a powerful means of technology transfer between countries, within the framework of intellectual property rights protection. There is a growing need to provide a form of public access to published intellectual property data. The WIPO global information network can become a vehicle for the improved dissemination of intellectual property information to previously unserved communities, such as universities, research and development institutions, and copyright users.

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