Routing of applications to examiners

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Background - Classification

- USPTO uses classification to:
  - Identify and group the technology captured in an incoming application
  - Match the technology in an application to a patent examiner
  - Assign examination time to an application
Background - Classification

• In October of 2010, USPTO and EPO agreed to jointly implement CPC
• Significant step towards international harmonization
• CPC is a more flexible and up-to-date classification system
Symbols on an application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of symbols used for routing</th>
<th>USPC</th>
<th>CPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbol(s) directed to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most comprehensive claim</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>One or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CPC and application routing:

- Opportunity to address multi-disciplinary applications via more than one CPC symbol.
- Personal expertise in the claimed art is an enhancement to productivity or ability to examine in a timely manner.

**Challenge:** How to maintain examiners’ technology expertise, and take advantage of the opportunity to use multi-disciplinary symbols to match applications to examiners?
Updates to the routing of applications (1 of 2)

Key goals:

• Finalize the transition to CPC by eliminating USPC dependencies on operational processes
  – Decrease examiners’ burden of understanding and operating within two classification systems
  – Ultimately eliminate the Office’s administrative and cost burden of using two classification systems

• Maximize the retention of expertise and institutional knowledge of examiners
Updates to the routing of applications (2 of 2)

- Utilizing CPC:
  - Applications will be routed to examiners based on an examiner’s work history (portfolio)
  - The classification picture on incoming applications will be compared to all examiners’ portfolios to find the best examiner to examine the application
Route applications based on CPC

• Match an application’s classification picture with an examiner’s work experience
  – Application classification picture
    • One or more CPC symbols allocated to an application
  – Examiners’ portfolios
    • Representation of work experience in CPC
Examiner portfolio

• Representation of an examiner’s work experience

• Tally of the CPC symbols found on applications in which that examiner has completed at least one action
  – Actions include:
    • Final and non-final rejections
    • Allowances
    • Ex Parte Quayle actions,
    • First Action Interview Pilot Steps 1 and 2
    • Examiner’s answers
Example of examiner portfolio

• An examiner does a non-final rejection on a patent application with CPC symbols A01B1/01, A47C35/15, and F16H55/05.

• The examiner also issues an allowance on a different patent application with CPC symbols A47C35/15, F16H55/05, and B35J21/07.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner Portfolio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPC SYMBOL</td>
<td>CPC TALLY</td>
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<tr>
<td>F16H55/05</td>
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<tr>
<td>A47C35/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>A01B1/01</td>
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<tr>
<td>B35J21/07</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Example of qualification assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPC Symbols on an application</th>
<th>Examiner A tally</th>
<th>Examiner B tally</th>
<th>Examiner C tally</th>
<th>Examiner D tally</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
Match examiners to an application

• Size of each examiner’s new application docket.

• Examiner’s symbol percent qualification.

• Number of other applications in the unassigned backlog for which an examiner has symbol qualification.

• Similarity between an examiner’s portfolio and the classification picture on the application.