

7 Research and Study on Desired Information Transmission from the Japan Patent Office

This research and study was conducted to examine how information should be disseminated from Japan Patent Office (JPO), for the purpose of enhancing appropriate use of information on intellectual property, and accordingly promoting proper protection of intellectual property, under the present circumstances where the importance of the intellectual property is increasingly more highly recognized.

At the present time, the JPO disseminates various kinds of information on intellectual property such as the Annual Report, Technology Trend Surveys and official statistics, etc., through its website on the Internet and printed media. However, the fact remains that no clear-cut definition has been established yet on the contents and the target users of such information dissemination from the JPO.

As the results of the questionnaire survey conducted in Japan have revealed that while many users desire to obtain information through its website in the future, beginners find it difficult to reach the right information because of excessively huge volumes of information carried in the current website.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Patent Offices of other major countries have arranged their website compositions so as to make it easy even for beginner to use.

In the future, while the advantages of each medium for information dissemination should be fully utilized, the contents of information should be selected, and media used for the dissemination of information should be designed and composed, from the point of view of improving the users' conveniences.

I Current Status and Problems of Information Dissemination from the Japan Patent Office

1 JPO Website

(1) Current Status

Various media are currently being used by the Japan Patent Office to disseminate information, and among them, its website on the Internet is playing a major role as one of the main pillar media.

Counted as the advantage of using the website is "immediacy" or "promptness" of information provided, subject to how often and timely such information is updated. Also considered to be another advantage of the website is to provide "interchangeability" or "complementarity" among information media by sorting the information to be provided by typem among the media.

Also, from the user's point of view, it provides a significant advantage to obtain information through the website, with drastic improvements realized in accessibility.

With these points in mind, not only the JPO but also Patent Offices in other major countries are putting a strong emphasis on information dissemination utilizing their websites.

The JPO opened its website on April 18, 1996. Laid out in its front page is the table of contents, which comes up with diversified items reflecting the huge variety of the information provided there.

(2) Tasks

Notwithstanding that it was less than 5 years

ago when the JPO started using its website to disseminate information, the website is already accessed approximately 500 thousand times a month, achieving an effect as such.

However, it cannot be said that there is a clear-cut and concrete policy in the JPO on information dissemination utilizing its website, and in fact there are problems as described below:

Firstly, sufficient adjustment among media by kind or contents of information has not been made yet, and in addition to this, the target users of information provided through the website have not been clearly defined.

Especially, as to the kinds of information provided, it should be noted that the more information is disseminated from the website, the more advantages accrue to the users, on the other hand, the harder it becomes for users to access their desired information.

This may not be a problem unique to the JPO, but prevalent among Patent Offices in other countries disseminating information via their websites.

Secondly, there are issues on clarity of classification of information provided through the website and on simplification of the website layout design.

As already discussed before, the JPO offers a great variety of information through its website, and this brings about certain negative effects such as difficulties for the users to access the right information.

According to the results of the questionnaire survey conducted for this study, positive appreciative opinions like "Information we would like to find is fully loaded here," were expressed

by experts familiar with the patent system and procedures, such as patent attorneys or specialists in intellectual property departments of companies. On the other hand, negative opinions like "So much information makes it difficult to reach the right information" were expressed by those who are not assumed as knowledgeable enough about the patent system, such as those in the financial, insurance and distribution industries.

One possible way of solving this problem would be to reduce the total volume of information provided through the website, but the reduction in the information volume would never bring about a fundamental solution. Establishing a clearly defined classification (in a hierarchical structure) of information to be provided through the website, and at the same time, simplifying the website layout design should be a right approach to the problem solution.

As a matter of fact, with the same critical minds, the Patent Office of each country has attempted to cope with the problem by reconsidering the hierarchical structure of classification of information, and at the same time by simplifying the layout design of its website. Such the approach should be studied by the JPO.

A third one relates to the promptness in providing information through the website.

Needless to say, an advantage of disseminating information through the website is the easy accessibility as well as the promptness of providing information. It will be necessary to examine how information should be updated on the website of the JPO, keeping in mind the desires of the users.

It should be noted especially when publishing information on the website that there is no advantage of the promptness, if the information is merely the same as already published in print, for example, in the "Annual Report".

Another point to be considered is that when updating information, journal data such as the date of updating should be clearly indicated, and at the same time, in certain cases old information should not be simply deleted, but should be left there for convenience, for example, in case of transitional measures for a system amendment.

A fourth one is a problem related to the kind of information disseminated through the website.

Among the responses to the questionnaire survey for this study, there were some opinions that desire for information to be disseminated from the website of the JPO, concerning the regulations and amendments in the systems, legislations and operational rules not only in Japan but also in other major countries, as well as the trend in international organizations such as the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization). Such information is actually available by accessing the website of each country's Patent Office or

those international organizations, but still it may be necessary to examine whether the website of the JPO should carry certain information specially interesting to the users.

