

Getting Started in Private PAIR 7.1

Plus A Summary of New Features

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NEW

Announcement: The e-Office Action Pilot Program will be extended through January 2008. Additional organizations can now be added to the pilot test by request to the PAIR Project Team (e-mail: PAIR@USPTO.gov). The pilot test includes organizations that have volunteered to receive e-mail notifications from the Office in lieu of postal mail when new outgoing correspondence is available for viewing and downloading in Private PAIR. The January 2008 release of Private PAIR will make these new features available to all users.

A summary of new features for this release appears on P-2.

Key New Private PAIR 7.1 Features

The following features are planned for Private PAIR 7.1:

- **Application Search - Additional Time Period:** With Private PAIR 7.1, users now can select a list of Applications by Customer Number, Applications with Status Changes, or a list of Outgoing Correspondence(s) mailed (either electronically or through regular mail delivery) within the last three (3) days, as well as longer time periods. In the previous release, customers could select lists for 7, 30, 60, 90 or 180 days, but not for the 3-day period.
- **Attorney Docket Number Search:** Private PAIR 7.1 will require entry of only the first 3 characters, instead of the first 4 characters, as is the case in the earlier release.
- **Customer Number Details:** E-mail addresses will be tested for validity when they are entered or modified. Customers will be notified of any additions or modifications to their e-mail address.
- **Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Search:** Assignment data for a PCT Application now can be accessed, if it is available. Also, registered users, who are owners of the application, can view PCT Chapter II file transactions for published applications with which their Customer Number is associated. Non-owners still only can view Chapter I file transactions.
- **Replacement of the “Image Date” Column from the Outgoing Correspondence Tab:** This column will be restored.
- **XML Download:** Private PAIR 7.1 will provide additional bibliographic data in Extensible Mark-up Language, or XML, format. Before this release, bibliographic data for only a single Application could be downloaded. When customers have a digital certificate, they now can download files that include a list of Applications and Outgoing Correspondence associated with their Customer Number. All XML download files now have XML Schema files that comply with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) specifications.
- New **e-Office Action** features appear on the following page (P-3).

NOTE! USPTO plans to introduce the following new e-Office Action features in Private PAIR:

- **E-mail Notifications Will Identify Individual Outgoing Correspondence Documents (Release 7.2 October 2007):**
 - The Office will provide users with document descriptions in the e-mail notification when new outgoing correspondence, associated to the participant's Customer Number, is available for viewing and downloading in Private PAIR.
 - Customers must still provide the Office with one to three e-mail addresses to be used for e-mail notification.
 - The official date of notification of the outgoing correspondence will be indicated on the form PTO-90C cover sheet which is included in the correspondence.

- **Follow-up Postcard Sent if Correspondence Is Not Viewed in Seven Days (Release 7.1 August 2007):**
 - The Office will continue to send a postcard reminder if at least one document in the correspondence is not viewed within seven calendar days from the date the e-mail message was sent.
 - Postcard reminders will no longer be sent for correspondence that does not require an applicant's response.
 - Postcard notification will not reset the time period for reply.

Advisory

- ✓ To start receiving e-Office Action notifications, users are required to login to Private PAIR and select the “Receive Correspondence Notification via E-mail” option and provide up to three e-mail addresses on the Customer Details Tab.
- ✓ Several areas of the Office have independent mailing processes. Until all USPTO offices implement e-Office Action, users may continue to receive paper mailings, in addition to e-Office Action notifications, for correspondence originating from those areas including but not limited to: Office of Initial Patent Examination, Petitions (OIPE), the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), Appeals, Publications, Interference, and Reexamination.
- ✓ Please add the “USPTO.gov” domain to the white list in your e-mail blocking program to allow our e-Office Action notification messages to be received. E-mail blocking programs, also called a **spam filters**, are intended to prevent most unsolicited e-mail messages (**spam**) from appearing your inboxes.
- ✓ When Customers have opted in and choose to opt back out by eliminating e-mail addresses, it is important to note that at least one e-mail address should be left in Private PAIR for at least 15 days. This is to provide time for documents in process to get to their destination.

Note! A listing of the Quick Start Guides for the topics in this section appears in Section 1.2.

1. Overview

Welcome to Private PAIR, the United States Patent and Trademark Office's (USPTO) safe, simple, and secure means of electronically viewing the status of your patent applications and downloading your patent material. This guide will provide you with the information you need to rapidly understand how to access the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system and find your patent applications using an Internet web browser. This guide also includes screen samples that identify critical components of the product.

1.1.0 About Private PAIR

Before you login to the secure Private PAIR web site, there are a few important facts you should know:

PAIR accesses patent information held in the USPTO internal Patent Application Locating and Monitoring (PALM) system and presents it in two different web-based views: Public PAIR and Private PAIR¹.

