

USPTO Telework Annual Report 2015

USPTO Telework:
*Representing the
Gold Standard in
Federal Telework
Since 1997.*

UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



USPTO Telework Awards

2014 17TH ANNUAL CONSTANCE L. BELFIORE QUALITY OF LIFE AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
QUALITY OF LIFE
COMMITTEE

(Trademark Organization)

uspto

2013 #1 THE BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

AWARDED BY THE
PARTNERSHIP FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE

uspto

2013 ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

uspto

2012 SAMUEL J. HEYMAN SERVICE TO AMERICA AWARD NOMINATION

AWARDED BY THE
PARTNERSHIP FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE

2010 TELE-VISION AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT TELEWORK

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

(Enterprise Remote Access
(ERA) Portal)

uspto

2010 FEDERAL TELEWORK DRIVER AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

(Danette Campbell,
Senior Telework Advisor)

uspto

2009 TELE-VISION AWARD FOR BEST USE OF INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT TELEWORK AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

(Office of General Law
Telework Program)

uspto

2008 TELE-VISION AWARD FOR BEST NEW TELEWORK INITIATIVE

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

(Trademark Assistance Center)

2007 EXCELLENCE IN TELEWORK LEADERSHIP AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

2007 FEDERAL TELEWORK DRIVER AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

(Deborah Cohn,
Deputy Commissioner, Trademarks)

uspto

2007 WORK-LIFE INNOVATIVE EXCELLENCE AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
ALLIANCE FOR WORK-LIFE
PROGRESS

(Trademark Work at Home Program)

uspto

2006 TELE-VISION AWARD: TELEWORK PROGRAM WITH MAXIMUM IMPACT ON GOVERNMENT

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK EXCHANGE

(Trademark Work at Home Program)

uspto

2004 TELEWORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
POTOMAC FORUM

uspto

2003 BEST ORGANIZATION FOR TELEWORK AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
MID-ATLANTIC
TELECOMMUTING
ADVISORY COUNCIL

uspto

2003 GOVERNMENT TELEWORK AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
TELEWORK COALITION

uspto

2001 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS TELEWORK AWARD

AWARDED BY THE
METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON COUNCIL
OF GOVERNMENTS
COMMUTER CONNECTIONS



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This year’s annual report was inspired by those who have contributed to the success of telework at the USPTO. Your efforts have made the program a gold standard for telework. A sincere thank you is extended to Fred Steckler, Chief Administrative Officer, Paul Ehlike and Roberto Ortiz, Lead Visual Information Specialists.



Gold is associated with success, such as winning the gold medal or being the gold standard.

Introduction:

Worth Its Weight in Gold

The United States Patent and Trademark Office Telework Program

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) telework program is valuable to employees, the agency, as well as to external stakeholders. This initiative is considered the gold standard for telework in the federal government.

The USPTO telework program started in 1997 with 18 Trademark examining attorneys. At the end of the fourth quarter 2015, the agency had more than 10,000 employees working remotely between one and five days per week.

Between fourth quarter fiscal year (FY) 2014 and fourth quarter FY 2015, the percent of positions eligible to telework increased from 91 percent to 93 percent (adding 293 eligible positions agency-wide).

The USPTO telework program provides cost savings 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 and better work-life balance for participating employees.



999.9
FINE

GOLD

1000g

The USPTO Telework Program also enhances the resiliency of the agency by providing the majority of employees the ability to work during a continuity event. For example, during federal inclement weather closures in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, telework and hoteling employees remain productive. During the 2015 winter season, on average, patent examiners maintained a nearly 92-percent production rate, and trademark examining attorneys maintained a 106-percent production rate compared with a non-inclement weather day.

The USPTO telework mission is clear. Telework at the USPTO is a corporate business strategy, which supports mission achievement and goal fulfillment via a distributed workforce. For employees and the agency alike, it is an initiative that is worth its weight in gold.

An Interview with Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Deputy Director of the USPTO Russell Slifer

Russell (Russ) Slifer is the Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Deputy Director of the USPTO. He became the Deputy Under Secretary on March 25, 2015. Before taking the position of Deputy Under Secretary, Mr. Slifer was the first director of the USPTO's Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Denver, Colorado which opened on June 30, 2014.

Deputy Under Secretary Slifer has spent 20 years practicing intellectual property law. Prior to joining the USPTO, he spent eight years as a chief patent counsel for Micron Technology and spent more than nine years in private practice helping clients with their intellectual property needs. Prior to his legal career, Mr. Slifer was a design engineer for Honeywell.

How would you suggest that the USPTO maintain its "gold standard" status?

The USPTO is committed to maintaining its "gold standard" status as the most successful federal telework program and one of the best places to work in the federal government. Telework at the USPTO fits into a wide variety of support offerings for employees which includes flexible schedules, an onsite child care facility, a state-of-the-art fitness center and health units, and various other wellness programs. The privilege to telework has led to increased job satisfaction by enabling USPTO employees to maintain a more satisfying work-life balance.

Simply put, the ability to telework is one of the key elements in the recruitment and retention of a highly-skilled workforce. The USPTO will continue to expand telework opportunities in FY 2016.

How does USPTO benefit from having a geographically-dispersed workforce?

The USPTO and the intellectual property community benefit from having a geographically-dispersed workforce. With the addition of the four regional offices in Detroit, Michigan; Denver, Colorado; San Jose, California; and Dallas, Texas, the USPTO now has a presence in each time zone across the nation. This presence allows each location to serve as a hub of education and outreach, as well as allows the agency to be available during local time zone business hours.

There are strong business advantages associated with telework, such as reducing the need for additional office space, fostering greater efficiency in production and management, and recruiting and retaining top talent, as I noted earlier. In addition, we are often reminded of how easily weather can disrupt operations. The ability to telework during inclement weather has allowed the agency to maintain high production rates.

Historically, the value of gold was based on its medium rarity, easy handling and minting, easy smelting, non-corrodibility, distinct color, and non-reactivity to other elements.





Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Deputy Director of the USPTO Russell Slifer

As the USPTO workforce becomes more distributed, maintaining employee engagement is more critical than ever. How can the USPTO maintain a strong sense of engagement in its increasingly distributed environment?

Maintaining employee engagement is vital in today's distributed environment. The agency has employees distributed across 46 states, in the regional offices, on the Alexandria Campus, as well as in the Randolph Square office. With this varied workforce distribution, managers and employees alike need to be mindful of ways to ensure we all stay connected. Effective communication is one of the foundations for success in a distributed workforce.

Encouraging strong, positive two-way communication demonstrates a commitment to programmatic success. Strong two-way communication is timely, clear, meaningful, and dependable. It is also inclusive, ensuring that everyone is connected to the same message. We rely on the technology and collaboration tools, such as Microsoft Lync, email, Cisco WebEx, and Cisco Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP), to maintain proper communications.

How does the USPTO compare with the private sector in leveraging a telework program?

Recently, the USPTO initiated a Telework Benchmarking Study with private sector, to identify best practices in large-scale

telework programs. There were six participating private-sector organizations in this study, with a median of 70 percent of employees at the private institutions authorized to telework at least one day per week. This is compared to 92 percent of USPTO employees eligible to telework.

Similar to USPTO's practices, private industry leverages common technology, including collaboration tools, to support employee productivity and ensure their distributed workforce remains productive. Flexible work schedules are also common, in tandem with telework offerings. I have observed a focus on promoting telework with the goal of reducing employee turnover, increasing productivity, maximizing real estate efficiencies and maintaining continuity of operations in the event of inclement weather. In addition, organizations rely heavily on employee viewpoint surveys to assess satisfaction with telework programs.