There is some opinion in respondents of the questionnaire survey that the information should be disseminated from the website of the JPO on file history as available in commercial database of Japanese patents PATOLIS and the Examination and Appeal Guidelines. Such information should be valuable to patent practitioners, but whether it should be carried in the website or not should be determined after streamlining the information media to be allocated for each kind of information dissemination.

Further, there are some other opinions expressed in the questionnaire survey for information to be carried by the website concerning court rulings (in summary) on lawsuits against appeal decisions and concerning infringement cases. Such information is available also from the website of the Supreme Court, but it is considered necessary to examine whether or not to disseminate from the website the information on the outcome of the information exchange between the JPO and courts, such as hyperlinking with appeal decisions.

2 JPO Annual Report

(1) Current Status

It was in 1998 when the JPO published its first issue of the JPO Annual Report in the current form. The JPO Annual Report (2000) "Tokkyo Gyosei Nenji Houkokusho" (Japanese edition) consists of 3 parts dealing with trend analyses, policies and statistical data (Japanese edition).

The first part that deals with trend analyses is entitled "Chitekizaisan-ken wo meguru ugoki (Movements Relating to Intellectual Property Rights)", and describes recent domestic and overseas topics concerning intellectual property.

The second part that deals with policies is entitled "Preparation of Environments toward the 'Era of Intelligence'" and introduces the concrete preparations by the JPO and other related organizations for the 'Era of Intelligence'.

The third part that deals with statistical data now carries not only conventional raw data but also graphics for some major statistics, and also a CD-ROM storing all the data contained in this statistics part is offered as an appendix.

The full text of the JPO Annual Report is also available to the public at the website of the JPO ^(*).

(2) Tasks

Only three years have passed since the JPO started publishing its Annual Report in the current form, but the contents have improved

(*1) URL(<http://www.jpo.go.jp/tousi/nenzi2000/index.htm>)

year by year, and also efforts have been made to make it easier to see and read the data by introducing color pages and increased use of photos, charts, graphs. Among the responses to the questionnaire survey for this study, comments on the JPO Annual Report are quite favorable as a whole. Yet, there remain some problems.

Firstly, no sufficient study has yet been made from the points of view of ① dissemination of information in accordance with the purpose, such as publicity of the current status or policies of the JPO, ② “Comprehensiveness” and “Continuity” of information and ③ “Interchangeability” and “complementarity” among the media for dissemination of information.

Discussions in the Committee of this research and study and the responses to the questionnaire survey refer to the necessity of limiting the range of information to be included in the JPO Annual Report as the current coverage is too extensive, and at the same time reconsidering the relationship with the other media used for information dissemination. Taking into consideration the requirements for information disclosure at government agencies, further study will have to be made from the point of view of further enhancement of the contents and improvements in user conveniences.

Secondly, like information dissemination from the website, the target users of the disseminated information are not necessarily clearly defined.

Thus, it is likely that the contents of the “JPO Annual Report” are in some cases not satisfying specialists, but too difficult for beginners. Therefore, it is considered necessary to define the supposed target users and determine the information to be disseminated to them.

Thirdly, problems exist in relation to the design of the “JPO Annual Report”. The current “JPO Annual Report” carries numerous photos, charts and graphs for visual improvements, and thus a considerable level of improvement has been made. Yet, compared with the annual reports issued by the patent offices of various other countries, there still remains considerable room for improvement. Notably, further study will have to be made on design improvement, particularly for the convenience of beginner users.

Fourthly, there is a problem concerning the conformity with the annual reports issued by the patent offices of various other countries.

The formats and contents of the annual reports issued by the patent offices of other countries vary depending upon their histories and policies, and therefore there is no uniform format and contents. However, applicants and right holders are getting more and more interested in the annual reports issued not only by the domestic patent office but also by the patent

offices of other countries, with globalization of the system and increase in foreign applications in the background. Also for college or university researchers making comparative studies on or analyses of each country, it is important for data formats used in from the annual reports issued by the patent offices of various countries to be conform. To this end, an attempt should be made within a possible framework to realize uniform formats and contents of the annual reports, through tri-lateral discussion on this subject among the patent offices in Japan, the U.S. and Europe.

3 Technology Trend Survey

(1) Current Status

As the results of research and development or technical development at enterprises, colleges and universities, and research institutes, patent information is the latest technical information as well as rights information. All technical fields are included within its scope, and one can see all kinds of technologies there from various angles.

One of the ways to strategically utilize such patent information is a technology trend survey based on the analysis of patent information. A technology trend survey made from the point of view of patents clearly shows the current status of patent applications in the field of advanced technologies and also the direction in which research and development efforts are moving. Such information should be quite valuable for enterprises, colleges and university, and research institutes in determining the theme of their research and development or the direction of their technical developments.

The volume of patent information accumulated up to now is so huge that each individual enterprise or research institute could hardly conduct analyses of such patent information, under the constraints of limited availability of financial and human resources. However, transformation of technical developments of a catch-up type into those of a frontier type is now considered vital to strengthening competitive power of industry. As success in creative technical developments brings to the enterprise a huge profits, patent strategies now have increased significance in corporate management. Under these circumstances, analysis of patent information is getting increasingly important. Based on these situations, the JPO has began conducting the Technology Trend Survey since 1998.

