

A glowing lightbulb is held in a hand against a sunset background. Above the lightbulb is a network of white stars connected by thin lines, symbolizing innovation and technology.

2018

TELEWORK ANNUAL REPORT

SUPPORTING INNOVATION

Through a Distributed Workforce

UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



Supporting an Innovative, Mission Focused, Nationwide Workforce

Fiscal year (FY) 2018 at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) was a year of monumental achievements. With its telework workforce in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, the agency has created a sustainable and best in class model for distributed work in the federal government.

Twenty one years after the inception of the original telework pilot, the USPTO has 88 percent of its workforce working remotely one to five days a week. Telework has become a proven success at the USPTO, enhancing the agency's ability to attract and compete for nation-wide talent.

To maintain its success, the USPTO strives to adopt sound workforce strategies where employees stay productive and connected, regardless of their alternate worksite location. The agency incorporates training, information technology (IT), and robust employee engagement initiatives to support the USPTO telework program. Further, the USPTO gathers, analyzes, and uses quantifiable data to identify and actualize business strategies to optimize program performance, measure return on investment, and capture the impact on agency operations and environment.

Innovation is a national priority and the USPTO telework program is a data driven business strategy enhancing the agency's ability to recruit nation-wide talent and providing employees with a variety of work options that best fit the needs of both the employees and the agency.

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Introduction:

Supporting Innovation in a Distributed Workforce



AN INTERVIEW WITH UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DIRECTOR OF THE USPTO ANDREI IANCU

Andrei Iancu serves as the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). He assumed this position in February 2018. Mr. Iancu also serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Commerce on domestic and international intellectual property policy matters.

Mr. Iancu holds a Juris Doctor from the UCLA School of Law, and a Master of Science in mechanical engineering and a Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering, both from UCLA.

During a recent interview, Mr. Iancu addressed USPTO's telework program.

Q: TO START TODAY'S INTERVIEW WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF USPTO'S TELEWORK INITIATIVE?

Under Secretary Iancu:

The USPTO has been a leader within the federal space in creating a nationwide workforce and in adopting and effectively implementing telework strategies. Our telework program significantly and positively impacts the USPTO by reducing the need for additional office space, enhancing recruitment and retention, fostering greater efficiency in production and management, and providing opportunities for expanded work flexibility.

Our telework program has also enhanced the USPTO's resiliency during continuity events, such as weather-related closures, because many of our employees can continue to work through them. The National Academy of Public Administration found that the program saved the office an average of \$7 million per year based on work conducted during closures.

Q: THIS YEAR'S REPORT THEME IS SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN A DISTRIBUTED WORKFORCE. DO YOU THINK THAT THE USPTO TELEWORK PROGRAMS HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON INNOVATION DUE TO THE INCREASED DISTRIBUTION OF OUR EMPLOYEES?

Under Secretary Iancu:

Yes. Innovation is a national priority, and you can address it best with a workforce drawn from the entire nation. Our highly skilled, diverse, and distributed workforce delivers high-quality and timely examination of patent and trademark applications and continues to remain focused on our mission to foster innovation.

I believe that having employees distributed across the United States and Puerto Rico has contributed to our progress toward achieving an optimal working level of patent applications under examination, delivering high-quality trademark registrations within target pendency, and proactively engaging the public.

Q: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON MAINTAINING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN A DISTRIBUTED WORKFORCE?

Under Secretary Iancu:

Organizations like the USPTO rely heavily on employee surveys to assess satisfaction with telework programs. Recent USPTO Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey scores indicate that our teleworkers, regardless of status, have higher positive scores on broad engagement indicators. We want to maintain this upward trend by continuing to provide the training and tools needed by our distributed workforce.

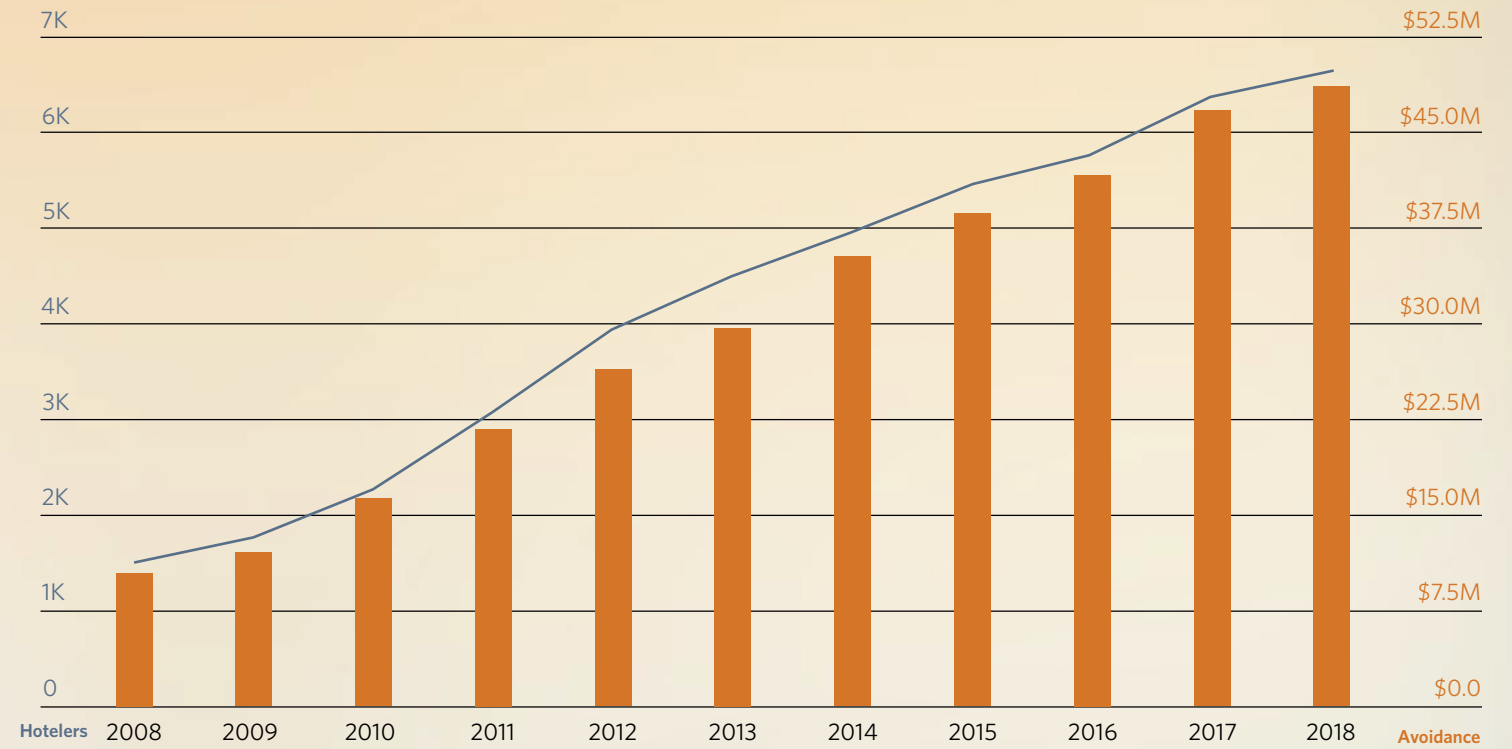
Statistics:

The USPTO gathers and analyzes telework data, collected quarterly from business unit telework coordinators, to advise USPTO leaders and stakeholders regarding program status. These analytics provide the agency with relevant information for data driven decision making.