During my tenure at the USPTO, I have had an opportunity to observe the return on investment as a result of USPTO's telework initiative. I do believe that the agency's telework program is the gold standard for telework in the federal government, and remains one of the top programs when compared to the private sector.



Business Unit Highlights:

Going for the Gold

The USPTO has demonstrated that with the appropriate collaboration tools, training, and clearly-defined performance expectations, telework can be successful in all business units. The Telework Program Office assists the business units to clarify telework guidelines, develop pilot programs, expand existing initiatives, conduct workshops on supporting and managing a distributed workforce, and collect quarterly telework data. At the USPTO, telework is not a “one-size-fits-all” strategy. Each business unit’s telework program(s) is designed to meet the particular needs of the business unit.

Below are highlights from each business units’ telework programs.

Trademarks

Trademarks’ challenges this year included processing a record increase in trademark application filings, and the consequent need to boost the number of staff, especially the number of examining attorneys. Because telework is an ingrained business strategy in Trademarks, they were able to maintain their reduced real estate footprint despite the increase in personnel, and were able to meet all their goals including production, quality, and e-government.

At the end of FY 2015, more than 90 percent of Trademark employees in all work units had the opportunity to telework one or more days per week, and 86 percent of Trademark

employees participated in telework. Ninety-seven percent of eligible Trademark examining attorneys teleworked full time, most choosing to change their official duty stations to their residence address. These employees only report to headquarters on an as needed basis. By the end of FY 2015, 19 percent of Trademark examining attorneys were participants in the Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program (TEAPP) in 29 different states. In addition, three senior staff attorneys from the Trademark Office of Training and Quality Review and Identification/Classification, and one attorney from their Outreach office were TEAPP participants.

Employee Engagement

Supervising employees who work remotely requires enhanced attention to best management practices. With 18 years of telework experience, Trademarks was able to continue to work to improve employee engagement and good labor-management relationships, while augmenting telework opportunities. Besides regular meetings with Trademark labor unions, Trademark leadership also participated in the successful USPTO Labor Management Forum which was tasked with improving telework programs in the areas of communication, transparency, and accountability.

Trademarks has implemented several initiatives to improve leadership communication and employee development. The

*Thank you
to the Business
Unit Telework
Coordinators and
champions of telework
across the Agency.*



TRADEMARKS



Andrew Lawrence



TRADEMARKS



Mary Sparrow



TRADEMARKS



Michael Kazazian

Trademark Commissioner met with TEAPP employees whenever she was on travel in their cities. She was able to have face to face interactions with employees in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, California; Chicago, Illinois; West Palm Beach, Florida; Denver, Colorado; Detroit, Michigan; and Dallas, Texas. Other communication vehicles included a quarterly electronic employee magazine, TMPeople, and the Commissioner's monthly newsletter, Madison Messages. All hands meetings and regular staff meetings were webcast and the use of collaboration tools was encouraged among all employees. They also have expanded the number of work projects for employees on TEAPP. Trademarks continues to embrace professionalism and work-life balance while maintaining high productivity, quality, and customer service.

Improved Telework Opportunities for Managers

To address employee satisfaction and retention for managers as well as succession planning, Trademarks has launched two management telework pilots: the Virtual Law Office pilot (where the managers and the employees telework full time) and the Shared Telework Hours Management telework pilot (where the managing and senior attorneys share a bank of telework hours). The objective of both pilots is to test increased telework flexibilities for law office management. Evaluations of the pilots include measuring employee satisfaction, recruitment, retention, and job performance. Evaluative data indicate increased or maintained effectiveness of the managers

in the Virtual Law Offices in the areas of quality and speed of responsiveness. The employee satisfaction in the pilot offices continues to be high. The Shared Telework Hours pilot program has been implemented as well, and data also appears positive for increased or maintained effectiveness of the managers.

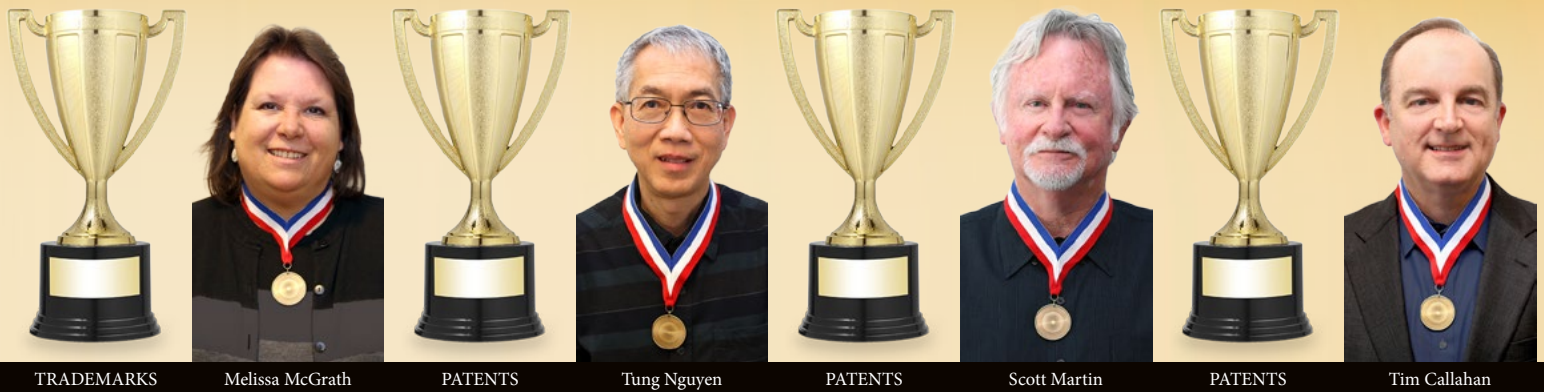
Patent Telework Programs

Patents offers a variety of telework options for its employees. All necessary equipment, infrastructure, training, and support are provided to help ensure that employees and management can seamlessly perform their assigned duties independent of their location. Various program options are provided so that employees and managers can select the telework opportunity that aligns to business unit and employee needs.

Patent telework programs provide employees workplace flexibility and work-life balance. Under the Patent telework programs, employees can conduct all their necessary work while at home, eliminate a challenging commute, and reduce distractions that may occur in an office environment. With the availability of collaboration tools such as WebEx, Microsoft Lync and others, employees are able to interact and attend meetings in much the same way as they do when they are on the Alexandria, Virginia campus. Snow emergencies and other weather-related incidents have less impact on business units because of the Patent telework programs.

The new online application tool, the Patent Telework Enterprise System (PTES), provides Patent employees with





a consolidated site where they can apply to various telework and hoteling programs and establishes a centralized database for all Patent telework data. This database enables an improved interface for Patents business unit managers to review and approve employee requests to participate in a telework program. This new system improves Patent management’s ability to manage the applications, approvals, work agreements, and participation information for over 8,000 Patent employees currently participating in telework programs.

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 2016.

Office of the Under Secretary and Director

Trademark Trial and Appeal Board

In FY 2015, the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) hoteling participants increased by approximately five percent. At the same time, TTAB also implemented a new organizational structure, which will increase operational efficiency and accurately align functional areas. TTAB also reduced the end-to-end processing times, which covers the average commencement to completion time for appeals, and trial cases.

Having previously entered into a telework agreement with NTEU 245, TTAB implemented new telework guidelines for both

NTEU 243 and non-bargaining employees in 2015, and offered training opportunities to ensure up-to-date knowledge and skills for added efficiency. Paralegals and Information Specialists completed a 16-session training program in trademark law and procedure taught by judges, interlocutory attorneys, and members of the Trademark Quality Review (TQR) office. TTAB also partnered with the Telework Program Office to deliver telework training for supervisors and a “telework training day” for all TTAB employees, which included Telework Tune-Up and Collaboration Tools Training.