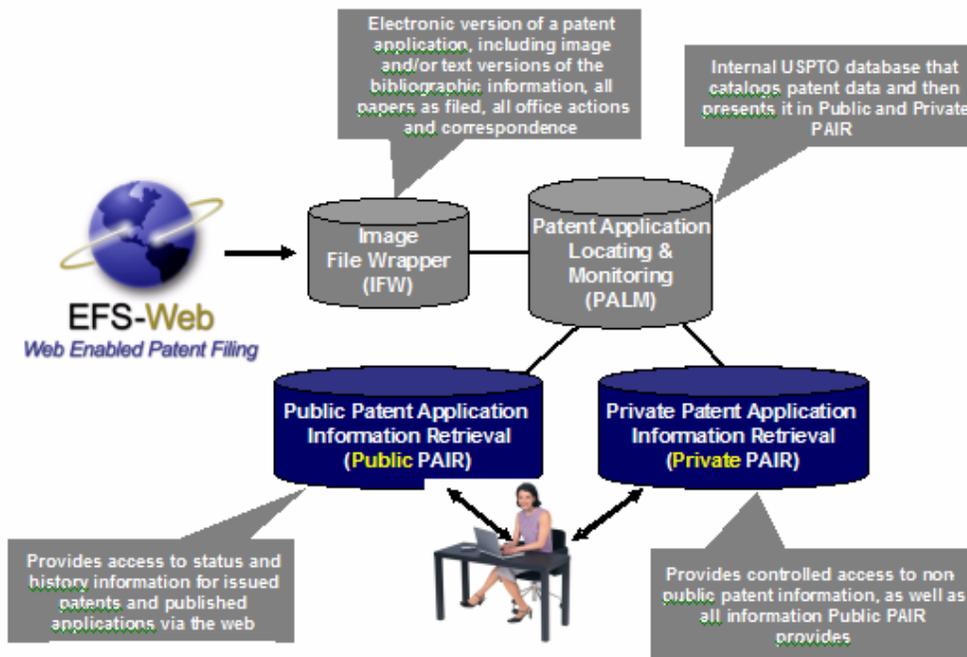


Figure 1-1 Overview of Public and Private PAIR

¹ Private PAIR allows only registered users to see more comprehensive information than what appears in Public PAIR. See Footnote 2 for a description of what is available in Public PAIR.

PAIR provides web-based access to public and pending patent information and eases the process of tracking patents, patent applications and follow-on documents through the USPTO approval process.

1.1.1 Private PAIR – Real-Time Status Information

Private PAIR allows Independent Inventors, registered patent attorneys, and patent agents the ability to access all of the content of Public PAIR², *as well as real-time status information*, application documents and transaction history for their pending patent applications using the Internet.

- Private PAIR is only available to Customers who have pre-registered with USPTO as a trusted filer.
- Once you are a registered filer, and your applications are associated to your Customer Number, all of your Private PAIR information is available via the web.

To use Private PAIR, you must:

- Be a registered patent attorney/agent or an Independent Inventor
- Have a Customer Number
- Have a digital certificate (or Public Key Infrastructure, i.e., PKI) to obtain secure transmission of the application to the USPTO
- Have downloaded the USPTO software to your personal computer (PC)

1.1.2 Registered and Unregistered Filers

While EFS-Web gives anyone who accesses the site the ability to submit patent applications and documents, as a registered filer you have the added benefits such as, filing follow-on papers and saving the package before submission. Registering is easy and can be done by submitting a notarized Certificate Action Form to the USPTO Electronic Business Center (EBC), which will then issue a digital certificate that authenticates your identity.

² Public PAIR provides bibliographic data, status, file history, PDF file images from the Image File Wrapper, continuity data, foreign priority, patent term adjustments and extensions, text and TIFF images of published applications and patents, maintenance fees, and the online ordering of copies. Public PAIR is a portal that is available to *anyone* accessing the USPTO web site and it provides easy access to information about the status and history information for *issued patents and published applications* that are available via the web.

1.1.3 How to Apply for a Customer Number

To apply for a Customer Number:

- Go to the Patent Electronic Business Center (EBC) website and download the “Request for Customer Number” form.
- Fax the form to 703-308-2840, or mail it to UPSTO, Mail Stop EBC, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313.
- Depending on the set-up for each firm or corporation, there must be at least one Customer Number for each correspondence address. A Customer Number cannot be associated with more than one address.

1.1.4 How to Associate the Application(s) with the Customer Number

To associate your Customer Number with your Application(s):

- Download the “Customer Number Update Template.”
- Fill out the Excel spreadsheet.
- Save it, using your preferred method of saving documents.
- Print out the form and mail it to the USPTO Patent EBC, Mail Stop EBC, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313.

You can use the spreadsheet to change the correspondence address, and/or maintenance fee address, which will show a legal record of change. (Private PAIR now enables registered users to change addresses from within the software as well.)

If you change the information manually (via the spreadsheet), this spreadsheet **MUST** be accompanied by a cover letter, signed by someone who, for each application or patent listed on the attached spreadsheet is one of the following:

- Pro Se applicant
- Sole Inventor (where there is not a registered Patent Attorney, or Agent of Record) or
- An Attorney or Agent of Record

1.1.5 I Have My Customer Number, Now What Do I Do?

- Go to the USPTO EBC website and complete steps below. (See Section 3 and 4 in this guide as well as the Customer Number Details Quick Start Guide.)
- Use this Customer Number immediately for new applications so that they are automatically associated with that number.
- Fill in the “Certificate Action Form” to receive the PKI certificate codes.
- Fill in the requested information.
- Click “OK.”