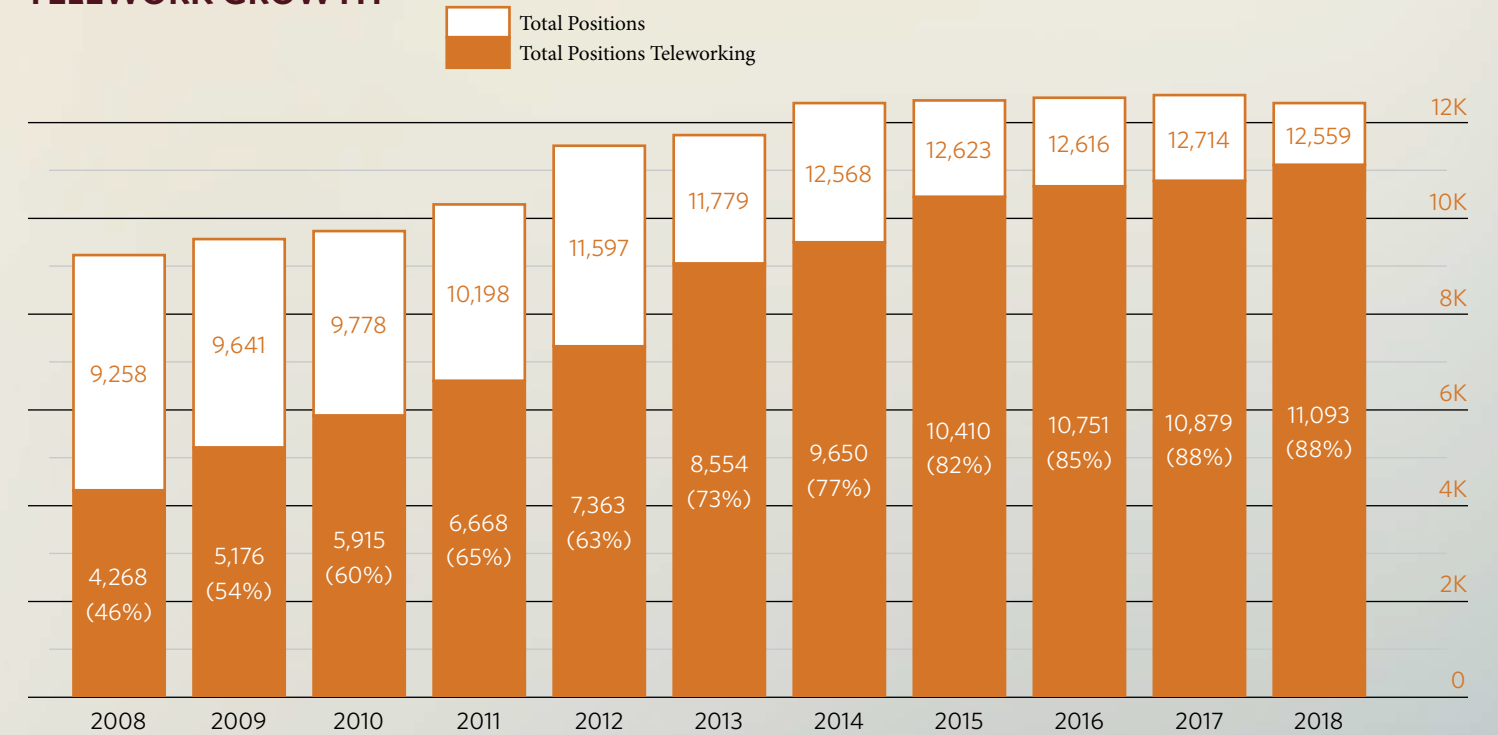
FY 2018 USPTO TELEWORK STATISTICS:

Number of Teleworkers at the USPTO	11,093
Number of Eligible Positions at the USPTO	11,830
Percent of Positions at the USPTO that are Eligible	94.20%
Percent of Positions at the USPTO that are Teleworking (Agency-wide)	88.33%
Total Number of Patent Teleworkers	8,824
Percent of Eligible Patent Positions that are Teleworking	94.01%
Total Number of Trademark Teleworkers	751
Percent of Eligible Trademark Positions that are Teleworking	97.15%
Number of Patent Positions Teleworking 4 or 5 Days per Week	6,061
Number of Trademark Positions Teleworking 4 or 5 Days per Week	495

ANNUAL REAL ESTATE COST AVOIDANCE DUE TO FULL-TIME TELEWORK



TELEWORK GROWTH



WEATHER-RELATED EVENTS

Virtual private network (VPN) data usage as well as Patent and Trademark production is reported during inclement weather to quantify the benefit of teleworking during a continuity event

- During the three winter weather events (two hour delayed arrival January 4 and federal office closure March 2 and March 21, 2018) USPTO employees worked accordingly:
 - January 4, more than 10,000 of the approximate 12,500 USPTO employees were able to telework. Trademark examining attorneys performed more than 105 percent of the work they did on recent comparable days without closures or storms. Patent examiners accomplished an average of 108.5 percent of the work they did on recent comparable days.

- March 2, almost 8,000 of the approximate 12,500 USPTO employees were able to telework. Trademark examining attorneys performed more than 85 percent of the work they did on recent comparable days without closures or storms. Patent examiners accomplished an average of 105 percent of the work they did on recent comparable days.
- March 21, almost 8,700 of the approximate 12,500 USPTO employees were able to telework. Trademark examining attorneys performed more than 95 percent of the work they did on recent comparable days without closures or storms. Patent examiners accomplished an average of 77 percent of the work they did on recent comparable days.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TELEWORK

6,324 teleworkers working from home four or five days per week:

- Avoid driving 70 million miles in a year
- Collectively save \$5.5 million in gas a year
- Collectively reduce emissions by 37 thousand tons a year

4,443 teleworkers working from home one, two, or three days per week*:

- Avoid driving 22 million miles in a year
- Collectively save \$1.7 million in gas a year
- Collectively reduce emissions by 11 thousand tons in a year

