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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
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**ADVANCED SEMINAR
ON THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION
(IPC)**

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IPC REVISION – FUTURE

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DEUTSCHES PATENT- UND MARKENAMT

München, December 2, 1998

German Patent and Trademark Office

Division 2.2. - Classification

IPC-Revision - The Future

Revision Policy

The IPC is a tool to provide access to technical information. Since the technological progress is increasing more and more there is no doubt that the IPC has to keep pace with this development.

Beside the patent offices many other institutions are using the IPC for preparing or retrieving technical information.

At present the IPC is revised every five years. If, for instance, a project is initiated only shortly before the end of the revision period usually there is no possibility to complete the project in time for the respective IPC edition. That means that this project can only be implemented in the next IPC edition, i.e. after seven years only. This seems to be unbearable in view of the technological progress in our time. The efficiency of the IPC as search tool then is no longer secured or at least very questionable. In this case patent offices are compelled to take care of efficient search provisions for themselves, i.e. to develop internal subdivisions of the existing IPC on a large scale.

To keep the IPC up-to-date it seems reasonable to shorten the revision period to three years.

With the help of the new media – e-mail, Internet, CD-ROM – a three years revision period will be feasible. Moreover, it would be of advantage to provide intermediate publication intervals with fixed dates for certain projects.

Revision Procedure

Structural measures

- ◆ Multiple classification (last place rule, precedence ref.) may be allowed in the light of electronic documentation.
- ◆ Introduction of entries for novel technology should have priority over further subdivision of existing groups. The latter should be handled with care when revising.
- ◆ The criteria for revision requests should be toughened, in order to be in the position to concentrate on few important projects.
- ◆ Indexing should be obligatory to grant an efficient electronic search.
- ◆ Indexing in the IPC should be extended, e.g. creating a universal indexing scheme, e.g. for materials, colours, pressures etc.

Procedural measures

- ◆ The Working Group for IPC Revision should be given more competence for, e.g.
 - deciding on the allowability of new revision projects
 - extending the scope of running projects
 - determining the number of projects to be dealt with in one session.
- ◆ The WG should be able to concentrate on the proper revision work and should not be burdened with general problems, e.g. dealing with training examples.
- ◆ The number of two sessions for the WG per year is deemed to be adequate. Sessions of sub working groups should be provided on demand held at patent offices.
- ◆ To accelerate revision work the rapporteur's mandate should be increased, e.g. the rapporteur should be authorised to ask for further comments.
- ◆ To improve the efficiency of the meeting of the working group an additional round of comments after the rapporteur report and before the meeting should be provided for.
(First round of comments ⇒ RR ⇒ second round of comments ⇒ RR ⇒ meeting)

Modern technical aids

The session work should be supported by modern means, e.g. computer with viewer (for display on the wall) or overhead projector. Proposals could then be displayed at once, results easier be obtained, e.g. by comparison with the existing wording and approved of.

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