Once you have your *Customer Number*, you must also associate your current patent applications with it. (Please follow the link below for more information.)

[Customer Number Upload Spreadsheet](#) [MS Excel, 241kB]

The information in this file will show you how to put this information into spreadsheet format. Also, note that this information can be sent on a diskette to:

Mail Stop EBC Customer Number
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Associating Customer Numbers with PCT Applications

To associate a PCT application in the international phase with a Customer Number for purposes of viewing the PCT application in *Private PAIR*, please see the

[Request to Update a PCT Application With a Customer Number](#) form letter [MS Word, 29kB].

The form letter is simply provided for your guidance and convenience. The following valid information is required to associate a PCT application with a Customer Number for viewing in *Private PAIR*:

- Customer Number,
- PCT application number,
- Registration Number (if not submitted by applicant) and
- Signature of applicant, attorney or agent of record, or registered attorney or agent named in the originally filed PCT Request (Form PCT/RO/101). S-Signatures are acceptable.

Please note that the enclosed "Privacy Act Statement" is provided for your review and is not required as part of the request.

Each PCT application international phase update requires a separate request, which needs to be signed by (one of) the persons indicated above. This request does not affect or modify the correspondence address or any other information associated with your PCT application; it is merely used for viewing your PCT application in *Private PAIR*. Please note that only PCT applications filed on or after January 1, 2004 are viewable in *Private PAIR*.

The Request Letter can be mailed or faxed to:

Mail Stop EBC Customer Number
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.
571-273-0177

Fax:

1.1.6 How Do I Update a Customer Number?

If you have a *Customer Number* and you need to update the information associated with it, please download and complete the following file:

[Customer Number Data Change Form](#) [a PDF, 180kB –can be filled out on-line.]

Fax the completed form to the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at **571-273-0177**. This information may be useful to attorneys changing firms or organizations that are reorganizing the management of a group of patents.

[Read about becoming a registered attorney or patent agent, or being granted limited recognition;](#) however, this is not required to be a PAIR user.

1.1.7 Next – Getting Ready For PKI Secure Access (Digital Certificate)

The next step is to read the Subscriber Agreement and Request a Digital Certificate.

First you must read the following agreement:

[Subscriber Agreement](#) [PDF, 66kB]

Then you obtain your **Customer Number**. After that, you can complete the next form:

[Certificate Action Form](#) [PDF, 63kB] (PKI secure access form)

Then the next step is to have the Certificate Action Form notarized by a notary and mail the originals (no faxes or copies) to the following address:

Mail Stop EBC
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Or, you can provide the completed Certificate Action Form and proof of identity in person by to a USPTO employee designated by the USPTO CIO to perform this task. (See the box below for links and instructions.)

Certificate Action Form - Related Documents:

[Certificate Action Form](#) [PDF, 63kB]

[Instructions](#) [73kB PDF]

[Privacy Act](#) [20kB PDF]

This information will be used to generate a certificate that will be used to uniquely identify you and allow secure access to your data. To assure the security of your data, follow the policy described in the Subscriber Agreement.

1.1.8 Obtaining Your Access Codes

After your application has been approved you will receive two codes:

1. **Authorization Code**
2. **Reference Number**

The *Authorization Code* will be sent via e-mail and the *Reference Number* by U.S. mail. In addition, for customers with U.S. residence only, the Patent EBC will attempt one phone call to deliver the *Reference Number*. The *Reference Number* will only be given if the requestor is reached, otherwise a message will be left that their *Reference Number* will be mailed and to contact the Patent EBC with any questions.

Once you have both codes, you will be able to access Private PAIR and take advantage of electronic filing of patent applications or patent application status checks via the Internet. For any customer who would like to receive their *Reference Number* before it arrives via U.S. mail, please contact the Patent EBC at **1-866-217-9197**.

1.1.9 Recovery of Access Codes

Code life span is **90 days**, starting on the date of issuance. If your codes expire or have been lost, contact the Patent EBC at **1-866-217-9197** to request reactivation. The *Authorization Code* will be sent via e-mail. The *Reference Number* will be given to the requestor via telephone after the requestor calls the EBC. International customers will receive their *Reference Number* in a separate e-mail from the *Authorization Code*.

1.1.10 Using the Digital Certificate Site

Use the following site to create a set of recovery codes, manage your digital certificate contact information, and recover lost or damaged digital certificates online.

[Digital Certificate Management](#)

You are now ready to Search for an Application, or conduct a number of other steps using your Customer Number in Private PAIR. (See Section 2 for information on how to proceed.)

1.2 Other Guides Available

In addition to this guide, there are several other Quick Start Guides available from the PAIR website that can help you understand how to use specific features in Private PAIR 7.1. (You will find the link to these guides in the USPTO Private PAIR web page Documentation Pack below.)

