

**From:** phalbert-at-townsend.com  
**Sent:** Monday, December 01, 2003 3:03 PM  
**To:** eReference  
**Subject:** E-Patent Reference feature - comments

This comment is in response to the notice published at:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/norefs.html>

In response to the notice, I propose that the PTO allow for Form PTO/SB08 (1449) submissions wherein paper copies of U.S. patents are not submitted.

The U.S. PTO is to be commended in their efforts to save paper as this helps our environment. The E-patent reference feature implies that patent practitioners have easy access to electronic versions of U.S. patents and I believe this is indeed the case. Many patent practitioners prefer electronic versions, as they are easier to search and selective printing is easily done with most electronic systems.

Since one would expect that the PTO has at least the same access to electronic versions of patents that is available to patent practitioners, further paper waste can be avoided by permitting patent practitioners to omit paper copies of U.S. patents in Form PTO/SB08 (1449) submissions. Some Examiners have indicated that they would consider such submissions and some Examiners have requested that electronic copies be submitted instead of paper copies. However, unless there is a rule that permits such filings, patent practitioners will take the cautious route and submit paper copies of U.S. patents to ensure that the cited references are considered.