

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS ON CALENDAR DATES

*Presented to the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)
at its tenth session on November 25, 2022*

BACKGROUND

1. At its ninth session in 2021, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) approved a revised schedule for updating the surveys in Part 7 of the *WIPO Handbook on Intellectual Property Information and Documentation*. The schedule includes an update to Part 7.1 on calendar dates to be performed in 2022 (see paragraphs 109 to 114 of document CWS/9/25).
2. In August 2022, the Secretariat issued circular C.CWS.162 inviting Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to participate in the survey on representation of calendar dates. Responses have been received from 38 IPOs through September 26, 2022. Responses to the survey are expected to be published in Part 7 of the WIPO Handbook by the end of 2022, considering the time needed for preparation and translation¹.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

3. Responses were received from 38 member states and regional IPOs. There were 34 responding member states: Australia; Austria; Bahrain; Burkina Faso; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Croatia; Cuba; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Japan; Kazakhstan; Latvia; Lithuania; Mexico; New Zealand; Norway; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Ukraine; United Kingdom; United States of America. Three regional IPOs responded: Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO); European Patent Office (EPO) and European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).
4. The following are some highlights of the results. Percentages do not add up to 100 per cent because most questions allow multiple answers. This reflects that each IPO publishes many different types of documents that may have different practices for representing dates.
5. The year-first order for numeric dates, e.g., 2022.09.27, is only reported as being used by 16 respondents (43 per cent) on question 1 of the Survey, despite being the preferred format recommended by WIPO Standard ST.2 for usage by IPOs since 1997. Day-first order, e.g., 27.09.2022, is reported as being used by 66 per cent of respondents in contradiction of ST.2. The remaining respondents either use another format or do not use purely numeric dates.
6. The statistics on question 1 are misleading for several reasons:
 - Respondents were allowed to select multiple answers on question 1, to reflect that different documents may have different date practices. Many respondents who chose year-first also chose day-first. Only nine respondents (24 per cent) reported using year-first as their only date order, in compliance with ST.2. Those respondents are the

¹ A preview of the results without translation may be found at:
http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=586531

following IPOs: China; Denmark; Hungary; Japan; Lithuania; Norway; Portugal; Sweden; and EAPO.

- At least one respondent did not select year-first as one of the date formats they use, but indicated in comments that they do in fact use year-first date formats in some circumstances.
- On question 6, 24 respondents reported using one of the specific year-first formats. This suggests that the eight respondents, who chose a year-first format on question 6 but did not answer year-first on question 1, perhaps misunderstood question 1.

7. The most commonly used separator between date components is a dot “.” (70 per cent), followed by dash “-”, space, or comma. However 32 per cent of respondents reported using a different separator in at least some of their published dates.

8. A little over 80 per cent of respondents reported that leading zeroes are always included in numeric dates, such as “09” for September. However, 19 per cent of respondents stated that they do omit leading zeroes in some circumstances. This contradicts the recommendations of ST.2, which since 1997 has recommended always using two digits for day and month to avoid confusion.

9. Slightly more than half (54 per cent) of respondents report that they never spell out the names of months in any dates. The remaining respondents use either full or abbreviated month names in at least some published dates. The most commonly used languages for month names are English (47 per cent), Spanish (21 per cent), and French (15 per cent).

10. Among date formats used by respondents, the most common (regardless of separators) is DD.MM.CCYY used by 28 respondents (73 per cent), followed by CCYY.MM.DD used by 24 respondents (65 per cent). Other common formats are DD.MM.YY by 14 respondents (37 per cent), CCYY.(M)M.(D)D i.e. year-first with leading zeroes omitted by 12 respondents (32 per cent), and (D)D.(M)M.CCYY i.e. day-first with leading zeroes omitted by 10 respondents (27 per cent). Also used are (D)D.MM.YY by 9 respondents (24 per cent) and YY.MM.DD or YY.(M)M.(D)D by 8 respondents each (22 per cent).

11. For date storage, 29 respondents (76 per cent) report using database fields to store date formats for IP documents. A timestamp (number of second or milliseconds from a fixed point) is used by six respondents (16 per cent), while a different integer-based offset is used by four respondents (11 per cent). Only four respondents indicated that their systems may potentially be affected by timestamp date rollovers in 2036, 2038, or 2079.

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