- Attorney Docket Quick Start Guide
- Customer Details Quick Start Guide
- e-Office Action Quick Start Guide
- Order Entry Management System (OEMS) Quick Start Guide
- Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Quick Start Guide
- E(X)tensible Mark-up Language (XML) Download Quick Start Guide

You will find the link to these guides in the USPTO Private PAIR web page Documentation Pack. Follow the link below to download other guides.

www.uspto.gov/ebc/portal/pair/about_documentpack.html

You will see the following screen, with a listing of the available documents for downloading. Note the directory path: Patent EBC > Patent Portal > PAIR Help & Tutorials > Documentation Pack—the path appears under the USPTO Seal.

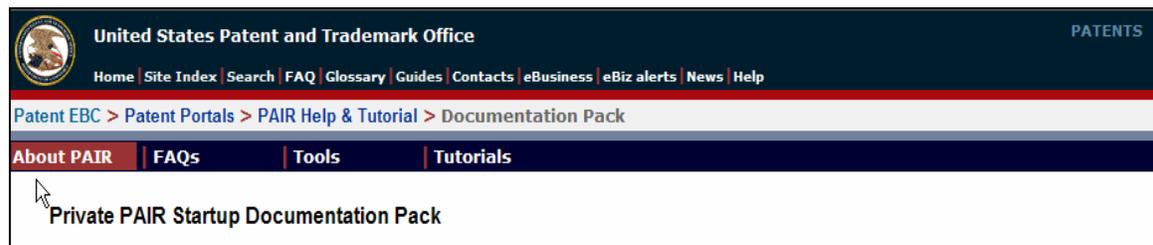


Figure 1-2 USPTO Private PAIR Document Download Screen

NOTE! For assistance with any of the steps shown in this guide, users can contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at the Customer Support Center. Information is shown in the table at the end of this guide (in Section 5).

2. Private Pair – Sign On

There are two methods for accessing the Private PAIR Sign-on. The first method is as follows:

To access Private PAIR go to <http://portal.uspto.gov/external/portal/home> and click on the 'Private PAIR' link shown in Figure 2-1. (You now can go directly to Section 2.1 in this guide for further instructions.)

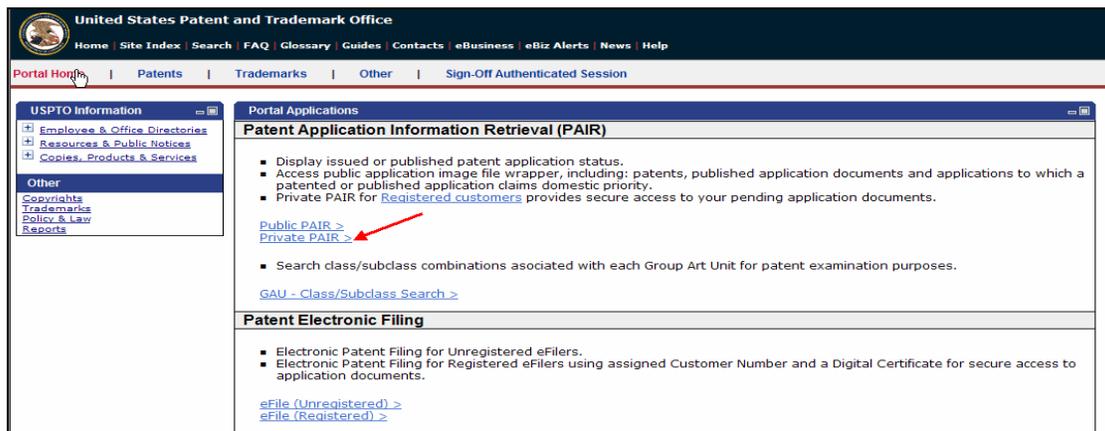


Figure 2-1 USPTO Portal Home Page

Or, using the second method, type www.uspto.gov in your Internet address bar, press "Enter" and the following page appears. Follow the link to "Patents" in the left-hand menu list (see sample screen below).



Figure 2-2 Accessing PAIR from USPTO.gov

Once, you click the “Patents” link, the list shown in Figure 2-3 appears (as you can see on the next sample web page (Figure 2-4). Further steps for this method follow on the next page as well).

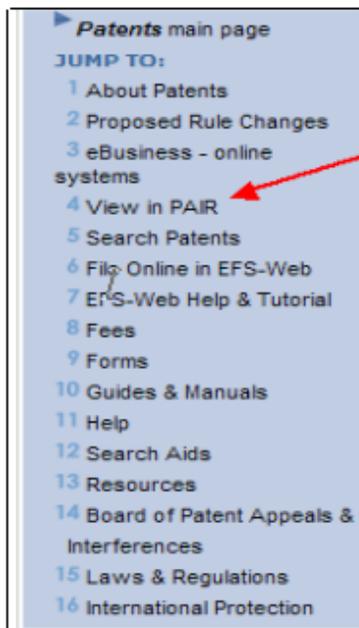


Figure 2-3 View in PAIR link

- Follow the link next to menu item 4, by clicking the mouse button (Figure 2-3) “View in PAIR.”
- The screen options for Public or Private PAIR appear, as shown in Figure 2-4.
- Click the link for Private PAIR (as shown in Figure 2-4).
- If a Security prompt appears, click “OK.”