The foundation for the TTAB telework program’s success has been proper planning and training, effective communication through the use of collaboration tools, and clear performance metrics. Telework provides the flexibility to get the work done at the most productive times for the employee. Clear performance metrics provide teleworkers with an understanding of the work that needs to be done.

The USPTO provides the tools, equipment, and systems necessary to teleworkers to conduct their work in the same way that they would if in the office. Thus, the customer’s experience is seamless, regardless of where work is being performed. The flexibility and seamlessness of telework has allowed TTAB to attract and retain employees and allows work to continue during government closures. The employees value the flexibility it offers to balance work and family, the positive environmental impact by not contributing to the traffic or pollution associated with commuting, and overall commuter savings such as gas, tolls, and parking fees. TEAPP also allows TTAB to enhance outreach



TTAB



LaToya Brown



TTAB



Pat Beck



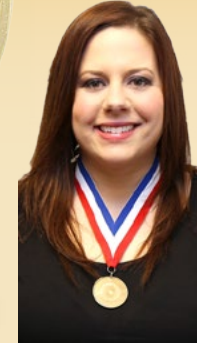
PTAB



Stephanie Murray



OGC



Sherryl Schoeman

to stakeholders by using interlocutory attorneys and judges who work remotely to interact with trademark practitioners and interest groups in their local areas.

In the future, TTAB is planning to continue to increase outreach efforts by using interlocutory attorneys. TTAB is also planning to continue to utilize collaboration tools to increase employee engagement and communication. TTAB anticipates an increase of employees participating in its telework programs over the next year.

Office of the Under Secretary and Director

Patent Trial and Appeal Board

The Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) is an active participant in providing teleworking options and alternatives for its employees. PTAB continued to expand during FY 2015, hiring more than 33 new judges, who are assigned to USPTO's Alexandria office, as well as the USPTO's regional offices in San Jose, California; Denver, Colorado; Detroit, Michigan; and Dallas, Texas. On October 15, 2015 the USPTO's Silicon Valley Regional Office celebrated the grand opening in the rotunda of San Jose City Hall. With the lease ending at the temporary regional office in Menlo Park, California; the judges were approved to telework for a short time leading up to the grand opening. This allowed them to continue their production without any interruptions.

Under the FY 2015 telework eligibility statistics, the PTAB ended the fiscal year with 97 percent of positions being eligible

for telework under PTAB's current telework program for non-bargaining employees and hoteling program for NTEU 243 with the 50-mile radius option for change of duty station. All new judges are in telework-eligible positions and will be approved for telework on a case-by-case basis as their familiarity with PTAB processes and procedures increases.

The PTAB's teleworkers are able to design their individual telework routines, thus providing them needed flexibility without negatively impacting their coworkers or PTAB's business processes. During FY 2015, PTAB conducted four total iterations of telework (rules and best practices) training; two sessions were conducted during PTAB's All-Hand Conference (AHC). Sessions were held separately for administrative patent judges and attorneys, followed by training for all the support staff personnel. There was a separate training conducted prior to the AHC for all NTEU 243 bargaining unit members and supervisory sessions were held shortly after the AHC. PTAB will continue to conduct extensive telework training for all PTAB employees on a bi-annual basis, as well as smaller sessions as necessary. The PTAB continues to ensure that employees are properly trained on the suite of collaboration tools and proper telework procedures prior to being deployed to work remotely.

Office of General Counsel

At the end of FY 2015, 96 percent of positions in the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) were eligible to telework, with 86 percent of those eligible taking advantage of





OAS

Linda Osler

OHR

Michael Arguello

OCFO

Jackie Davis-Maxfield

OPIA

Kendra Mashack

the program. The OGC continues to see steady growth in the number of participants in the telework program. Recently, OGC drafted new telework guidelines to promote consistency among its four organizations. The modifications to the guidelines allow for greater flexibility, productivity, and the ability for OGC attorneys and support staff to continue to provide legal support during government closures and inclement weather. OGC will continue to evaluate its telework program to ensure that participants, stakeholders, the OGC, and the agency needs are met.

Office of Administrative Services

In FY 2015, the ability for the Office of Administrative Services (OAS) employees to participate in the USPTO telework program continued to have an empowering effect on increased job satisfaction and morale. OAS continued to utilize telework to enhance business unit operations and offer flexibility to its employees. OAS teleworkers value the flexibility that telework affords, and appreciate the ability to work without interruptions from home. Additionally, since the Washington metropolitan area has some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation, telework offers OAS employees a break from commuting, further enhancing work-life balance for OAS teleworkers.

Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) recently updated its telework guidelines to provide more clarity to the OHR telework rules and procedures. OHR also offered a pilot program that allowed participants to work three days-a-week from an approved alternate work site.

Ensuring employees can maintain a work-life balance while also providing exceptional customer service have been the key drivers behind the OHR telework program. Many of the services provided by OHR can be done remotely, without any negative impact to the customer. OHR has found that many employees are often more productive when teleworking, because they have fewer interruptions. Additionally, employees who are telework ready can continue to work during unexpected office closures such as inclement weather.

A three-day telework option will help positively impact OHR real estate challenges by combining telework and office-sharing. The increased telework days will enable OHR to share offices that would otherwise be single occupancy. Being able to telework has also had a huge impact on employee engagement and retention. Going forward, OHR will continue to monitor its telework program and see where improvements can be made.

The Oscar statuette is easily one of the most recognizable trophies in the world. Standing 13.5 inches tall and weighing in at 8.5 lbs., the interior of the golden award is actually composed of a metal alloy called britannia and plated with 24-karat gold.



OEEOD



Clint Janes



OCIO



Teddy Tadesse



UNDER SECRETARY



Patrick Barcia



OCCO



Paul Fucito

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) is a mission-driven and goal-oriented organization that delivers quality product and exemplary service to its internal and external customers. Being a result-oriented business unit, the OCFO's telework program is seamless for its teleworkers, managers, and stakeholders. Communication, collaboration, and consistency in program design and implementation have helped ensure telework program success in the OCFO.

By offering the option to telework, the OCFO has improved employee morale and helped the business unit retain valuable employees. The OCFO will continue to expand its telework program in 2016 by offering expanded telework days-per-week for some positions.

Office of Policy and International Affairs

The Office of Policy and International Affairs (OPIA) continues to demonstrate exceptional strides in telework expansion. OPIA has grown substantially in the past year, and its telework program has expanded as well. The OPIA telework program ensures that teleworkers maintain exceptional customer service to internal and external stakeholders when working from their alternate worksite.

With the success of a pilot program launched in FY 2014 for OPIA administrative staff, having the ability to telework has improved performance and productivity of this group of employees. OPIA looks forward to ongoing expansion of its telework program in FY 2016.

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity

The foundation for the success of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity's (OEEOD) telework program is accountability and flexibility. OEEOD's regular teleworkers remain engaged while working from home. Teleworkers understand what is expected - they schedule and participate in teleconferences and meetings as though they were on campus. They initiate unscheduled ad hoc meetings in the same fashion as one would do on campus.

Many of OEEOD's staff are ad hoc teleworkers. It is a win-win proposition when, for example, an employee opts to telework rather than take leave to attend a midday medical appointment or wait for a delivery. This flexibility allows nearly all of OEEOD's employees, who are not regular teleworkers, to enjoy the benefits of teleworking, as long as their remote participation does not interfere with office operations. Employees occasionally opt to telework because they are less likely to be interrupted or distracted when working from their alternate worksite. They find



OCAO

Danette Campbell

OCAO

Cindy Auten

OCAO

Tamara Spiro

OCAO

Toby Barrera

it easier to concentrate on their work when writing and tend to be more productive as a result.