* Includes PTP 10 hours a bi-week

USPTO FULL-TIME TELEWORKERS BY STATE

District of Columbia	184	Iowa	10	North Carolina	197
Maryland	1,307	Kansas	5	Ohio	99
Virginia	2,186	Kentucky	12	Oklahoma	8
Alabama	20	Louisiana	19	Oregon	40
Alaska	1	Maine	14	Pennsylvania	216
Arizona	31	Massachusetts	66	Puerto Rico	9
Arkansas	6	Michigan	132	Rhode Island	5
California	258	Minnesota	23	South Carolina	54
Colorado	102	Mississippi	2	South Dakota	2
Connecticut	28	Missouri	22	Tennessee	27
Delaware	28	Montana	4	Texas	251
Florida	335	Nebraska	3	Utah	23
Georgia	110	Nevada	26	Vermont	7
Hawaii	4	New Hampshire	18	Washington	76
Idaho	6	New Jersey	92	West Virginia	23
Illinois	102	New Mexico	10	Wisconsin	34
Indiana	33	New York	181		

10 Million Patents

UNITED STATES ISSUES PATENT NUMBER 10,000,000



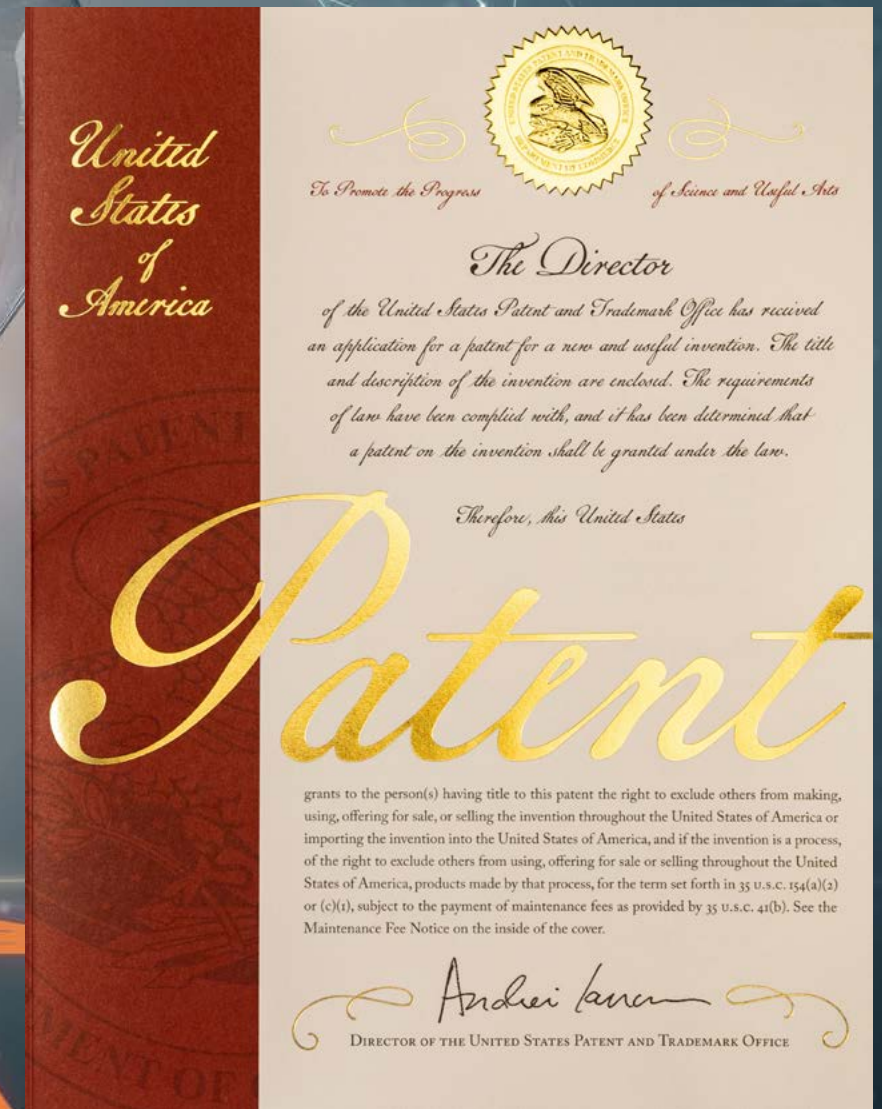
June 19, 2018 - President Donald J. Trump signs patent number 10 million, for “Coherent LADAR Using Intra-Pixel Quadrature Detection,” in a ceremony at the White House with (left to right) Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Andrei Iancu, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, inventor Joseph Marron, and Thomas A. Kennedy, Chairman and CEO for Raytheon Company.

In 2018, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) issued U.S. patent number 10 million. More than just a number, patent 10 million celebrates the rich history and strength of the American intellectual property system dating back to the first U.S. patent, signed 228 years ago by George Washington on July 31, 1790, and issued to Samuel Hopkins for a process of making potash, an ingredient used in fertilizer.