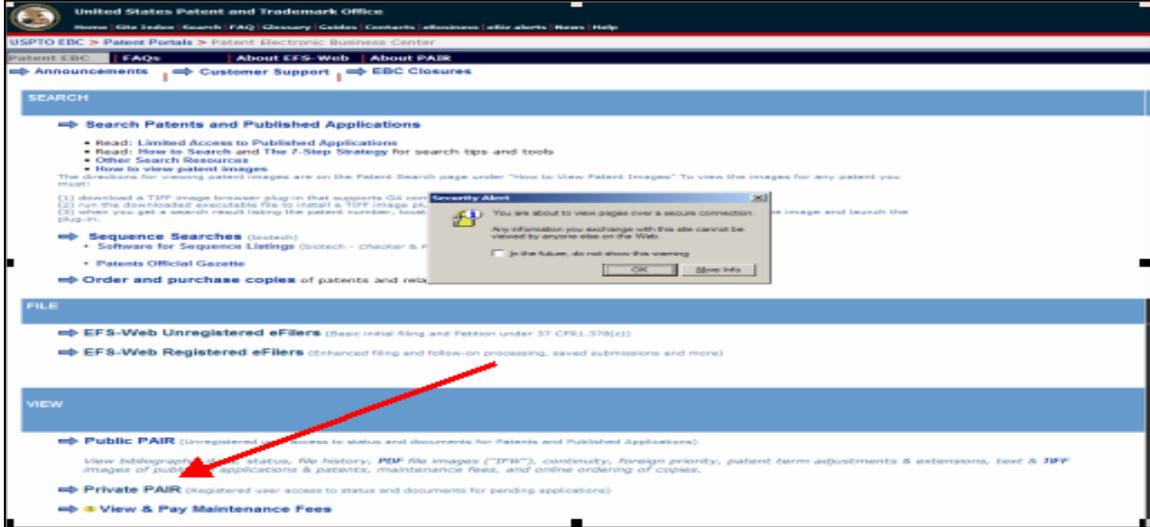


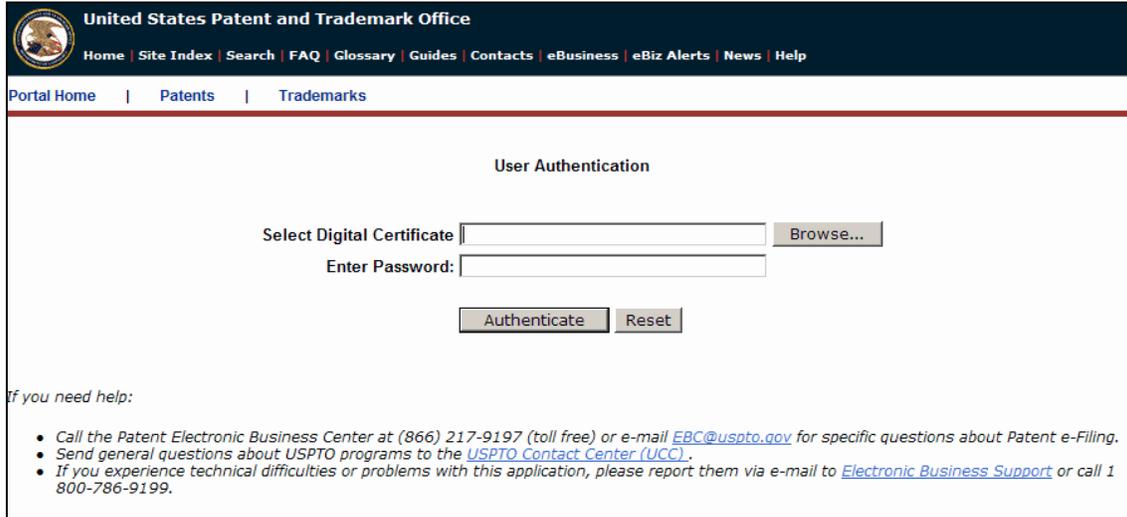
Figure 2-4 Selecting the Private PAIR link

The screen for those Private PAIR Customers who are Registered Users, appears (shown in the next section as Figure 2-5).

2.1 Access for Registered Users

A Registered User has both an assigned Customer Number and a digital certificate for secure access to application documents.

NOTE! You may either be working as the certificate holder or under the authority of the certificate holder.



United States Patent and Trademark Office

Home | Site Index | Search | FAQ | Glossary | Guides | Contacts | eBusiness | eBiz Alerts | News | Help

Portal Home | Patents | Trademarks

User Authentication

Select Digital Certificate Browse...

