Electronic Processing of Information Disclosure Statement

SUMMARY

As part of its e-commerce program, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) beginning on January 18, 2006, will begin electronic processing of the list of citations (e.g., forms 1449 or SB 08) submitted as part of an information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted in applications stored by the USPTO in image form. The USPTO will provide examiners with a tool to electronically annotate citations and electronically sign the IDS when reviewing cited references. The electronically processed IDS will be stored in the USPTO's official record as an entry in the application's image file wrapper and a copy will be mailed to applicant as part of an Office action.

PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION

The USPTO plans to make the tool to electronically process IDSs available to examiners in a staged release beginning on January 18, 2006, and ending in February 2006. Accordingly, applicants that receive numerous Office actions may receive some IDS annotated by hand while receiving other IDSs annotated by electronic means for a limited time period.

ELECTRONIC ANNOTATION AND SIGNATURE

The electronic annotation, similar to hand written annotations, will cause the initials of the reviewing examiner to be applied to either: (1) the immediate left of each citation reviewed; or (2) the immediate left of the first of several consecutive citations and the left of the last of the consecutive citations reviewed with a line connecting the initials. Citations that have not been considered will be lined through.

The electronic signature will be in the form /John Q. Examiner/ at the bottom of the last sheet of citations of an IDS. The examiner may elect to electronically sign each sheet of citations considered.

Comments regarding this notice may be directed to Robert A. Clarke, Deputy Director – Office of Patent Legal Administration, at robert.clarke@uspto.gov. Technical questions regarding the tool for electronic processing of IDS may be directed to Michael Sigda, Manager – Electronic Patent File Unit, at michael.sigda@uspto.gov.

DATE: 01/24/06

/S/
John Doll
Commissioner for Patents