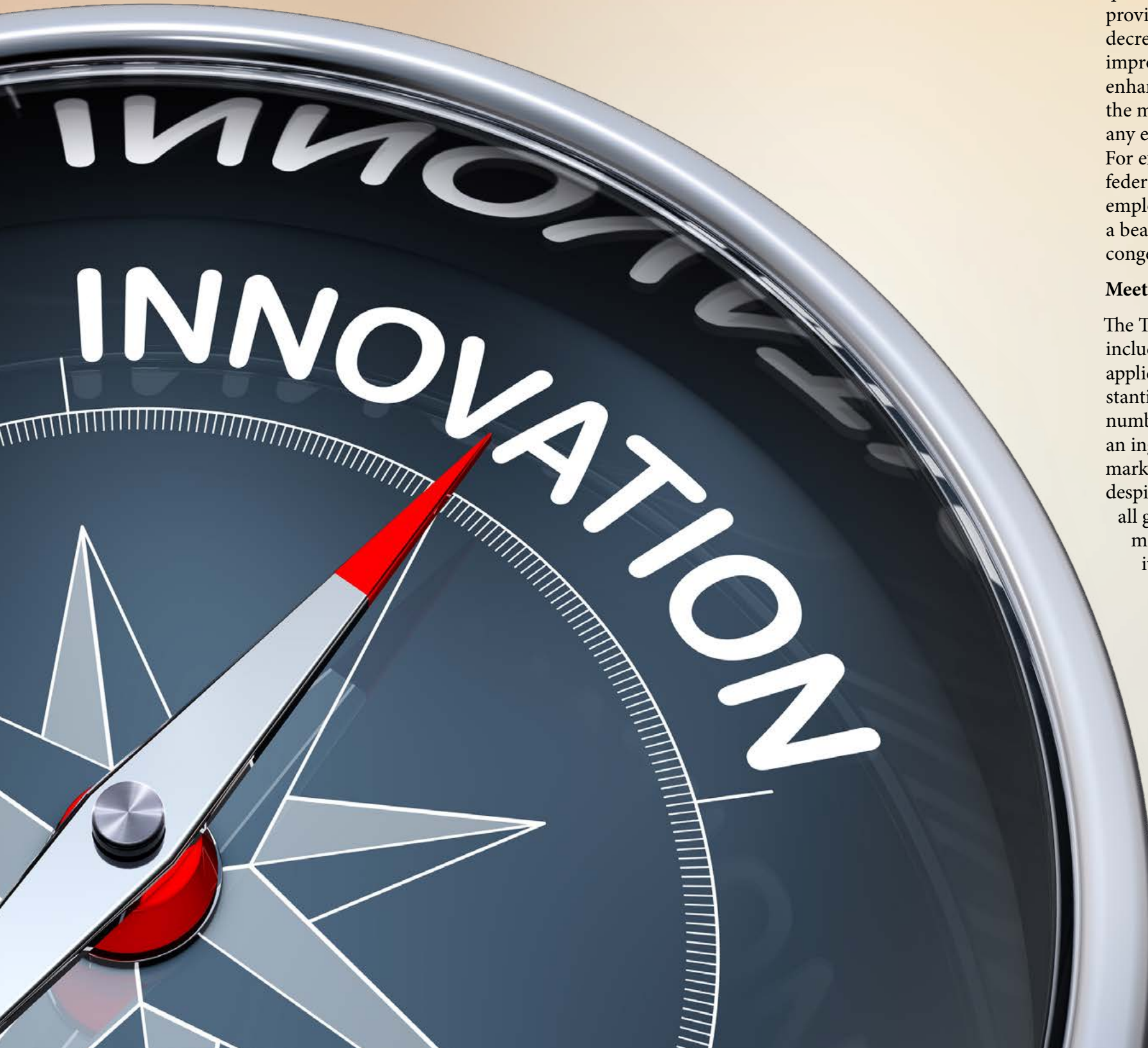
Patent 10 million for “Coherent Ladar Using Intra-Pixel Quadrature Detection” symbolizes the breadth of American invention, with applications in such varied fields as autonomous vehicles, medical imaging devices, military defense systems, and space and undersea exploration. It was invented by Joseph Marron and is owned by Raytheon Company. The patent examiner who reviewed this patent application participates in the Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program (TEAPP).

“This patent represents one of ten million steps on a continuum of human accomplishment launched when our Founding Fathers provided for intellectual property protection in our Constitution,” said Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Andrei Iancu. “Some of the greatest leaps humanity has made have been fueled by our greatest inventors, Americans who have changed the course of history with their brilliance and dogged perseverance.”

“The U.S. patent system serves as a reminder that our nation values and continues to be built by those who are willing to take risks, challenge traditions, push the boundaries of convention, and test new limits in design and thought,” said Commissioner for Patents Drew Hirshfeld.



Business Unit Highlights



TRADEMARKS

Since 1997, when Trademarks first implemented telework, the Trademark Work at Home (TWAH) program has proven its value to employees, external stakeholders, and the USPTO. The program provides cost savings by reducing the need for additional office space, enhances recruitment and retention, and fosters greater production and high quality work. It improves employee satisfaction by providing opportunities for expanded work flexibility, decreasing the costs and stress of commuting, and improving work-life balance. Importantly, telework enhances the resiliency of the USPTO by allowing the majority of employees the ability to work during any event that threatens the continuity of operations. For example, during inclement weather, when other federal agencies may be closed for business, our employees continue to work at home without skipping a beat. Of course, telework also decreases traffic congestion and improves air quality.

Meeting Trademark Challenges

The Trademark organization's challenges this year included processing a record increase in trademark application filings, and the consequent need to substantially boost the number of staff, especially the number of examining attorneys. Because telework is an ingrained business strategy in Trademarks, Trademarks was able to maintain a small real estate footprint despite the increase in personnel, and was able to meet all goals including production, quality, and e-government. In addition, Trademarks was able to maintain its emphasis on an excellent customer experience.

At the end of FY 2018, more than 85 percent of Trademark employees in all work units had the opportunity to telework one or more days per week, and 66 percent of Trademark employees participated in full-time telework. These employees only report to headquarters on an as needed basis.

By the end of the fiscal year, 21 percent of Trademark examining attorneys were participants in the Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program (TEAPP) in 33 different states. In addition, fourteen senior staff attorneys from the Trademark Office of Training and Quality Review, the Petitions Office, the ID/Classification unit, and our Outreach office were TEAPP participants. Because of the difference in locality pay, Trademarks was able to avoid over \$500,000 in compensation costs this fiscal year. Since TEAPP's inception, Trademarks has had a net cost savings of over \$2 million dollars in salary reductions.

Expansion of Telework Opportunities and Career Development for Managers

With the expansion of the number of law offices, Trademarks needed to recruit, train, and retain management personnel. Increasing management flexibilities has been vital to that effort. One such program has been the expansion of virtual law offices, where both staff and management work at home full time and conduct most business communication on line via our collaboration tools such as email, instant messaging, and video conferencing.

The Trademark Leadership Development team created an innovative training curriculum, TM Talks, for new trademark supervisors that targets relevant training specific to the needs of a trademark supervisor. The training was designed to emphasize on-the-job development and tailored specifically to Trademarks' organizational goals through a series of challenging and diverse experiences that accentuate the new managers' learning and development. The TM Talks program models best practices and incorporates peer coaching and manager-led courses related to the role of trademark supervisors, merit system principles, labor relations, managing virtual employees, business processes, problem solving, project management, and dealing with difficult situations. During FY 2018, approximately 24 hours of leadership training was provided to new Trademark supervisors under this program. Existing evaluations indicate that the TM Talks Program met the needs of new supervisors and their managers.

Communication, Collaboration, and Employee Engagement

Supervising employees who work remotely requires enhanced attention to best management practices. With 20 years of telework experience, Trademarks was able to continue to work to improve employee engagement and good labor-management relationships, while augmenting telework opportunities. Trademark teams work on employee training, career development, succession planning, management training, engagement, and communication. The engagement team comprised of representatives from the operations management team and the labor unions focused specifically on engagement and communications issues.

Besides regular meetings with Trademark labor unions, Trademarks has implemented several initiatives to improve leadership communication and employee development. The Trademark Commissioner continued her practice to meet with TEAPP employees whenever she was on travel in their cities. Other communication vehicles include a quarterly electronic employee magazine, TMPeople, and the Commissioner's monthly newsletter, Madison Messages. As always, Trademarks participated in the USPTO Green Fair and Community Day. All hands meetings and regular staff meetings were webcast and the use of collaboration tools was encouraged among all employees. Trademarks continues to embrace professionalism, career development, and work-life balance while maintaining high productivity, quality, and customer service.

