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Mr. Ronald Hack, Acting Chief Information Officer  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
Re: Docket No. 010126025-1025-01  
RLN 0651-AB34

COMMENTS ON THE PLAN TO REMOVE THE USPTO CLASSIFIED PAPER FILES  
FROM THE PUBLIC SEARCH ROOMS AND REPLACE THEM WITH ELECTRONIC  
RECORDS

I wish to place myself on record that I, an independent inventor, am vehemently opposed to this plan.

My affiliation as an inventor is that I am the CEO of NICTRONIX, Inc. which held U.S. Patent 3,210,631, the brushless DC motor whis now the workhorse motor used in all space vehicles, inasmuch as the fact that other D.C. motors cannot operate in the vacuum of outer space. I also hold three other patents and , after retiring, did patent searching for patent attorneys for many months. This experience in patent searching qualifies me as being more knowledgeable than most independent inventors regarding the problems encountered in searching.

The following comments represent my personal views:

1. For the past several years I have been handicapped in using a computer keyboard. My hands suffer from "intention tremor" which prevents me from using a sensitive keyboard because my fingers will sometimes cause the key to be struck more than once before I can withdraw my finger. Correcting the error thus caused takes extra time and requires me to monitor every stroke, thus causing me to take an inordinately long time to make a selection.
2. Computer readouts allow only one page at a time to be examined. When a patent has one or more drawings, usually several of them with their individual numbered or lettered parts, it is much less cumbersome to flip pages back and forth between the text and the indicated parts while holding pages bound together than re-entering a computer display, especially if the searcher has an imperfect short term memory. To me this is the most important argument of all in favor of keeping the stacks. The time required to review one patent will be multiplied excessively.
3. The computer necessarily narrows down to the exposure of one patent at a time and does not expose the searcher to the broad field in which a patent is filed in a shoe in a subclass in the search room. One advantage that the search room possesses is the educational advantage of being exposed to a wide range of ideas as the searcher views related state-of-the-art patents as he flips through a shoe or a whole subclass.

4. The most compelling argument against relying on the computer only is the incompleteness of filing patents in all of the classifications in which a patent should be filed. For example, although my motor was not filed under motors with permanent magnet rotors although that was a major characteristic. It is an almost impossible requirement of classifiers that they cover all characteristics and file them in all the classes and sub-classes to which they pertain given the fact that educational backgrounds of classifiers can not be sufficient to the task - it is too big. If they all did a perfect job the total mass of the patents would be huge. In this respect the computer has an advantage, but searching time would be magnified.

5. If the stacks were to be located elsewhere, the examiner's search rooms would be overtaxed to meet the demand.

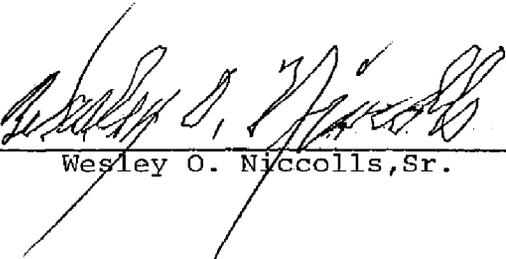
6. If the stacks were to be located elsewhere the inconveniences of running back and forth between examiners and the stacks location thus increasing the time and expense of processing a search, especially when a professional searcher is assigned to multiple cases.

7. Clients would find it difficult to communicate with their searcher because the searcher is not always available at a central location.

8. The added expense in time and money could discourage some inventors from pursuing a patent.

9. The overall expenses of pursuing a patent would be shifted from the USPTO to the general public thus providing no over-all savings.

Respectfully submitted,



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Wesley O. Niccolls, Sr.