Along with the flexibility of telework, most teleworkers also enjoy the elimination of the daily commute. Telework provides a better work-life balance. In FY 2015, with the consent of agency personnel, OEEOD has been able to have their sign language interpreter periodically provide sign language interpreting remotely. In the future, OEEOD anticipates that more of its eligible staff will begin participating as ad hoc teleworkers.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

In FY 2015, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) telework program continued to expand. Telework participation was at the highest rate ever with 93 percent of positions eligible for telework participation. In FY 2015, OCIO had 448 trained teleworkers working at an alternate worksite one or two days per week; some on a situational basis.

All aspects of the telework program are designed to meet OCIO's as well as agency goals. OCIO's teleworkers are able to deliver its services effectively and efficiently from remote locations and maintain the productivity needed in its fast paced environment. In order to ensure success for all stakeholders, OCIO offered consistent service and training to participants to help them perform their job effectively from campus or an alternate location.

OCIO is still offering a two-day-per-week telework pilot program to non-bargaining and POPA participants. OCIO and the Telework Program Office also conducted pre-and post-focus sessions and surveys to assess the first part of the pilot program. According to the most recent focus session and survey results, participants indicated they were more productive, and customer service skills and relationships with peers and supervisors were the same or better. The results also reported that job satisfaction jumped 9 percent from the pre-pilot survey.

OCIO teleworkers indicated that the work-life balance was the most valued privilege of teleworking. They have also stated that telework has improved productivity, morale, and reduced stress. For the future, OCIO is looking at ways to expand the telework program even further.



The golden ratio is another name for the golden mean or golden section and in mathematics two quantities are in the golden ration if their ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum to larger of the two quantities.



Telework Advocates

Top Photo left to right: Scott Martin, Hezron Williams, Retta Williams, Alexander Kosowski, Tung Nguyen, Andrew Lawrence, Tim Callahan, Matthew Landau, Jay Patel. Not Pictured: Meryl Hershkowitz, Michael Kazazian, Mary Sparrow, Chris Doniger, Melissa McGrath, Jay Besch, Jillian Cantor, Kristin Dahling, Jeffrey Look, Toshia Ross, Esther Williams, Talya Goodman, Joseph McKane, Gary Benzion, Christina Johnson, Matt Kim, Meng-Ai An, William Trost, David Hudspeth, Ulka Chauhan, Dave Porta, Ian Simmons, Florian Zeender, Saul Rodrigues, Joseph Hail, Robert Chen, Victoria Shumate, Donnetta Alston, Errica Miller, Michael Neas, Randy Green, Dawn Moore, Paula Hutzell, Larry Helms.

Bottom Photo left to right: Khalid Waseem, Al Carter, Scott Martin, Tung Nguyen, Van Keane, Khalil Naamane, Michael McGill, Maraky Sissay, Syeda Saleh. Not Pictured: Jackie Bowen, James Nichols, Holly Chong-Williams, Michael Stehling.





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Statistics: Certified Results

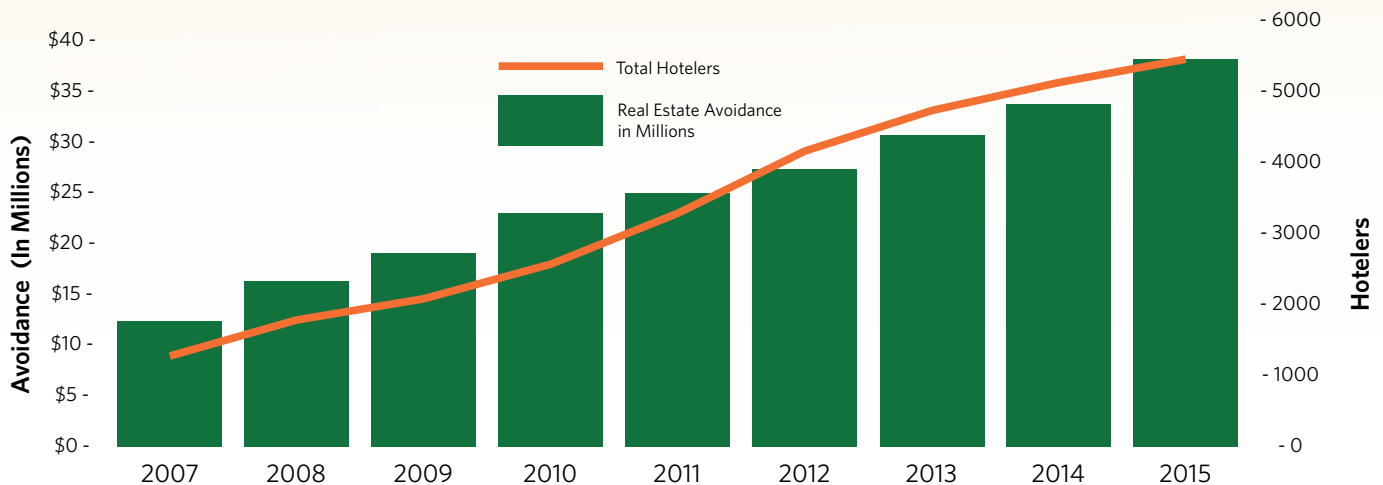
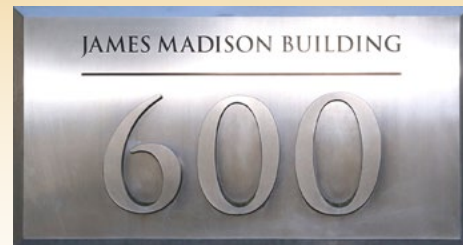
The USPTO analyzes and certifies telework data on a quarterly basis. This data is reported to the Office of Personnel Management, agency executives, and employees, and provides supporting data for developing the telework return on investment model.

Certified Results of the FY 2015 USPTO Telework Programs:

Current Number of Teleworkers at USPTO	10,410
Current Number of Eligible Positions at USPTO	11,734
Percent of Positions at USPTO that are Eligible	92.96%
Percent of Positions at USPTO that are Teleworking (Agency-wide)	82.47%
Total Number of Patent Teleworkers	8,509
Percent of Eligible Patent Positions that are Teleworking	89.36%
Total Number of Trademark Teleworkers	624
Percent of Eligible Trademark Position that are Teleworking	95.27%
Number of Patent Positions Teleworking 4 or 5 days per Week	4,925
Number of Trademark Positions Teleworking 4 or 5 days per Week	465