One important engagement and public outreach activity was very successful this year. The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, for the first time, in collaboration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, hosted the 2018 National Trademark Exposition. Many Trademark employees were on hand, organizing and participating in the expo. The event is a free, family-friendly couple of days where the public can learn about trademarks. It featured educational workshops, exhibits, and hands-on activities demonstrating the important role trademarks play in our economy and our lives. Children's activities, including scavenger

hunts, interactive games, and trademark design workshops, were offered both days. Free continuing legal education (CLE) seminars were offered for legal professionals. This amazingly successful event resulted in attendance of 43,000 visitors. Keynoting at this year's exposition was NBA All-Star, author, and entrepreneur, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

The physical environment of the workplace has a direct impact on employee productivity and satisfaction. Teleworkers who spend less time at headquarters need an inviting space to collaborate with colleagues. Working with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (OCAO), the Trademark space leads were eager to sponsor the idea of several USPTO employees to build out a creative and collaborative environment within the Trademark space in the Madison East building. The "collaboration room" in Trademarks which opened this year comprises a redesigned and expanded service center into a cheerful meeting/eating/working area with comfortable furniture, computer drops, lockers, and a television to motivate employee brainstorming, mentoring, networking, collaborating, and socializing. Teleworkers can plug in their laptops in the inviting space and meet with their colleagues on campus in this wonderfully collaborative environment.

PATENT TELEWORK PROGRAMS

The patent telework program offers a variety of telework options, which provide the opportunity to best match the needs of the employees and the business unit. These programs offer employees flexibility and better work-life balance. The patent telework program has improved performance and productivity by providing employees the flexibility to arrange their work schedule and work environment to maximize their efficiency. Employees are able to eliminate time spent in traffic during their commute and minimize other distractions that may limit their productivity. The patent telework program also helps to increase recruitment and overall retention of Patent employees.

The impact of an office closure is also significantly lessened during snow emergencies and other weather

related acts. Employees are allowed to telework and work at home instead of taking leave or spending hours on the road in dangerous weather conditions.

In FY 2018, 6,061 Patent employees worked from home four to five days a week. In total Patents had more than 8,800 teleworkers, working from home at least one day a week. With the availability of the USPTO provided collaboration tools such as Cisco WebEx and Microsoft Skype for Business, teleworking employees are able to interact and attend meetings in much the same way as they do when they are on the Alexandria, Virginia campus or at one of the regional offices.

The telework team in the Office of Patent Information Resources (OPIR), Office of Patent Information Management (OPIM) will continue to work on improving the tools, resources, and training programs available to teleworkers in FY 2019.

TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

On August 8, 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed an amendment to Trademark Act Section 17 creating the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. To celebrate this milestone, in 2018, the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) celebrated its remarkable 60th anniversary with an event held in the National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum.

In 2018 the TTAB continued to expand its telework program to support innovation at the USPTO by recruiting and retaining highly qualified and experienced employees, increasing outreach activities, expanding use of collaboration tools for meetings and trainings, and enhancing focus on employee engagement.

The TTAB's overall telework participation is 89 percent, down slightly from 2017 as a result of the retirement of one judge, the departure of one attorney and the addition of five interlocutory attorneys in September



Left to right: Talya Goodman, Patents; Pat Beck, Trademark Trial and Appeal Board; Stephanie Murray, Patent Trial and Appeal Board.

who have not yet met the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board Work at Home (TTABW@H) program eligibility requirements.

With the exception of the chief judge and the deputy chief judge, 100 percent of the positions in the TTAB are telework eligible. The general popularity of the telework program and the flexibility provided by the Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program (TEAPP) continue to enable the TTAB to recruit and retain highly qualified, experienced employees from a nationwide pool of candidates.

Currently the TTAB has 10 administrative trademark judges (ATJs) and three interlocutory attorneys (IAs) in TEAPP in 10 different states. 100 percent of TTAB paralegals telework. In 2019 TTAB will update the current National Treasury Employees Union, Chapter 243 (NTEU 243) agreement for its trademark information specialists to add an additional day of telework as part of the new agreement. TTAB will also begin reviewing

the NTEU 243 telework memorandum of understanding (MOU) for potential updates.

In 2018, TEAPP ATJs and IAs continued to take part in outreach activities by interacting with trademark practitioners and professional associations in their local areas. TEAPP participants attended activities at the Dallas Regional Office, the PTAB/TTAB joint hearing programs in New Orleans and San Diego, and the Boston Patent Law Association's TTAB Best Practices Program. Additionally, while attending outreach events the chief judge was able to spend time with those ATJs on TEAPP.

Although oral hearings are held in the TTAB hearing room in Alexandria, Virginia through the use of video conferencing technology, ATJs on TEAPP, regardless of their location, are able to remain actively involved. In the interest of educating and providing outreach to stakeholders, live hearings presided over by a panel of three TTAB judges are occasionally scheduled on law

school campuses and at professional events throughout the country. These hearings showcase TTAB appeal and trial proceedings. In such situations, TEAPP ATJs located in the region are assigned to preside at those hearings, often joined by the chief judge or deputy chief judge from the Alexandria, Virginia office. The TTAB encourages managers and supervisors to increase the number of meetings and trainings held by Cisco WebEx. To facilitate this in 2018, TTAB equipped its TTAB team room with the latest collaboration tools. By doing so, TTAB enhanced the capabilities for conducting meetings and trainings with those distributed employees no longer working on the Alexandria, Virginia campus. TTAB utilized the new collaboration equipment to conduct multiple training sessions with new IAs and a TEAPP ATJ.

TTAB acknowledges that its ability to recruit and hire the very best and brightest employees and retain a diverse and talented workforce have been strengthened by the USPTO's telework program.

PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

The Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) provides telework options and other work flexibilities for its employees. During FY 2018, PTAB continued to expand telework participation.

PTAB ended the 2018 fiscal year by attaining 98 percent telework eligibility of all business unit positions. These positions fall under PTAB's telework programs for non-bargaining employees and for the NTEU 243 50-mile radius program. All new judges are in telework eligible positions and are approved for telework on a case-by-case basis as their familiarity with PTAB processes and procedures increase.

In FY 2018, PTAB added video enhancements to its hearing rooms and executive offices to include new equipment and a smaller video room where judges working remotely can accomplish their hearings via teleconferencing. PTAB's technical enhancements



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four/five days per week:
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enabled an informative and successful presentation in January entitled, PTAB: Managing in a Telework Environment.

In 2019, the PTAB will continue to conduct extensive telework training for its employees, and ensure that employees receive and understand all telework procedures prior to being deployed to work remotely.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

In FY 2018, the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) had 92 percent of its staff eligible to telework with 82.76 percent of those eligible participating in the program. This year, OGC updated the telework agreement to include the new weather and safety administrative leave policy that was implemented by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This change will allow for greater productivity and the ability for OGC attorneys and support staff to continue to provide legal support

during government closures and inclement weather. OGC continuously explores opportunities to improve its telework program and improve work life balance for its employees. The ability to telework has been key to employee satisfaction and continues to be a major factor in attracting new talent to the office.

