Patent Public Advisory Committee
Quarterly Meeting

Quality Initiative Update

May 5, 2016
Quality Agenda

- Patent Quality Community Symposium
- Quality Metrics
- Re-evaluate AFCP 2.0 and Pre-appeal
- Topic Submission for Case Studies
- External Survey Results
Patent Quality Community Symposium:
Empowering Innovation Through Enhanced Quality

Richard Seidel
Acting Deputy Commissioner for Patent Administration
Patent Quality Community Symposium

• Wednesday, April 27, 2016
• Where
  – USPTO Alexandria
  – All four regional offices
  – Webcast
• Participation: Over 2,200
Patent Quality Community Symposium

Featured Presentations

• Updates on Enhanced Patent Quality Initiative (EPQI)
• USPTO’s efforts to use Big Data
• Quality Metrics for FY2016
• Master Review Form Workshop (MRF)
Quality Metrics Redefined

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<th>FY 2016</th>
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<td>First Action (FAOM) Review</td>
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<td>Continuing to internally and externally poll perceptions of patent quality</td>
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Quality Metric Data Source: Product Indicators

FY 2016

Product Indicators
Master Review Form
Capturing both correctness and clarity of examiners’ final work product using uniform criteria gathered in a single database

Process Indicators
Transactional QIR
Tracking the efficiency and consistency of our processes (for example, to identify “churning”)

Perception Indicators
Survey Results
Continuing to internally and externally poll perceptions of patent quality

FY 2016 Key Product Metrics

Correctness
Clarity
Quality Metric Data Source: Process Indicators

FY 2016

**Product Indicators**
Master Review Form
Capturing both correctness and clarity of examiners’ final work product using uniform criteria gathered in a single database

**Process Indicators**
Transactional QIR
Tracking the efficiency and consistency of our processes (for example, to identify “churning”)

**Perception Indicators**
Survey Results
Continuing to internally and externally poll perceptions of patent quality

FY 2016 Key Process Indicators

- Reopening Prevention
- Rework Reduction
- Consistency of Decision-Making
Quality Metric Data Source: Perception Survey Results

FY 2016 Vital Perception Indicators

Product Indicators
Master Review Form
Capturing both correctness and clarity of examiners’ final work product using uniform criteria gathered in a single database

Process Indicators
Transactional QIR
Tracking the efficiency and consistency of our processes (for example, to identify “churning”)

Perception Indicators
Survey Results
Continuing to internally and externally poll perceptions of patent quality

Root Cause Analysis
Validation/Verification
Quality Metrics

• Federal Register Notice published on March 25, with comments due May 24
  – Requesting feedback on:
    • Decision to replace Composite Quality Score with individual metrics
    • How to objectively measure patent examination quality
    • Standardized Master Review Form

Contact Us:  QualityMetrics2017@uspto.gov
Questions & Comments

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Re-evaluate AFCP 2.0 and Pre-appeal

Remy Yucel
Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Patent Operations
Re-evaluate AFCP 2.0 and Pre-appeal

• Tests how some of the best attributes of the AFCP 2.0 and the Pre-Appeal pilots can be combined to give both applicants and examiners additional information

• Increased understanding of the issues will lead to more accurate decisions on subsequent courses of action
Re-evaluate AFCP 2.0 and Pre-appeal

- Features under consideration:
  - Available within 2 months of final rejection
  - Panel, including a neutral party
  - Applicant participation to present arguments as in Pre-Appeal (5-page document) or claim amendments
  - More information on panel decision (i.e. grounds of rejection withdrawn or maintained, claims rejected, allowed, additional brief comments)
Questions & Comments

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Topic Submission for Case Studies

Anthony Caputa
Director, Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA)
Topic Submission for Case Studies: Pilot Summary

• Federal Register Notice initiated the program on December 21, 2015

• Submissions were accepted through February 12, 2016

• USPTO invited stakeholders to submit patent quality-related topics for study
What is a Case Study?

• Review of a single, quality-related issue

• Tailored to the selected issue

• Performed by USPTO
  – Distinct from standard reviews completed by the Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA)
Topic Submission for Case Studies: Program Goals

• Use stakeholder experience to provide USPTO with a wider range of topics to consider for a case study

• Use study results to better understand and enhance quality of USPTO work products and processes to:
  – Identify quality issues and examples of examination best practices
  – Reveal areas where further training may be needed
Topics Selected for Case Study

2. Consistency of application of 35 U.S.C. 101 across Art Units/Technology Centers
3. Use of compact prosecution when making 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections
5. Enforcement of 35 U.S.C. 112(a) written description in continuing applications
6. Consistent treatment of claims after May 2014 35 U.S.C. 112(f) training
Topic Submission - Resources

• Topic Submission for Case Studies Webpage: http://www.uspto.gov/patent/initiatives/topic-submission-case-studies-pilot-program


• Contact us at TopicSubmissionForCaseStudies@uspto.gov
Questions & Comments

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External Quality Survey (EQS)

Martin Rater
Chief Statistician, Office of Patent Quality Assurance (OPQA)
External Quality Survey (EQS)

• Conducted semi-annually since 2006
  – Most recent survey Q1 in FY16
• Surveys 3,000 frequent-filing customers with each survey
• Has been included in Patent Quality Composite (FY2011-15)
• Continues to be a vital quality indicator as we transition to new quality metrics in FY17
Perception of Product: Quality of Rejections Made

Q6: Frequency of Technically, Legally, and Logically Sound Rejections (Percent reporting “Most of the time” or “All of the time” of the time)
Q10: In your experience, what have examiners done that has helped advance prosecution?

- Collaborative, constructive, makes suggestions: 528
- Well written responses: 108
- Well prepared for meetings: 117
- Willing to discuss via phone/email: 146
- Initiate contact with Applicant: 151
- Interviews at all stages: 192
Q9: In the past 3 months, have you experienced problems with the consistency of examination quality from one examiner to another?
Perception of Overall Quality

Q7: Percent Positive and Negative Ratings of Overall Examination Quality in Past 3 Months

- Percent reporting "good" or "excellent"
- Percent reporting "poor" or "very poor"
Link between Perception of Consistency and Overall Quality

Overall Quality Perception
- Poor or Very Poor
- Fair
- Good or Excellent

No Inconsistency: 75%
Small Degree of Inconsistency: 65%
Large Degree of Inconsistency: 53%
Using EQS for Validating the Quality Metric

- Utilize the External Quality Survey as a snapshot of stakeholders’ perceptions
- Assure alignment of the quality data underlying our metrics and our external stakeholders’ perceptions
- Exploit the flexibility of the Master Review Form to capture data points that reflect patent quality
Questions & Comments

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