Enter Password:

Authenticate Reset

If you need help:

- Call the Patent Electronic Business Center at (866) 217-9197 (toll free) or e-mail EBC@uspto.gov for specific questions about Patent e-Filing.
- Send general questions about USPTO programs to the [USPTO Contact Center \(UCC\)](#).
- If you experience technical difficulties or problems with this application, please report them via e-mail to [Electronic Business Support](#) or call 1 800-786-9199.

Figure 2-5 Private PAIR Login Screen

The system displays the Private PAIR login screen (Figure 2-5). The “Browse” button should be used to navigate to the location of the user’s PKI certificate file (ending in “.epf”).

1. Enter the PKI certificate password.
2. Press the “Authenticate” button.

3. Search by Customer Number

3.1 Description

Customers using the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Private PAIR system can search for Applications by Customer Number, Applications with Status Changes, view Outgoing Correspondence and view or update Customer Number Details.

Customers can view or print their customer details and request changes to that data. These changes then are validated and updated in the Patent Application Locating and Monitoring (PALM) system.

NOTE! A new feature in Customer Number searches is that e-mail addresses will be tested for validity when they are entered or modified. Customers will be notified of any additions or modifications to their e-mail address.

3.2 Customer Number— Correspondence Address

To search for Applications by Customer Number for the Correspondence Address, click the radio button next to this category on the Private PAIR “Select New Case” screen (see arrows in figure below).

Note: Also see Section 3.3—3.4 for changing a correspondence address.

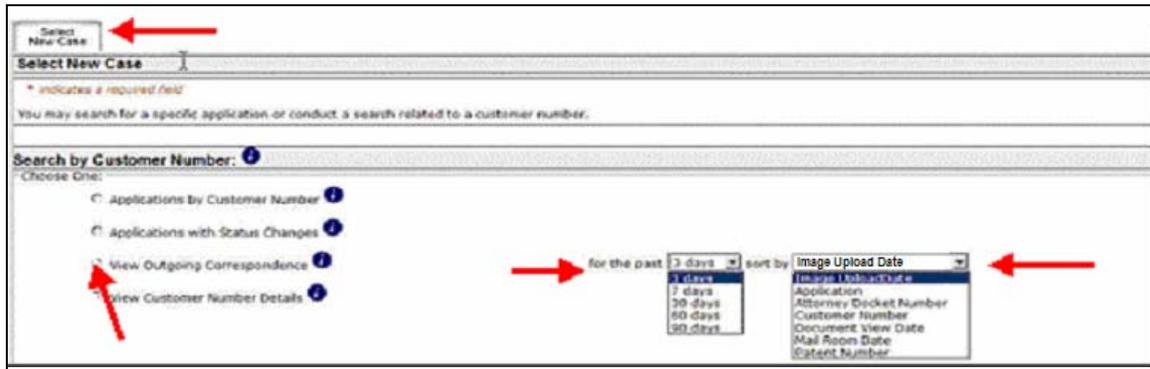


Figure 3-1 Actions to View Outgoing Correspondence

You can view Applications by Customer Number, Applications with Status Changes, and two other options shown above. For this example, click the radio button beside “View Outgoing Correspondence.” Note that you can sort by a series of categories and display by status levels (far right-hand arrows). See figures below for drop-down menus choices.

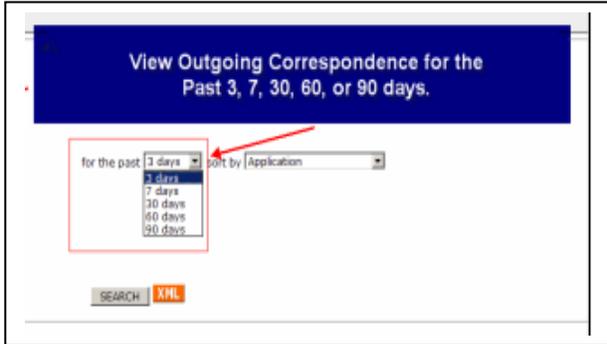


Figure 3-2 View Outgoing Correspondence Time Period Options

For instance, you can view Outgoing Correspondence for the past 3, 7, 30, 60, or 90 days. Private PAIR 7.1 includes the new feature of sorting by three (3) days in addition to the other available time periods.

Also, the “sort by” drop-down list will give you the options shown in Figure 3-3.

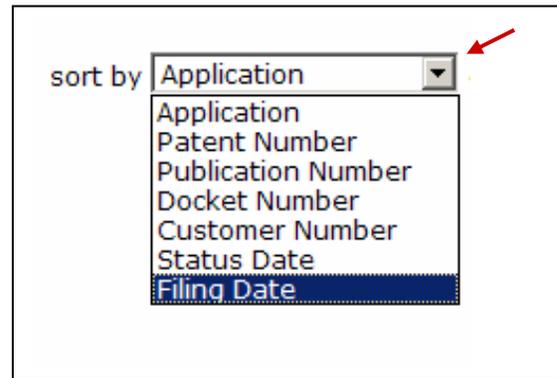


Figure 3-3 Options for Filtering Data

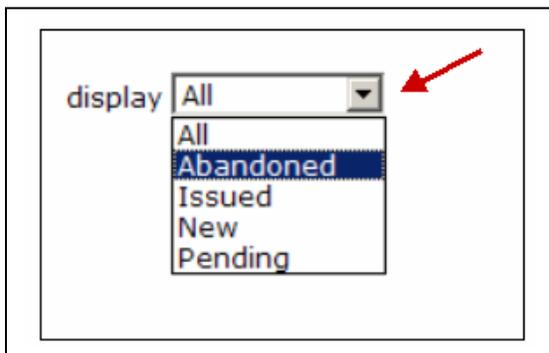


Figure 3-4 Choosing a Display Option

The display drop-down list items are shown in Figure 3-4.