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Office of Administrative Services (OAS) will continue its trend of telework expansion and participation. In FY 2018, 100 percent of OAS staff who were eligible to telework had telework agreements in place to work from an alternate work site one to two days a week or situationally.

Telework has impacted OAS' ability to accommodate work-life balance for its employees. It has provided the flexibility necessary for employees to better manage their commuting time as well as their individual work

schedules. Additionally, improved collaboration tools and positions previously considered telework-ineligible are now classified as telework-eligible. By offering employees improved telework flexibilities OAS recruitment and retention has increased.

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) offers a variety of telework options to its employees. These options include situational, one, two, and three days of telework, depending upon the position. Currently 100 percent of OHR positions are eligible for telework and over 95 percent of those positions have telework agreements in place.

In OHR, telework is a recruitment and retention incentive for prospective and current employees. OHR teleworkers report an enhanced work-life balance as a result of the telework opportunities available in this business unit.

In 2019, OHR will continue to utilize telework as another tool to help improve product quality, enhance customer focus, and encourage employee engagement.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

In the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) telework is an important business strategy. Management has found that telework opportunities are an important component for recruitment, retention, and work-life balance. By permitting the OCFO to provide its mission critical support services during inclement weather, telework is also an important service delivery tool. The OCFO has also experienced benefits from the telework program through increased employee morale and engagement. This is evident as employees have demonstrated a willingness to put in time at home during the evenings and weekends to complete work deliverables with short deadlines.

Employees have embraced telework tools in a responsible manner. They have become adept with the collaboration tools and developed different ways to share information, coach new employees,

have productive meetings, and work together on deliverables. These tools have become a routine part of work activities performed both at headquarters and alternate worksites. Employees find that changes to work products can be made more quickly, which enables more efficient discussions and decisions than what could have been accomplished before teleworking was an option.

In the future the OCFO is continuously looking for ways to improve service delivery. This includes evaluating the OCFO telework strategy to ensure it continues to meet both the mission and employee needs. This includes ensuring telework eligibility matches the missions support needs of the agency.

OFFICE OF POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Office of Policy and International Affairs (OPIA) continued to be productive in FY 2018, due in part to the majority of eligible staff remaining active in our telework program. Our attorneys desire the ability to work seamlessly with overseas colleagues, and the caveat of having to accommodate the time differences between their geographic locations can occasionally be eased by the ability for them to do so remotely from a home office.

In FY 2018 OPIA introduced a new telework handbook to employees, providing comprehensive guidance regarding the available plans and best practices. Topics include how to plan and apply for telework, equipment and safety procedures, productivity tools, and a quick reference guide with troubleshooting tips and frequently asked questions.

OPIA has continued to promote telework options that provide the flexibility desired by staff, alongside the multiple collaboration tools and virtual meeting options provided to the agency. In FY 2019 OPIA plans to continue support for innovation within the USPTO by providing additional training and encouraging staff to employ more frequent use of Cisco WebEx to conduct both intra-agency meetings as well as meetings and training with external and international participants.



With its telework workforce in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico the USPTO has created a sustainable model for distributed work in the federal government.

Left to right: Teddy Tedesse and Yelirmma Elliot, Office of the Chief Information Officer; Shannon Baily, Office of Policy and International Affairs.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The Office of the Chief Communications Officer (OCCO) manages the USPTO's public affairs function and coordinates a wide variety of internal and external communications.

OCCO serves as the frontline communications team when weather-related or other unforeseen circumstances change the USPTO's operating status. The ability to telework allows the team to connect immediately in the absence of a physical space and update our employees, customers and the press with the timeliest information.

The staffing size of OCCO continues to expand and this growth has provided employees with a wider array of work schedule options, including the transition from episodic (situational) telework to routine telework for eligible positions where specific work activities are portable and can be performed as effectively outside the office. Transitioning from limited, episodic (situational) telework to routine telework for eligible positions was a major step forward for the OCCO. This has allowed for greater flexibility for employee scheduling and work-life balance, which has always been a top priority for OCCO.

Telework has also allowed OCCO to expand work detail opportunities outside of the immediate Alexandria, Virginia campus. For FY 2018, OCCO welcomed their first full-time teleworking detailee (based in Florida) as editor of the internal USPTO Weekly employee newsletter.

OFFICE OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY

Telework in the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity (OEEOD) is beneficial for the USPTO and for OEEOD staff. In 2018, 76 percent of OEEOD staff participated in some form of telework. This business strategy has improved office productivity by allowing staff to work from home when they would otherwise have taken leave such as when coping with

inclement weather or attending a medical appointment near their homes. Similarly, the availability of telework in combination with flexible schedules has increased office productivity and morale by permitting staff to work remotely either earlier or later and in many instances longer than they would have worked had they commuted into the office.

Staff have expressed appreciation for the flexibility of the OEEOD telework program by noting how it has improved their work-life balance. Anecdotally, OEEOD knows, from interviewing job applicants, that the agency's telework program is an attractive benefit to potential recruits.

A significant portion of the USPTO workforce is comprised of distributed workers. This has required OEEOD to adjust how its services are delivered. For example, OEEOD currently relies on a web-based reasonable accommodation request program which allows employees to seek reasonable accommodations whenever and wherever they need to make these requests. Similarly, OEEOD staff who process employment discrimination complaints, now conduct most of their job responsibilities online or by telephone, a major change from how those functions were performed in the past. The incorporation of telework as a business strategy has prompted the OEEOD to develop new methods of assisting leadership with managing and promoting the diversity and inclusion of geographically dispersed employees.

OEEOD is committed to ensuring that staff is available to meet with its service users when requested. In instances where physical meetings are not possible, staff members interact with clients through video conferencing. If the requestor lacks the capability to participate in virtual meetings, OEEOD staff are expected to conduct those meetings by telephone.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

As telework has become an integral part of the USPTO work option, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) telework program has continued to grow.

Ninety-five percent of positions in OCIO are telework eligible and by the end of FY18, 67 percent of eligible employees were participating in the OCIO two-day telework program.

OCIO telework assists participants in maintaining the collaboration and productivity needed in the current work environment. Telework significantly benefits OCIO by maintaining operations during inclement weather conditions and emergency situations.

Continued growth of participation in the OCIO's telework program offers employees the flexibility to enhance work-life balance while maintaining USPTO goals.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY AND DIRECTOR

The Office of the Under Secretary (OUS) is a mission-driven and goal-oriented organization that delivers high quality customer service to its internal and external stakeholders. The Office of the Under Secretary telework program continues to be a successful means to accomplish agency and business unit goals.

Established to support the USPTO's strategic goals and mission. The majority of OUS staff are situational teleworkers; however, in 2016, the program was expanded to offer one telework day-per-week for interested employees. As a result participants have indicated an improvement in work-life balance. In addition to reporting improved work-life balance, employees are able to continue the same level of productivity as when they are physically in the office.