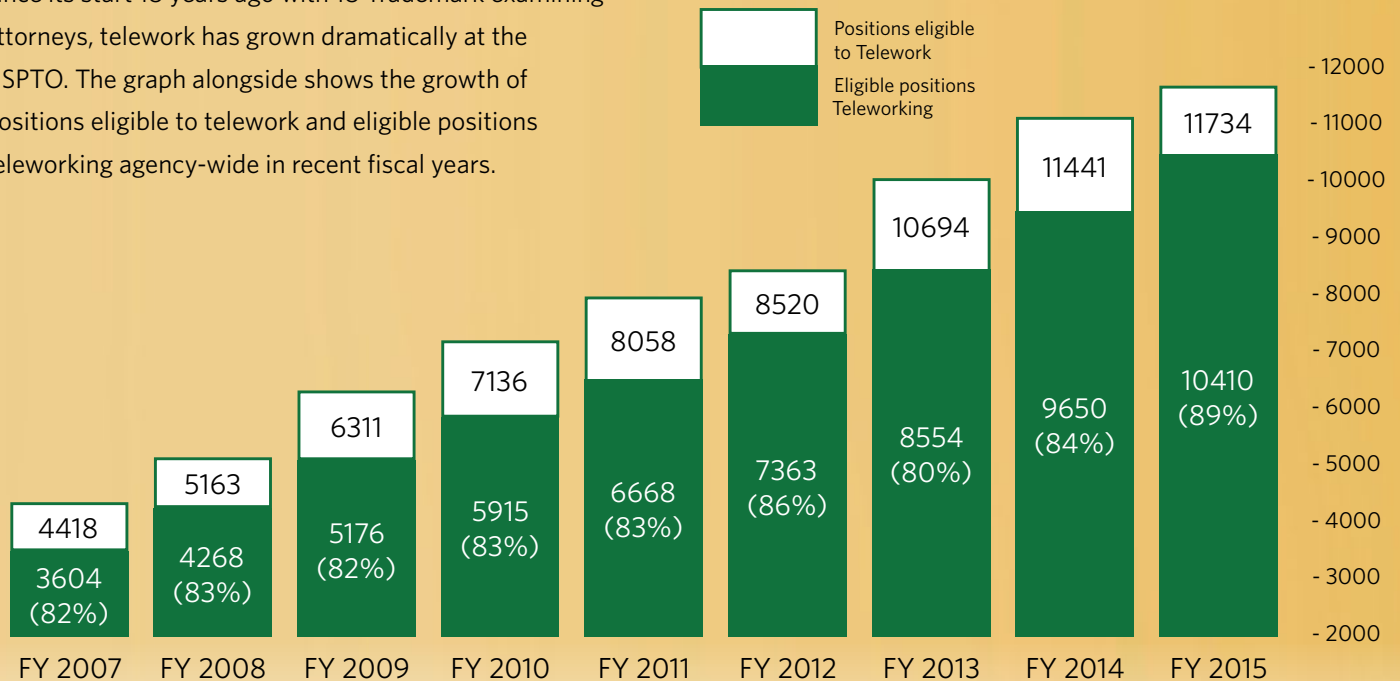
Annual Real Estate Cost Avoidance Due to Hoteling



The symbol for gold on the periodic table of elements is Au from Latin aurum, the Latin word for gold.

Telework Growth

Since its start 18 years ago with 18 Trademark examining attorneys, telework has grown dramatically at the USPTO. The graph alongside shows the growth of positions eligible to telework and eligible positions teleworking agency-wide in recent fiscal years.



Environmental Impact of Telework

Each year, USPTO's teleworkers have a dramatic impact on the environment in the Washington metropolitan area.

5,565 teleworkers who work from home four/five days per week:

- Avoid driving 61,792,369 miles in a year
- Collectively save \$7,209,110 in gas a year
- Collectively reduces emissions by 32,441 tons in a year

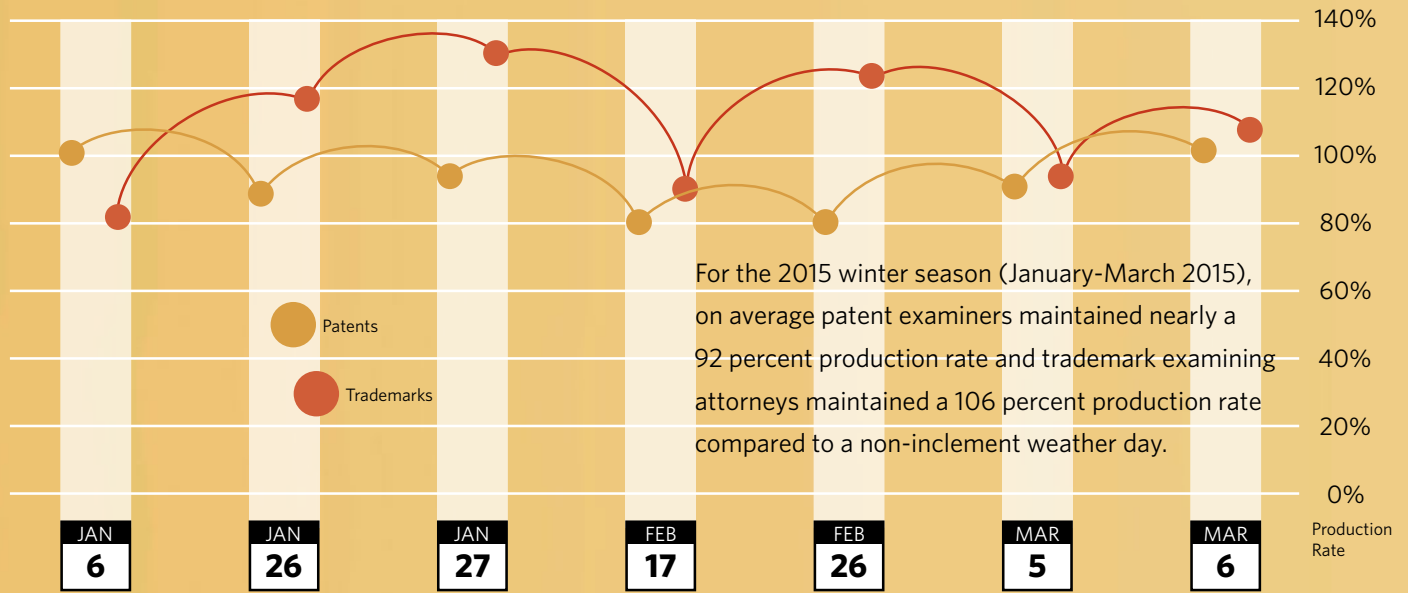
4,549 teleworkers working from home one-three days per week*:

- Avoid driving 22,449,315 miles in a year
- Collectively saves \$2,619,087 in gas a year
- Collectively reduces emissions by 11,786 tons in a year

*Includes PTP 10 hours per bi-week.



2015 Snow Days - The Impact of Telework





4

USPTO
Nationwide Presence:
The Gold Rush

Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program

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) 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 USPTO when directed by the agency as outlined in the TEAPP agreement. Since its inception in 2012, 87 trips have been taken back to campus.

In March 2015, the USPTO submitted the third TEAPP Annual Evaluation to the General Services Administration. The report highlighted the positive impact that the TEAPP has had on agency efficiency, real estate, continuity of operations (COOP), transit subsidy, and the environment. The report also detailed the cost and benefits associated with the TEAPP and the methodologies used for evaluation.

As of the end of the fourth quarter of FY 2015, the USPTO had 2,043 TEAPP participants across 46 states. TEAPP is considered a success by both the employees and the agency.

Notable Benefits Include:

- In FY 2014, 93 percent of TEAPP participants reported that overall job satisfaction was either slightly or significantly better since participating in TEAPP and 92 percent reported similarly for the ability to balance work and family life.
- In FY 2014, 75 percent of TEAPP participants reported that the volume of work performed (productivity) improved, while 72 percent reported that quality of work performed had improved since TEAPP.
- Environmental impact: In FY 2014, TEAPP participants working from home five days per week lead to an approximate yield of 10,200 metric tons of CO2 emissions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region.
- Recruitment and retention: In FY 2014, 95 percent of survey respondents feel that TEAPP has a positive impact on employee satisfaction and 87 percent of participants reported that the option to participate in TEAPP would affect their decision to accept or not accept a position in future career choices.
- USPTO benefits: In FY 2014, there was an estimated \$67.4 million total benefit to the agency.



