E

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

**Tenth Session
Geneva, November 21 to 25, 2022**

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS ON OFFICE PRACTICES FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Document prepared by the International Bureau

BACKGROUND

1.   At its ninth session in 2021, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) noted the progress made by the Digital Transformation Task Force on Task No. 62. The CWS approved a survey proposed by the Task Force to collect information from Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) on their digital intake, processing, and publication practices. (See paragraphs 89 to 95 of document CWS/9/25).

SURVEY RESULTS

2.   In March 2022, the Secretariat issued circular C.CWS 155 inviting IPOs to participate in the survey on digital transformation. Responses were received from 41 IPOs covering 40 member states and regions. The difference between the numbers is due to a new practice. Starting with this survey, the Secretariat began recording and publishing submissions by each IPO separately, instead of the old practice of combining submissions from multiple IPOs in one member state. Responses to this survey were received from two different Offices[1] in Algeria, so the number of responding IPOs is higher than the number of member states plus regional IPOs. The survey results are scheduled for publication in Part 7 of the WIPO Handbook in fall 2022, as soon as all responses have been translated and formatted.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

3.   Responses were received from 40 members states and regional IPOs: Afghanistan; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bahrain; Brazil; Canada; Chile; China; Denmark; Algeria; Estonia;

---

[1] The submitting IPOs are 'Algerian National Institute of Industrial Property' and 'Algeria National Office for Copyright and Neighboring Rights'.

Spain; Finland; Hong Kong, China; Croatia; Hungary; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jordan; Japan; Kenya; Republic of Korea; Lithuania; Republic of Moldova; Mexico; New Zealand; Philippines; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Sweden; Slovakia; San Marino; Chad; Ukraine; United States of America; Uruguay; Benelux Office for Intellectual Property (BOIP); European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO); and European Patent Office (EPO).

4.   The International Bureau provided the Digital Transformation Task Force with the IPOs' responses and a draft analysis of survey results for review and comments. In consultation with the Task Force Leader, the following analysis has been prepared.

5.   The following are some highlights of the results. Most respondents (31) indicate that PDF is the most commonly used file format followed by paper (30) and the Microsoft Word DOCX in free-form (19). More than half of respondents (24) indicate that they provide initial content-based validations to applicants prior to the submission to reduce the number of formality non-compliances.

6.   In a related question, there was an overwhelming YES response (38) for Offices which provide a scrubbing tool to remove unwanted metadata from documents prior to submission. Additionally, a good number of Offices (29) provide feedback during the filing process detailing potential problems with the submitted application, as a result of validations performed by the Office.

7.   Not surprisingly, an overwhelming number of Offices (31) stated that the originally-submitted application documents are considered the authoritative copy of the submission. The originally-submitted image format is also preserved by some Offices (12). Additionally, most Offices indicated they would display the originally-submitted format (27) for examination and administration of the application.

8.   The Task Force Leader notes that this information on submitted documents and images is a key point to consider as the Task Force plans future work. Both Offices and applicants consider the original submission as the authoritative copy of the application, which means Offices will need to always maintain the original submission in its original form, along with any conversions needed to process the data for internal workflow.

9.   In reference to publication, most respondents indicated they would use the originally-submitted document format (20) or a format converted by the Office (20). Note this question allows multiple responses, so Offices may select more than one option. Several Offices (10) indicated that they plan to discontinue physical publication in the next five years.

FURTHER ACTIONS

10.   After review of these survey results, 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 and EXPORT. These two areas are the most likely to be workable in terms of commonality between Offices and will also help the applicant.

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

12.   Export - Most Offices offer publications (Export) in one or more formats. The Task Force can work towards encouraging 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 on for their use of the data.

13.   If the CWS approves the content of the survey analysis above, it will be published with the survey results in Part 7 of the WIPO Handbook.

14. The CWS is invited to:

(a) note the content of this document;

(b) consider and approve the contents of the survey analysis in paragraphs 3 to 9 above for publication with the survey results in the WIPO Handbook; and

(c) consider and approve the work items for the Task Force described in paragraphs 10 to 12 above.

[End of document]