Highly effective communication, collaboration, and tools drive the OUS telework program and enable the consistent delivery of reliable product and services to stakeholders regardless of where the employee is physically located.



Left to right: Karen Sewell and Paul Fucito, Office of the Chief Communications Officer.

Nationwide Workforce



TELEWORK ENHANCEMENT ACT PILOT PROGRAM (TEAPP)

The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 authorized the USPTO to conduct a test program allowing employees to waive their right to travel expenses for a reasonable number of mandatory trips to the USPTO. TEAPP allows employees to work anywhere in the contiguous U.S. (greater than 50 miles from the USPTO, located in Alexandria, Virginia), and as of FY 2016 Puerto Rico, without a routine reporting requirement back to campus. While enrolled in TEAPP, employees will change their duty station to an alternate worksite in the city in which they live. The employee must travel to the USPTO when directed as outlined in the TEAPP agreement. Since its inception in 2012, 1,766 trips have been taken back to campus.

In 2018 The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed by President Trump on August 13, 2018, included a three-year extension to the USPTO's existing authority to run the TEAPP, which expired in December 2017. Under this extension, the TEAPP is now authorized until December 31, 2020. This allows the USPTO to continue the expansion of this program.

TEAPP began in the second quarter of FY 2012 with 654 participants and as of the end of the fourth quarter of FY 2018, the USPTO had 2,784 TEAPP participants across 47 states and Puerto Rico. TEAPP is considered a success by both the employees and the USPTO.

Notable Benefits Include:

- **Environmental impact:** In FY 2018, TEAPP participants working from home five days per week lead to an approximate yield of 13,500 metric tons of CO2 emissions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region.
- **USPTO benefits:** In FY 2018, there was an estimated \$125.9 million total benefit to the USPTO.

Below: TEAPP Oversight Committee. (Left to right) Jay Besch, Howard Friedman, Tim Callahan, Bob Oberleitner, Meryl Hershkowitz, Pam Schwartz, Fred Steckler, Melanie Tung, Kathy Duda, Danette Campbell, Andrew Lawrence, David Dalke, Harold Ross.



SUPPORTING INNOVATION
Through a Distributed Workforce

2018 PATENTS TRAINING AT HEADQUARTERS (PaTH) EVENTS

PaTH has been established to develop opportunities for planned and focused interactive communication among Patent's growing nationwide workforce. The objective of PaTH is to maintain and enhance communication and to enrich team collaboration within our remotely connected work staff as we continue to build quality examination.

Two mandatory PaTH events were held in fiscal year 2018. These events occurred in October 2017, and December 2017. While the October mandatory PaTH event marked the completion of Technology Center 2100, the December mandatory PaTH event included the first half of Technology Center 2400 examiners and managers. As of the end of fiscal year 2018, nearly 4,500 participants have attended PaTH events and more than 1,100 were TEAPP employees. Participants included employees from Alexandria headquarters, all the USPTO regional offices, the patent hoteling program (PHP), and PHP on TEAPP.

Event attendees participated in facilitated training which focused on improving work quality through collaboration and enhanced communication skills. Art unit and workgroup meetings, an OCIO Town Hall, in-house training modules (including career

management techniques and a team building exercise), and a Scientific Technical Information Center (STIC) EXPO were provided, in addition to contractor-led training, which included modules on time management and virtual communication.

PaTH events include members of the Patent Office Professional Association (POPA), Office of Patent Training, Office of Patent Finance, Telework Program Office, Office of Equal Employment and Diversity, Office of Patent Information Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Office of Security and Safety, Est. 1790, Nationwide Workforce Team, Office of Human Resources Enterprise Training Division, and the Labor Relations Division. The PaTH planning team including executive leads, supervisory patent examiners as well as staff from the Office of Patent Training (OPT) provides guidance to ensure continued success for each of the upcoming PaTH events.

In FY 2018, event-planning processes for registration, travel for TEAPP employees, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12, Personal Identity Directive (HSPD-12/PIV) security updates, and employee communications were improved based on feedback from previous sessions. In preparation for the events, the PaTH team assisted guest speakers, acquired meeting space, marketed the event, and volunteered their support. In facilitation of PaTH event logistics, the following pre-/post-event planning tools were utilized:

- PaTH website,
- SharePoint registration site,
- Contractor facilitated and in-house training agendas,
- Event surveys,
- Email communications,
- Talking points, and
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

FY 2018 PaTH EVENT SURVEY RESULTS

The PaTH team delivered a post-event survey to gather feedback regarding training and event logistics. The following items were addressed:

- Logistics: Based on survey results the logistics of coordinating/making travel and hotel arrangements were very successful.
- Facilities: The majority of participants were satisfied/very satisfied with the meeting rooms, cafeteria, and the parking accommodations.
- Agenda: The two day agenda was designed to maximize individual meetings between examiner participants and their supervisors during their stay. The design also enabled face-to-face meetings at the art unit and workgroup level.

- PaTH Feedback: The majority of participants believed that the event contributes to the following objectives:
 - Creating better connected teams
 - Enhancing work product quality
 - Improving communication among the distributed workforce
 - Increasing collaboration
 - Increasing employee engagement
 - Contributing to overall job satisfaction
- Comments: A number of comments have been collected and incorporated into PaTH planning to enhance the format and content of future PaTH events.

Currently, the USPTO has planned four PaTH events for FY 2019 (approximately 2000 participants) and four events for FY 2020 (approximately 2000 participants).



Left (Left to right): Paul Rodriguez, Seema Rao, and Edward Lefkowitz from the Technology Center 2100 Directors welcome attendees to the December 2017 PaTH Event. Above: Andrew Faille, Deputy Commissioner for Patent Operations, speaks to attendees at the October 2017 PaTH Event.



DALLAS, TEXAS

Texas Regional Office, EST. 2015

REGIONAL OFFICES

Each USPTO regional office is equipped with several universal public workstations, which enable members of the public to work with tools that are nearly identical to those used by patent examiners and trademark examining attorneys. This can save potential applicants time and money by allowing them to perform a brief initial search for their invention or mark. Professional practitioners and searchers can also use the workstations. The regional offices also provide hands-on workshops for those who may not be familiar with the USPTO search systems. In FY 2018, the regional offices created over 513 new accounts and had over 632 visits to the universal public workstation rooms.

The regional offices play an important role in supporting the agency's mission to maintain a diverse workforce by allowing the USPTO to attract talent that is unable or unwilling to relocate to the Washington, D.C. metro area. The regional offices employ 261

examiners and 57 administrative patent judges on-site. In 2018 each regional office on-boarded new patent examiners, hiring 82 examiners in FY 2018.