Jay Besch



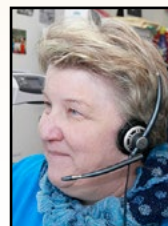
Tim Callahan



Danette Campbell



David Dalke



Kathy Duda



Howard Freidman



Meryl Hershkowitz



Andrew Lawrence



Bob Oberleitner



Deborah Porter



Harold Ross



Pam Schwartz



Fred Steckler



Melanie Tung



PaTH

The Patents Training at Headquarter (PaTH) implementation team was initially established through a collaborative effort with the Nationwide Workforce Team, the Patents Employee Engagement Team, and the Telework Program Office. The objective is to maintain and enhance communication, and to enrich team collaboration within the remotely-connected work staff as the agency continues to build quality examination. In-person interaction between remote employees, their supervisors, and on-campus peers promote a sense of trust and teamwork, which are key elements to maintaining a motivated and high-performing workforce.

The inaugural PaTH event, which took place in July 2015, is the first of a series of events designed to bring patent examiners from all Patent Technology Centers to the USPTO's Alexandria campus. The July 2015 PaTH Event consisted of 194 total participants, from the following groups:

- 59 On-Campus employees;
- 56 Patent Hoteling Program (PHP) employees;
- 53 TEAPP employees;
- 12 Detroit employees;
- 1 Denver employee; and
- 13 Supervisory Patent Examiners (SPEs).

The PaTH team is in the process of scheduling future events on campus to enhance communication and offer onsite training and development within the Technology Centers.

“With the Patents staff almost doubling in the last decade, enhanced communication amongst all employees has become increasingly important to effectively interact not only with fellow employees but also with stakeholders. To address the need for enhanced communication, Patent Training at Headquarters (PaTH) has been established to develop opportunities for planned and focused interactive communication among Patent’s growing Nationwide Workforce.”

- Andrew Faile, Deputy Commissioner for Patent Operations



Deputy Under Secretary Russell Slifer welcomed PaTH attendees to the inaugural event in July 2015.



During this event, examiners from Technology Centers 3610 and 3660 participated in team training with their art units.

Gold is often associated with the wisdom of aging and fruition. The 50th wedding anniversary is golden. Our most valued or most successful latter years are sometimes considered “golden years.” The height of a civilization is referred to as a “golden age.”

Regional Offices

The Detroit, Michigan regional office was the first of four sites selected by the USPTO to assist with outreach, improve retention and recruitment of patent examiners, decrease the patent application backlog, and improve the quality of examination. Approximately 75 employees in Patents, PTAB, and Under Secretary's Office support USPTO's mission in Detroit, Michigan.

Since the opening of the Detroit, Michigan regional office in July 2012, the USPTO has focused on expanding operations to three more time zones. In June 2014, the USPTO opened the Denver, Colorado regional office in the Byron G. Rogers Federal Building. In a 45,000 square foot space, the Denver, Colorado regional office houses approximately 100 employees from Patents and PTAB. The office engages with businesses throughout the Rocky Mountain community, draws in strong talent to a top ranked work environment, all while helping the USPTO fulfill its core mission.

“This office will play an indispensable role in the ability of our agency to provide outreach and education to all of our stakeholders in the region, and not simply those fortunate enough to be in the D.C. area or who have the budget to travel there. So while the investment may be local, the return on that investment extends far beyond the walls of this new office.”

*- Michelle K. Lee, Under Secretary of
Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the USPTO*

Denver Opening Remarks, June 2014

Early in FY 2016, the USPTO will open two more Regional Offices: San Jose and Dallas. At that time, the USPTO will have a presence in all four time zones across the United States. The regional offices directly support USPTO's mission of granting intellectual property rights to applicants and gives improved access to the nation's inventors, entrepreneurs, and businesses to USPTO resources. Across the country, the USPTO regional offices play a vital role to help entrepreneurs advance their cutting edge ideas to the marketplace and to efficiently navigate the world's strongest intellectual property system.



Denver Office



Detroit Office

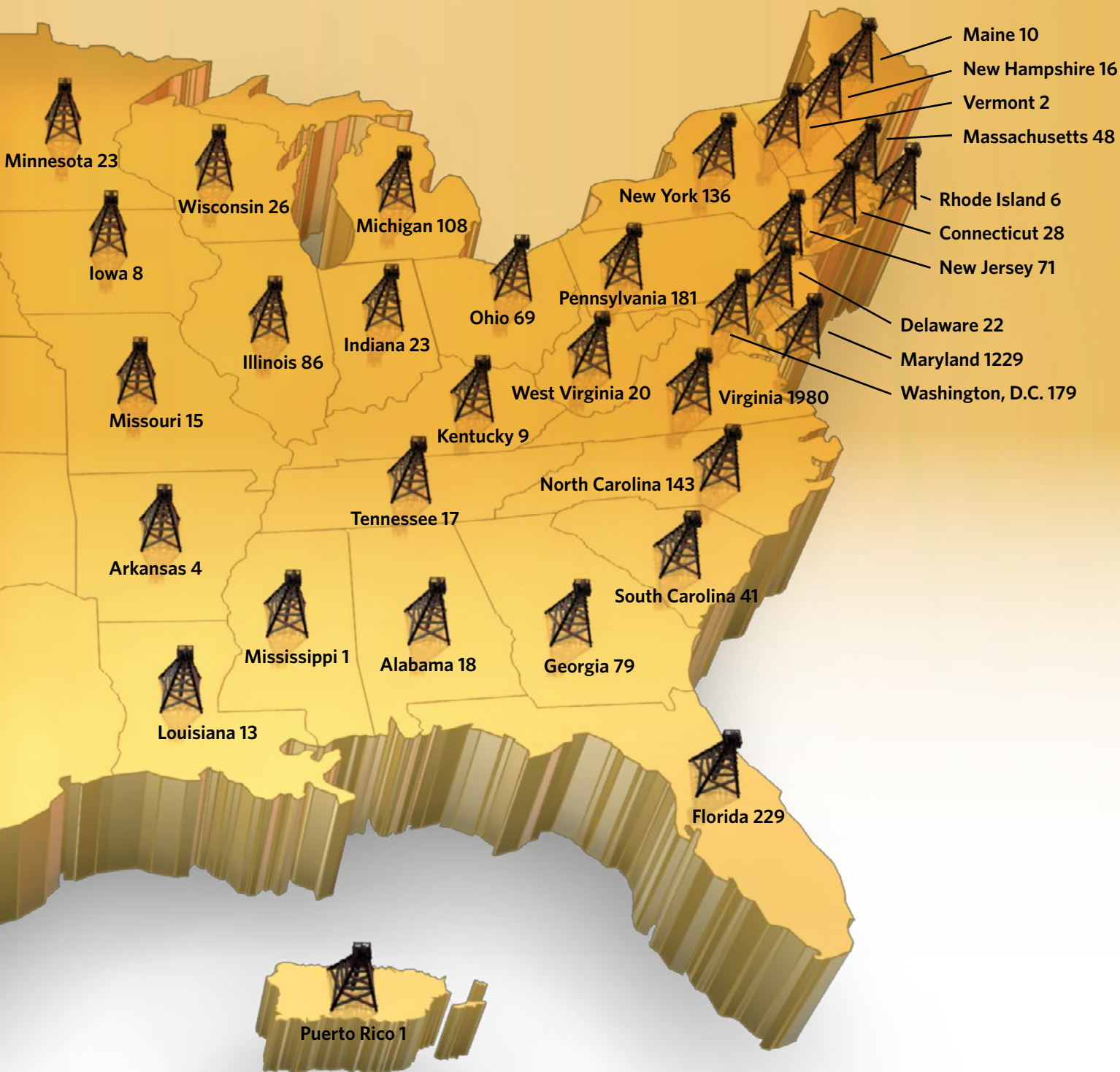


Technology:
Making [IT] Gold

USPTO Full-Time Teleworkers by State

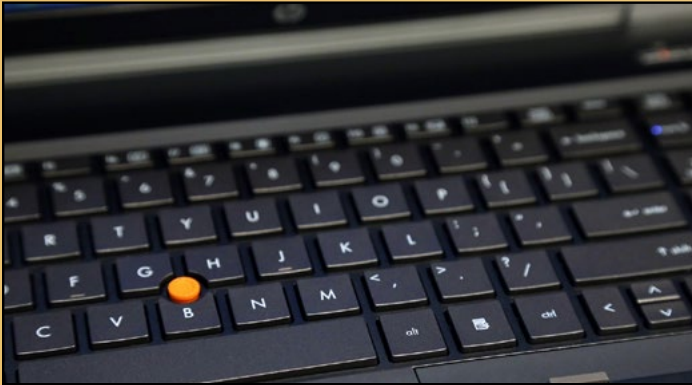


According to the World Gold Council, a typical cell phone may contain 50 mg of gold, worth about 50 cents.



