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Changes to the Trademark Rules of Practice To Mandate Electronic Filing

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General Comment

I work at a local patent and trademark center, a USPTO program. While a majority of my clients who visit for trademark assistance are fine with online filings I still have many who wish to file in print. One trademark attorney, who specifically asked me to instruct him on how to use TEAS, left befuddled with TEAS. He only files TEAS applications. He is an older gentleman.

In our area, throughout the 9 regional counties, the internet is not overwhelmingly prevalent. Many small town businesses, farmers, and craft businesses may find it difficult to file electronically because of intermittent or slow internet access.

Since 87% of US businesses are small businesses, with less than 50 employees, this would specifically be a burden for small businesses who have little or no internet access.

The argument that their local libraries can provide access, introduces a particular problem for

librarians. With the change, librarians are put in awkward situations of answering questions of a legal nature and helping patrons file trademark applications. These rural librarians will have no training whatsoever in explaining the trademark filing process. Referring this patrons to one of the 80 regional Patent and Trademark Resource Centers is not a very convenient or effective solution.

I would like to recommend that the paper filing option would continue for those who may find it difficult, especially older adults, to file electronically.