With the signing of the America Invents Act into law by President Obama in 2011, the USPTO moved forward with the establishment of four regional offices. The first of the new offices opened in Detroit in 2012. The USPTO has since established regional offices in Denver, San Jose, and Dallas.

Each regional office has a goal of promoting innovation and stimulating the economy by connecting inventors and entrepreneurs to government resources, supporting students and teachers through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs, gathering feedback from regional stakeholders, and recruiting diverse talent from the region.

All the regional offices are staffed with patent examiners and Patent Trial and Appeal Board judges. In addition to creating a regional presence for USPTO,



DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Elijah J. McCoy Midwest Regional Office, EST. 2012

these offices give inventors, entrepreneurs, and small businesses the added benefit of a USPTO presence in every time zone in the United States. In addition to working closely with intellectual property services, start-ups, and job-growth accelerators in their regions, staff collaborate with local STEM organizations.

The Texas regional office is located in the Terminal Annex Federal Building of downtown Dallas. An extension of the USPTO, serves the Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas.

The Rocky Mountain regional office is located in the Byron G. Rogers Federal Building in downtown Denver. An extension of the USPTO, serves Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

The Elijah J. McCoy Midwest regional office is located in the Stroh Building at 300 River Place Drive, Detroit, Michigan. An extension of the USPTO, serves the Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The San Jose regional office is located in the Wing Building of San Jose City Hall. An extension of the USPTO, serves California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Alaska, and Hawaii.

The regional offices participate in the agency wide policy of promoting cost savings, recruitment, retention, and work-life balance through telework.



DENVER, COLORADO

Rocky Mountain Regional Office, EST. 2014



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Silicon Valley West Coast Regional Office, EST. 2015

FY 2018

Telework Program Office Highlights

AGENCY OUTREACH

The USPTO is often asked to present the USPTO telework strategy as well as provide support and guidance to outside organizations to support various telework efforts.

AGENCY ASSISTANCE

- Securities and Exchange Commission
- Public Defender Service
- Federal Bureau of Investigation/Criminal Justice Information Services
- The Assistant Secretary for Management (ASM) at Department of the Treasury
- Department of Homeland Security

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

- China Trademark Office
- IP Australia Finance Team

SPEAKING EFFORTS

- OPM/CHCOC Academy Event “OPM Cost Benefit Analysis”
- Partnership for Public Service/Excellence in Government Fellows Program “Building Partnerships and Coalitions”

TELEWORK RECERTIFICATION

As a way to continuously improve the telework process, the Telework Program Office (TPO) created a telework recertification initiative, requiring all current teleworkers to review their specific telework guidelines and recommit to the telework program. The recertification is a computer-based module

in the Commerce Learning Center that contains important information and reminders on telework duties and responsibilities, best practices, and requires teleworkers to review their business unit’s telework guidelines/terms and conditions. Finally, the process includes managers’ involvement, who are required to acknowledge the recertification in the Learning Center. This initiative will be a bi-annual recurring process.

All current USPTO teleworkers must complete the mandatory Telework Recertification, including those who are:

- Full-time teleworkers and remote workers
- Part time teleworkers
- Situational teleworkers
- Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program (TEAPP) participants

The TPO notifies teleworkers (via Learning Center) of the recertification, offering one month to complete the course. The TPO tracks participation and reports to the business units the percentage complete. Follow-up notes are deployed through the Learning Center, reminding those who have not taken the module. The TPO requests all business units to communicate this process ahead of the launch. Communications are issued in the USPTO Weekly and on the Telework Resource intranet site.

In FY18, which was the third year of this initiative, more than 11,000 employees successfully completed the telework recertification. Another way of describing this accomplishment is that 100 percent of those who were required to complete the telework recertification successfully completed it.

2018 Leadership Forum

MORE THAN 1,000 NATIONWIDE ATTENDED 2018 LEADERSHIP FORUM

More than 1,000 USPTO supervisors, managers, and senior executives from across the nation attended Innovation Leadership 2.0 in Alexandria, Va. and online Aug. 6 – 10. This year’s theme was “The Innovative Leader: Agile, Empowered, Inspiring.”

Director Andrei Iancu kicked off the event, and Chief Administrative Officer Fred Steckler closed with a call to action for USPTO leaders to continue developing by applying what they learned throughout the week. Daily keynotes by world-class speakers focused on innovative leadership at all levels, and forum workshops showcased the USPTO’s leaders as teachers.

Presentation topics supported the development of USPTO Ideal Leader Profile qualities and included building trust, managing change, coaching and mentoring, leading distributed teams, emotional intelligence, communication, employee engagement and empowerment, diversity and inclusion, fostering innovation, and presentation skills.



Danette Campbell, Director, Telework Program Office and Mary Kelly, CEO of Productive Leaders discuss USPTO telework at the 2018 Leadership Forum, held August 6 – 10, 2018

Internationally renowned author, Naval Academy graduate, and leadership expert Mary Kelly lead the break-out session, “Managing a Remote Workforce.” Mary’s past experiences teaching leadership and management, in addition to her 21 years as a Navy intelligence and logistics officer, helped inspire session participants.



Above: NBC sports analyst, two-time TEDx presenter, author, Olympic silver medalist, and thought leader in design thinking and chronoception John K. Coyle gave the opening keynote address at Innovation Leadership 2.0.

The Future of Telework



Pictured left to right, Top row; Andrew Lawrence, William Trost, Dave Porta, Dawn Moore, Jackie Bowen, Jay Patel, Joseph Hail, Joseph McKane Bottom row; Khalil Naamane, Mary Sparrow, Matt Kim, Michael McGill, Syeda Saleh, Talya Goodman, Van Keane, Wayne Howard.

To ensure the continued success of the USPTO telework program, in FY 2018, the USPTO implemented a number of concrete steps to strengthen its support for managers and employees in areas of communication, collaboration, and training. Notably, the USPTO:

- Required all current teleworkers to review and electronically certify their specific telework guidelines. The training also contained important information on telework duties and responsibilities and reiterated telework best practices;
- Convened patent examiners who are teleworking remotely or part of the regional offices on-site as part of the PaTH program, including breakout sessions on effective collaboration and telework.

The USPTO will continue to expand its nationwide workforce in order to recruit and retain top talent.

In addition, the agency will continue to be a resource to others, focusing on sharing its best practices and expertise with outside agencies and organizations.

TECHNOLOGY

Using a wide suite of hardware and software teleworkers at the USPTO are able to remain seamlessly connected to each other, their managers, and their overall work environment, regardless of where they are physically located. This suite includes the Universal Laptop, Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection, the Cisco Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Microsoft Lync, webcam, Cisco WebEx, and small office/home office (SOHO) router.



Telework Resources

The USPTO Telework Program Office has developed an internal telework resource center, located on the USPTO intranet, to support telework-eligible employees, existing teleworkers, and managers. The Telework Program Office website for various resources, best practices, and tools.