These options are available to search for an Application using a specific Customer Number.

3.3 Steps for Accessing Customer Details

Each one of the subsequent radio buttons will take you to a new screen, based on the qualifying drop-down choices you make for sorting the query, and identifying the status level. For instance, to view or update Customer Number details, follow the procedure below.

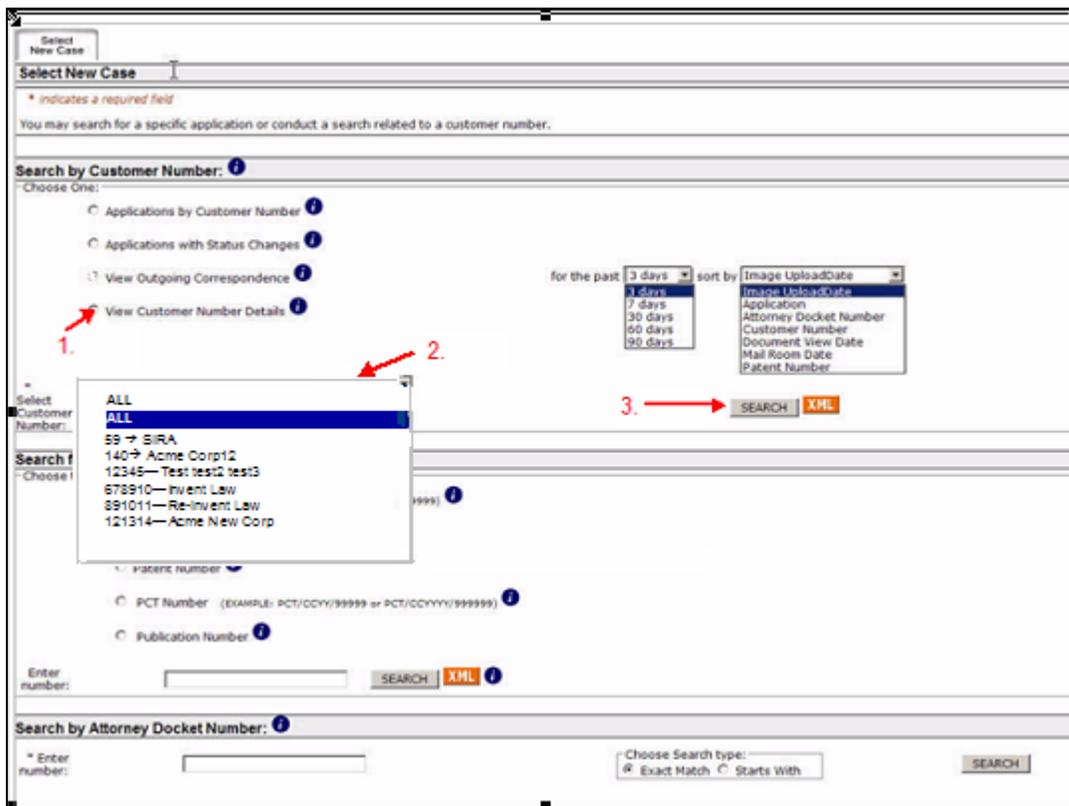


Figure 3-5 Steps for Viewing Customer Details

Scroll down to the *Search by Customer Number* section, and follow these steps:

1. Choose *View Customer Number Details*, by clicking the radio button.
2. Choose the desired Customer Number from the drop-down list *Select Customer Number*.
3. Click on the *Search* button.

NOTE! In the screen sample in Figure 3-5 above, you see three drop-down boxes. These are shown here for instructional purposes. These drop-downs are not normally seen at one time on the Private PAIR screen.

3.4 Viewing or Changing Customer Details

In the *Customer Details* section you can view Customer Number information such as: “Correspondence Address, Correspondence e-Mail, Telephone Numbers, Fax Numbers and Associated Individuals,” as shown below.

