

# WIPO



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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION  
GENEVA

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTATION WORKING GROUP

Fourth Session  
Geneva, January 26 to 30, 2004

### HARMONIZATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTS OF PATENT SPECIFICATIONS

*Document prepared by the Secretariat*

1. In its letter of August 20, 2003, the Patent Documentation Group (PDG) drew the attention of the International Bureau (IB) to a problem users of patent information are faced with, namely the difficulties in referring to citations and in locating specific parts of a patent document (e.g., when a patent document is available in electronic media, the identification of specific parts of the description text may become difficult if the document layout depends on the software settings of the users). This problem is related to the diverse forms of media on which patent documents are now made available.
2. The letter of the PDG is reproduced in the Annex to this document.
3. As a first step, the PDG proposes to carry out a survey in order to clarify the different practices by industrial property offices regarding the form of addressing the difficulties referred to in paragraph 1, above.

*4. The Standards and Documentation Working Group is invited:*

*(a) to consider the letter of the PDG reproduced in the Annex to this document; and,*

*(b) if found appropriate, to establish a task in order to carry out the survey referred to in paragraph 3, above.*

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

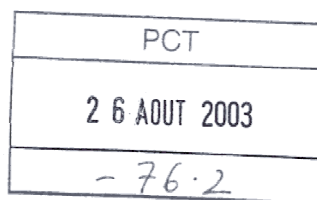
## Patent Documentation Group

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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY  
ORGANIZATION  
Attn. Mr. Angel Lopéz Solanas  
Head of Standards and Documentation Service  
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Switzerland



Date. 20 August 2003

Our ref. WIPO\_20032008\_2

Your ref.

Re: Identifying the Parts of Patent Specifications

Dear Mr. Solanas,

In the framework of the activities of the PDG Working Group IMPACT (Impact of patent laws on documentation) the members discussed the topic “harmonizing and identifying the parts of patent specifications”. We noticed that, depending on which media a document is stored and published, there could be a different output of the same document. As such, it presents difficulties when citing parts of patent documents, which is a part of the daily work of patent examiners, patent attorneys, and patent information specialists.

Several attempts have been made to cope with this problem. Since paragraph numbering is not dependent on the printing media, the PDG fully accepts this approach as an initial step towards solving the problem.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that additional problems can arise. Depending on the technical field (e.g. in chemistry) or the language used, often very long paragraphs are created. Even paragraph numbering does not solve the problem of unambiguously identifying a citation in certain circumstances. Possible solutions could be to use word counting as a technical approach. On the other hand, instructions to the applicant explaining the problems that can arise in these cases could be an other approach.

We should not forget to mention also the implications of online filing. Online filing completely changes the requirements for visualization and presentation. These new developments should also be considered carefully when searching for a standardized solution.

Our proposal is to as soon as possible start a discussion on this topic in order to promote “best practices” in this field perhaps by establishing a new standard.

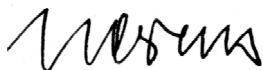
As a first step, the different procedures used in Patent offices should be clarified. Which offices have introduced paragraph numbering? Which offices have taken other steps to cope with the problem? What is planned for the future? Which aspects seem to be difficult? The result of such a survey would be a clear picture of the status quo, which is of the highest interest for all users of patent information enabling them to cite in an unambiguous way.

As a next step, the parties involved should discuss and agree on a procedure to enable all users of patent information to cite documents without ambiguity, independently of the media used.

It was generally felt that such an initiative should be started on the level of WIPO. We would like to ask WIPO to put it on the agenda of the appropriate SCIT Working Group.

Sincerely yours,

Patent Documentation Group



Ralf H. Behrens  
Secretary General

[End of Annex and of document]