To ensure that USPTO teleworkers remain technically connected, the agency provides a suite of hardware and software that seamlessly supports their work environment, just as when they are on the USPTO campus. This suite includes

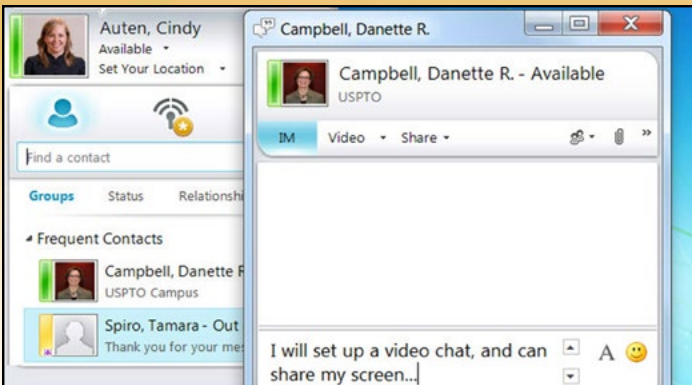
the Universal Laptop, Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection, the Cisco Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Microsoft Lync, webcam, Cisco WebEx, and small office/home office (SOHO) router.



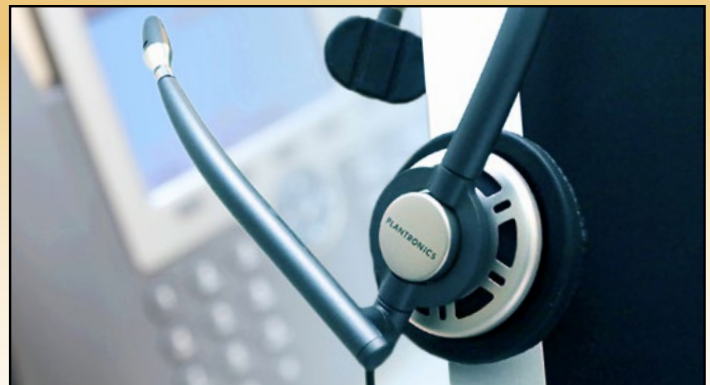
UNIVERSAL LAPTOP (UL)



VPN CONNECTION / ERA PORTAL



MS LYNC



VoIP



WEBCAM / WEBEX



SOHO ROUTER



Accomplishments: Path of Excellence

Accomplishments

The following provides highlights for FY 2015 activities and accomplishments:

- Provided expert consultation to 18 government agencies, institutions, and international patent offices.
- Developed the third TEAPP Annual Evaluation as part of the USPTO Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program.
- Participated in the Office of Personnel Management's Telework Advisory Group.
- Partnered with the POPA, NTEU Chapter 245, and NTEU Chapter 243 to advise and promote telework in Department of Commerce agencies.
- Updated the Telework Program Office intranet site for USPTO hoteling and teleworking employees and managers. The site serves as a resource for employee and manager best practices, telework guidelines, policy, training, research, media coverage, and internal and external telework reports.
- Conducted Telework Tune Up sessions for various USPTO business units. Sessions focused on best practices in managing and working in a distributed work environment. A hands-on collaboration session was also a part of the Tune Up.
- Managed the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (OCAO) Fireside and Spring chats.

Agency, Academic, and International Outreach

The USPTO is often asked to present the USPTO telework strategy as well as provide support and guidance to outside organizations. In FY 2015, the USPTO Telework Program Office worked with the following organizations to support various telework efforts.

Speaking Efforts

- Speaker: Association for Talent Development (ATD) "Hiring and Building a Resilient Workforce"
- Presentation for National Organization of Bar Counsel (Presented by Will Covey)
- Presentation for Indiana University School of Law (Presented by Janet Gongola)

Media Interviews

In FY 2015, the USPTO participated in the following media interviews, articles, and/or blogs.

- ATD blog by Danette Campbell, Director of the Telework Program Office, USPTO (August 11, 2015), How USPTO Fosters a Strong and Distributed Workforce
- Federal Computer Week by Colby Hochmuth (March 4, 2015), End of (Snow) Days
- TMGovU.org Interview by Allan Schweyer (February 4, 2015), Interview for White Paper on Workplace Flexibility

Academic Efforts

In FY 2015, the USPTO Telework Program Office worked with the following universities on telework-related studies:

- Cornell University
- George Mason University
- Harvard University

Agency Efforts

- Board of Immigration Appeals
- Department of Homeland Security
- Defense Information Systems Agency
- Institute of International Education



- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- NTEU
- Security and Exchange Commission
- Social Security Administration
- The State Department
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- White House Leadership Development Program



Danette Campbell, Director of the USPTO Telework Program Office highlights the USPTO telework strategy.

International Efforts

- Brazil Intellectual Property Office INPI, MDIC, and Representatives of the Embassy of Brazil in the U.S.
- ASEAN IP Office Administration Program
- Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines
- Office for Nationals Statistics, United Kingdom Government



Members of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines left to right: Frisco L. Guce, Director IV Financial, Management, and Administrative Services Bureau, Atty. Lolibeth R. Medrano, Assistant Director, Bureau of Patents & Legislative Liaison, Atty. Nelson P. Laluces, Deputy Director General.

Visit from the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines

In July 2015, the USPTO hosted members of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines for an all-day telework implementation seminar. The Telework Program Office crafted and delivered a full-day telework program, which included the agency's motivation and strategy for telework deployment and best practices for creating, managing, and measuring effective telework programs.

Further, the Telework Program Office partnered with the OCIO and Patents team to deliver sessions on IT infrastructure, remote equipment, software and communication applications, security considerations, and managing in a distributed work environment.



Members of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, Telework Program Office, and OCIO discuss telework IT infrastructure. Left to right: Frisco L. Guce, Atty. Lolibeth R. Medrano, Atty. Nelson P. Laluces, Kevin Gilbert, Deputy Project Manager, Intellectual Technology Resource Providers, Danette Campbell, Maraky Sissay, USPTO OCIO Service Desk Branch, and Cindy Auten, USPTO Telework Program Office.

Virtual Chats: A Gold Standard in Communication

In FY 2015, the OCAO held virtual, half-hour forums or “chats.” Coined Fireside and Spring Chats, these forums were delivered through a WebEx platform. During these sessions, Fred Steckler, the USPTO Chief Administrative Officer, discussed relevant topics with OCAO employees, solicited questions, and facilitated a lively discussion from audience participants.

By hosting these chats virtually, OCAO teleworkers and in-office employees alike can participate from the comfort of their desks. Leveraging WebEx is a proven, readily-available way to meet, discuss, and exchange valuable information. Whether it is a small team meeting or a large division-wide message, WebEx is a tool that enables employees to stay connected, engaged, and productive.



