

Considerations from the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria on the IPDL Project in connection with the Draft Outline of the WIPO's SCIT Strategic Plan

IPDLs are presented and discussed in the SCIT and its working groups primarily as Web libraries, seen from the point of view of their Internet presentation and utilisation. On our view it would be appropriate to consider the development of IPDLs in a broader meaning - analysing their origin, purpose, storage media, organisation, content, economical justification.

The following issues, among others, are proposed for special consideration:

/1/ Internal and public IPDLs.

From the point of view of their purpose, content, interface, etc. IPDLs may be viewed as internal and external or public. Most often IP offices will create more sophisticated internal IPDLs and provide extraction of them to external users via Internet or other on-line access means. In some cases, however, IPDLs may be designed and created specially for Web presentation and be equally available both internally and externally.

The model requirements and/or recommendations of SCIT concerning the design and content of the IPDLs would help to build-up a common approach to the internal and external availability of IPDLs.

/2/ Optical disk and magnetic disk IPDLs.

IPDLs may be distributed on multiple off-line optical carriers - CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-R, or be integrated on a single on-line magnetic disk space. Both optical (distributed data bases) and magnetic (integrated data bases) digital libraries may be made accessible on the Web. The strategic view on the utilization of the CD-ROM/DVD-ROM libraries would be a priority issue in the SCIT IPDL project.

Optical carriers are already the major digital IP information storage through the world. The evaluation of the possibilities and the economical consequences (savings) for maximum utilization of these information sources as part of the IPDLs creation process would be of significant importance.

/3/ IPDLs as data warehouses/repositories.

In order to be economically justified, IPDLs will most probably have to be viewed as multi-purpose data warehouses or repositories, designed to be flexible enough to satisfy a diversity of needs from a single IP information source. Such a goal or requirement would lead to the idea of evaluating the feasibility of implementing the data warehouse/repository information technology concept in the SCIT IPDL project.

/4/ IPDLs and commercial data bases.

The return of the investment through providing information services to the industry and the public and the coexistence with the commercial IP information providers would be another important issue of the SCIT IPDL project. For the moment it seems to be a common understanding, that the national IPDLs will not support sophisticated search capabilities comparable with the commercial providers. As example, the EPO's DIPS/Esp@ceNet project is announced as targeting mainly the public users, not the patent offices. On the other hand, the private IBM Patent Web Server is evaluated by patent offices users as providing very useful IP information with good search capabilities and free of charge for the moment.

/5/ Support of multiple languages and alphabets.

In order to make the IP information useful for other IP offices, it should be probably translated and presented in at least one international language (English). This would mean that the originating IPDL Office will have to make significant effort to maintain its IP records and documents in national and international language. In return, the Office would expect all IPDLs to be available in the same international language. In other words, the international use of IPDLs through the WIPONET would require their availability in internationally agreed language.

The evaluation of the cost for maintaining national IPDLs with a second language would be an important issue in the SCIT Strategic Plan.

30.03.1999