

Patent Public Advisory Committee Meeting

Introduction to the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) EPO and USPTO Bi-lateral Classification System



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Deputy Commissioner for Patent Administration

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- USPTO and EPO agree to cooperate on a joint classification system derived from IPC-based ECLA
- USPTO to move from USPC to CPC; EPO to move from ECLA to CPC
- CPC planned to be bilaterally operational at EPO and USPTO



USPTO and EPO Work Toward Joint Patent Classification System

"In view of the significant benefit to stakeholders of developing a transparent and harmonized approach to a global classification system for patent documents; in order to make the search process more effective; and in the belief that cooperation between their two offices will facilitate progress in undertaking classification harmonization projects under the IP5 Common Hybrid Classification initiative, the USPTO and the EPO have agreed together to work toward the formation of a partnership to explore the development of a joint classification system based on the European Classification system (ECLA) that will incorporate the best classification practices of the two offices. This system would be aligned with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) classification standards and the International Patent Classification (IPC) structure. Accordingly, they have initiated discussions on governance and operational aspects of such a partnership.

The IP5 partner offices will be continually apprised of progress at appropriate IP5 forums. Stakeholders will receive regular updates on the substance and progress of classification partnership discussions between the two offices."

David J. Kappos

Benoît Battistelli

October 25, 2010



Why the USPTO is Pursuing this Initiative

- Aligns with USPTO strategic goals
 - Implement IPC-based classification system at USPTO
 - USPTO is currently the only major IP office not using an IPC-based primary classification system
 - Accelerate classification harmonization efforts with other major IP offices
 - Promote resource sharing
- Improves global harmonization for examination and search
 - Classification is the foundation for all global harmonization efforts
- Increases document coverage for classified search
 - A single classification search yields results from the USPTO, EPO and EPO member states



General Features of CPC

- Ability to search a unified classification system
 - Reduces searching redundancy by providing a comprehensive patent document database
 - Merges PGPub and U.S. Patent databases
 - Patent documents classified by patent family
 - Permits search of foreign language document collection
- US and EP patent documents are already classified in ECLA and this back-file will be used as a basis for CPC
- It provides for more detailed breakdowns
 - At least 200,000 breakdowns in CPC vs. 150,000 breakdowns in CPC



General Features of CPC

- It provides an important step towards an internationally harmonized search and examination process, by:
 - Increasing document coverage for a single classified search
 - A single classification search yields results from the USPTO, EPO and EPO member states
 - Sharing resources between EPO and USPTO
 - Eliminating document reclassification from one office to another
 - Providing a classification scheme/system that is adaptive and more actively maintained
 - Providing a single classification symbol set for all USPTO and EPO documents



Activities Since June PPAC Update

- Over 250,000 CPC scheme breakdowns created
 - All schemes reviewed by examiner experts
- 624 maingroup definitions drafted
 - Definitions undergoing review by examiner experts
 - Finalization by monthly publication through Jan 2013
- CPC will have a base population of 35.5 million documents
- More than 40 national offices will have access to CPC at launch
 - Equates to more than 20,000 patent examiners searching the same collection.
- Examiner Field Specific Training (FST) begins October 2nd
 - 400 FSTs scheduled through Feb 2013
 - IT systems on track to support bilateral use of system



CPC Timeline & Milestones

25 October 2010: Joint statement launching the project

1 November 2010: Freeze of the USPC scheme

25 October 2011: Launch of the CPC website

June 2012: Freeze of the ECLA scheme

July 2012: USPTO User Day

Until October 2012:

- Develop USPTO training in collaboration with EPO
- Document classification practices
- Design the collaborative environment

1 October 2012: "CPC launch scheme" available

1 January 2013:

- Launch of CPC – USPC & CPC symbols searchable in EAST/WEST, routing remains based on USPC
- Contractor starts applying CPC symbols to US applications (A docs)
- Begin USPTO Corps and early adopter training

After January 2013:

- Quality assurance in place
- CPC used by EPO and USPTO
- Harmonized classification practices
- Joint CPC revisions
- CPC available for use by other IP offices & public
- Auto populate symbols on issuing applications ('B' docs) based on 'A' docs
- Examiners can add classifications (optional)

Until January 2014:

- Conduct USPTO Corps training
- IT implementation at EPO and USPTO

After January 2015:

- Static USPC data available, Search in CPC mandatory



Conclusion: Next Steps

- Continue collaboration with POPA throughout the development and implementation phases
- Provide opportunities for examiners to participate and share feedback
- Rollout CPC training
- Bring online IT systems to accommodate CPC



Conclusion: CPC Resources

- CPC General Website:
 - <http://www.CPCinfo.org>
- Until CPC is available, ECLA searches can be conducted online using ESPACENET, the EPO's public search tool:
 - <http://worldwide.espacenet.com/>