Fred Steckler, USPTO Chief Administrative Officer delivers a Fireside Chat virtually to OCAO employees

How USPTO Fosters a Strong and Distributed Workforce

By Danette Campbell
August 11, 2015



For the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), creating an environment for employees that prioritizes “getting the work done,” has been a major goal in recent years. Shifting the focus away from how and where work gets done, and instead emphasizing the quality and character of the work that employees do, has helped the agency make great strides in engagement and productivity.

Central to this strategy is telework. USPTO’s telework program is an integral part of the agency’s strategic goals to attract and retain top talent, save on real estate costs, and reduce pollution and traffic congestion. In fact, the increased number of full-time teleworkers has played a role in the improvement of the attrition rate over time.

Today, with more than 10,000 teleworkers, 5,200 working four to five days per week across 46 states, the USPTO deploys a multi-prong strategy to ensure that teams stay connected to each other while maintaining focus on agency and business unit mission and goals.

The USPTO provides various flexible work schedule options, tailored telework guidelines to support business units, targeted online and in person training, surveys to gauge the workforce, and a robust suite of collaboration tools to support effective communication.

In turn, these synergies create a more resilient workforce. What’s more, they have helped the USPTO become one of the “Best Places to Work” in the federal government.



End of (Snow) Days

March 4, 2015

As the D.C. area buckles down for another winter storm, it might be time to bid a fond farewell to those days of sleeping with your pajamas inside out, putting a spoon in the freezer, and watching the morning news ticker in anticipation of a day off from work.



Technology is making snow days for federal employees all but obsolete.

In years past, when the government closed its offices because of a weather-related emergency, the day was considered a “non-workday.” Now, even when the government is officially closed, most federal agencies continue to operate because so many employees can telework.

“Technology has really changed what was previously known as the ‘take a break’ snow day,” Danette Campbell, director of the Telework Program Office at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, told FCW. “Thanks to laptops, high speed broadband and increased mobility, our employees today have the technological capabilities to be effective outside of the office.”

USPTO has been a leader in telework since the 2010 Telework Enhancement Act -- 9,892 employees of its nearly 13,000 are teleworking on any given day.

This notion of the disappearing snow day can’t be understood without understanding the different types of teleworkers in the federal government.

When federal offices are closed due to weather, OPM’s operating status announcement requires two types of telework-ready employees to be working that day, but there is also a third group that comes into play.

The first category is employees already scheduled to telework that day. The second is employees whose written telework

agreement requires them to telework when the government is closed.

The third category of teleworkers are those who are telework-ready but are neither scheduled to work on the day of an OPM closure announcement or required to work on that day according to their written telework agreement.

OPM’s December 2014 D.C. Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures report said that agencies should move toward a telework policy that incorporates that third category of employees, which may be the largest category of telework employees, into the second category which would require them to telework on days when the federal government is closed.

That means the number of employees who have telework agreements but didn’t necessarily have to work on days of government closures is going to start to dwindle.

The tipping point for telework in times of bad weather was in 2010 when “Snowmageddon” hit D.C., resulting in almost a full week of government closures.

“It really set the new norm that agencies’ continuity of operations programs have to be connected in some capacity to telework,” Campbell said. “Closing down was not an option for stakeholders and it’s not an option anymore.”

Campbell said the potential of teleworking was fully realized during that week, as previously scheduled meetings successfully turned into conference calls and many agencies carried on “business as usual.”

But another question deserves to be raised — how much work is actually being done on telework days?

According to a survey by Intercall, a conference technology provider, seven out of 10 respondents said they are as productive or more productive when working from home. A Stanford University study also found that employees working from home are 13 percent more productive.

Campbell said the key to having consistent productivity on days when employees are all teleworking is by establishing clear expectations and responsibilities. Supervisors should discuss work schedule, collaboration tools and applications and communication ahead of time -- before bad weather strikes.

All employees who have a telework agreement at USPTO must undergo IT and non-IT training, which involves, among other things, employees and supervisors learning how to effectively conduct teleconferences.

"Employees know exactly what to do, they practice," Campbell said. "There's really no learning curve when we have an inclement weather incident."

About the Author

Colby Hochmuth is a former staff writer for FCW.

The Future of Telework is Golden



In FY 2015, the USPTO continued to demonstrate its commitment to expanding the agency's telework programs. The agency envisions continued improvement in engagement levels as teleworkers frequently cite work schedules and telework when considering USPTO as an employer of choice.

In October 2014, the USPTO hired the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to conduct an independent evaluation of its internal controls used to manage time and attendance reporting, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of its telework programs. The purpose of the review was three-fold:

- To determine whether the USPTO telework programs comply with applicable laws and regulations;
- To determine whether the USPTO telework programs have adequate management controls; and
- To determine whether the USPTO telework programs are operating effectively and efficiently to achieve programmatic goals.

Key Findings and Recommendations of the NAPA Report

The NAPA panel determined that the telework program has provided important benefits to the USPTO, including saving money, enhancing employee quality of life, potentially increasing recruitment and retention, and ensuring ongoing work during emergencies. The panel found that the USPTO has the controls in place to manage time and attendance for both on-site workers and teleworkers. The panel recommended that the USPTO continue its telework and hoteling programs, while enhancing oversight mechanisms and strengthening its management practices. The USPTO is carefully studying the findings and recommendations of the NAPA Report and has already taken a

variety of efforts to implement some of these recommendations. To ensure the continued high performance and integrity of USPTO's telework program, in FY 2015, the USPTO undertook a number of concrete steps to bolster the management of the program, including revising and making more accessible guidance documents concerning proper recordation of teleworkers' time and attendance, conducting numerous trainings on proper telework procedures, hosting a series of telework tune-ups for managers and employees, and reviewing individual business unit telework guidelines to ensure consistency. The USPTO intends to continue to implement these and other program management improvements and controls in 2016.

In FY 2016, the agency will continue to focus on expanding its nationwide workforce through telework, hoteling, the TEAPP, and the regional offices. These initiatives will continue to positively impact the agency's ability to attract and retain a highly-skilled workforce and enable the USPTO to continue to be an employer of choice.

The USPTO will continue to leverage its telework expertise to assist other agencies and organizations that are interested in starting or expanding telework.

A Gold Mine of Information

Gold Mine /'gōl(d) ,mīn/:

- A place where gold is mined.
- A source of wealth, valuable information or resources: 'this site is a gold mine of telework information.'

In FY 2015, the Telework Program Office provided enhancements to the Telework Resource Site, located on the USPTO intranet. Enhancements included updated reports, training materials, and an improved format for easier customer access.



TOOLS

HOME	ABOUT TELEWORK	TELEWORK AGREEMENTS/GUIDELINES	RECOGNITION	ANNUAL REPORTS	STATISTICS
TELEWORK WORKING GROUP	TRAINING	TOOLS	TEAPP	POLICY/MOUS/CONTRACTS	SUGGESTIONS



Telework Resource Site

PTOWeb Home Site Map Resources Contacts Internet Search go

TRAINING

HOME	ABOUT TELEWORK	TELEWORK AGREEMENTS/GUIDELINES	RECOGNITION	ANNUAL REPORTS	STATISTICS
TELEWORK WORKING GROUP	TRAINING	TOOLS	TEAPP	POLICY/MOUS/CONTRACTS	SUGGESTIONS



NEW SKILLS
TRAINING
↓ ↓
TELEWORKER TRAINING:
TELEWORK EFFECTIVENESS



NEW SKILLS
TRAINING
↓ ↓
MANAGER TRAINING:
TELEWORK EFFECTIVENESS



TRAINING REFERENCES



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