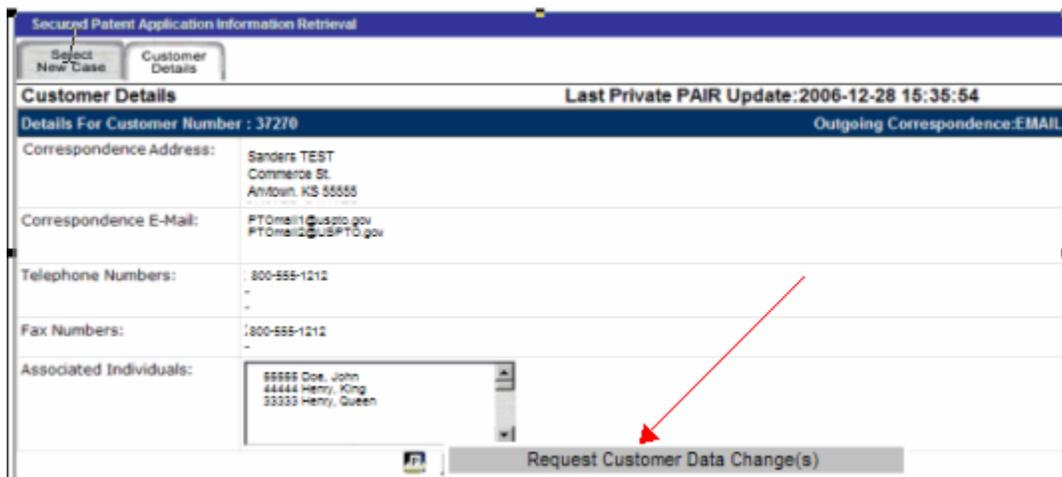


Figure 3-6 Request Customer Data Change(s) Selection

If you would like to change any of the information displayed on the *Customer Details* screen, click the "Request Customer Data Change(s)" button (shown in Figure 3-6).

See the USPTO Customer Number Details Quick Start Guide for further information and steps in how to change data, confirm data, and transmit new or edited Customer information to the USPTO.

4. Application Search Process

Once you have signed on and entered your search criteria for “Search for Application,” (Figure 4-1) the tab structure at the top of the screen expands to show you the available data components of your application (Figure 4-2).

The screenshot shows the Private PAIR Search Screen in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://eic.uspto.gov/epic/private/private>. The page title is "United States Patent and Trademark Office".

The main content area is titled "Secured Patent Application Information Retrieval". It features a "Select New Case" button and a "Select New Case" section. Below this, there is a "Search by Customer Number" section with a "Choose One:" dropdown menu. The selected option is "Applications by Customer Number for Correspondence". Other options include "Applications with Status Changes by Customer Number", "View Outgoing Correspondence", and "View Customer Number Details". There is a "Sort by" dropdown set to "Application" and a "Display" dropdown set to "All". A "Select Customer Number" dropdown is set to "SP -> SRA". A "SEARCH" button is present.

Below the "Search by Customer Number" section is the "Search for Application" section. It has a "Choose type of number:" dropdown menu. The selected option is "Application Number (EXAMPLE: 99999999 -> 99999999)". Other options include "Control Number", "Patent Number", "PCT Number (EXAMPLE: PCT/JP99999999 -> PCT/JP99999999)", and "Publication Number". There is an "Enter number:" input field and a "SEARCH" button with a "Y/N/C" button next to it.

Informational icons (i) are placed next to several fields and buttons throughout the page.

Figure 4-1 Private PAIR Search Screen

TIP! The **i** icons are informational icons. If you see an **i**, click on it, and you'll receive information about that section of the site.

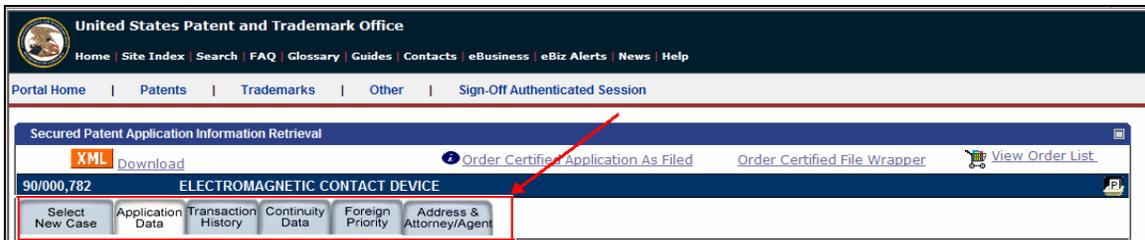


Figure 4-2 Private PAIR Application Data

NOTE! Tabs allow you to access various Private PAIR pages. (Tabs appear only if data exists for that function.)

Also note that there are many other aspects to Private PAIR. View the other Quick Start Guides by following the related links on the Private PAIR web pages. A list of these guides appears in Section 1.2 above.

5. Questions? Contact Information for EBC

Call, e-mail or send a fax (or letter by regular mail) to the USPTO regarding any questions you may have about the Private PAIR steps, new features, or related matters. You can contact the USPTO Electronic Business Center (EBC) directly using the following telephone numbers or address information. The EBC hours of operation are also noted.

Weekday Operation: Monday – Friday: 6 AM - Midnight (Eastern Time)

Telephone: 1-866-217-9197 (toll-free)
571-272-4100 (local)

E-mail: ebc@uspto.gov

Fax: 571-273-0177

Postal: Mail Stop EBC
Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450