The Technology Trend Survey is not only intended for the use by patent specialists, but also aims at top managements of enterprises and the general public as its targets. The survey in 2000

is entitled "Century 21 – Technological Competitiveness of Japan as Viewed from Patents" and will consist of two parts, one on macro analysis themes and the other on semi-macro analysis themes.

The macro analysis themes deal with comprehensive analyses covering all industries, relational analyses between the technologies of individual industries, and analyses of patent application structure between Japan, the U.S. and Europe covering all industries.

The semi-macro analysis themes, covering themes of urgency in individual industries, deal with outline analyses concerning technologies which are expected to grow on the market, or those which are assumed to expedite technological renovation in the future. 4 themes were chosen for 1999, and 21 themes for 2000. The budget scale allocated for the Technology Trend Survey in 2000 amounted to 850 million yen, and the similar level of the scale is expected for 2001.

The results of the Technology Trend Survey have been fixed up in the form of report, and also put on the website for dissemination, so that it may be used for practical work of examination and appeal at the JPO, and also made available to outside users.

(2) Tasks

The Technology Trend Survey was started by the JPO on a trial basis in 1998, and was put into a full-scale operation in 2000. Therefore it is a little too early to evaluate it, but still some problems can already be pointed out.

The first one is the problem concerning selection of the themes (especially semi-macro analysis themes) and surveying items in the selected themes.

Selection of the themes is currently made according to the priority worked out based on a number of factors. Eventually, however, it will be the task to be fulfilled how subjects should be selected to meet both the needs of practical work of examination and appeal, and those of outside users.

As to the surveying items for the semi-macro analysis themes, it is devised to provide the common surveying items among the themes and the individual surveying items according to the peculiarities of each subject technology. However, a further study will have to be made in selecting more appropriate surveying items based on the experiences up to now, as to the common surveying items, how appropriate items can be selected as for comparison purposes among various semi-macro analysis themes, and as to the individual survey items, to what extent patent analysis can be conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The second task is, like other forms of information dissemination, target (recipients of

information) setting.

The Technology Trend Survey presupposes the use at the practical work of examination and appeal, and at the same time, dissemination of information to corporate managements and the general public. In this regard, especially when disseminating information to the outside, it is important to determine at what level the target should be set. Depending on the target, certain careful consideration will be required, such as rearrangement or reediting of the survey results before dissemination.

The third task is the timing of information dissemination.

Subject to the budget and the progress of the Technology Trend Survey work, effective timing of dissemination of information will have to be considered for timely disclosure of the results of the survey.

The fourth task is the way to fix up the survey results.

In the Technology Trend Survey, analyses are made both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the committee of this research and study and in the result of the questionnaire survey for this study, it was pointed out about the importance of making a future trend forecast or an overall evaluation based on these analyses. Therefore, in this respect, it should be considered whether policy-oriented analyses should also be made as needed.

4 Public Statistics

(1) Current Status

The "JPO Annual Report" (2000 edition) contains various statistics in Part 3.

The statistics laid out over approximately 230 pages include comparison on the numbers of applications in major countries, various statistical data on domestic and international applications, various statistical data concerning major countries and organizations, budgets and other statistics.

(2) Tasks

While the coverage of the public statistics is quite comprehensive, and the volume of data is rather more than enough, some problems can be pointed out, however.

The first problem is continuity of data.

The JPO came up with the first issue of "Annual Report" in the present form in 1998. Until then, various statistics has been published once a year in another form of "Annual Report" as a part of "Patent Office Gazette." The types of statistical data published in the current "JPO Annual Report" do not necessarily conform with those carried in the former "Annual Report" and this creates a problem in data continuity.

The second one is the problem relating to

the kind and volume of data.

Some of those statistical data published in the current "JPO Annual Report" are not necessarily the data originating from the JPO, quite many of which are mere reprint of the data provided by other organizations such as the WIPO.

It may be necessary to examine the necessity of publishing data provided by other organizations in the "JPO Annual Report", keeping in mind the user's needs and difficulties in obtaining data directly from other organizations.

Specifically it should be noted not only that the data provided by the WIPO is easily accessible directly from the WIPO website but also that "freshness" of data themselves are in question.

The third problem is the nature of the public statistics.

The public statistics consist of the mixture of those published as "raw" data like the numbers of applications and those published as "processed"

data such as classified statistics but those are not clearly distinguished. It may be necessary to clarify the interrelation between those to be published as "raw" data and those as "processed."

II Questionnaire Survey on Ways to Disseminate Information from Japan Patent Office

1 Objectives of Questionnaire Survey

In an attempt to offer from the JPO intellectual property information valuable and easy to use for the users, an extensive questionnaire survey was conducted targeting domestic companies, patent attorneys and college and university researchers on the ways to disseminate information and contents of such information.

2 Results of The Survey

(1) As to Information on Intellectual Property Provided from the JPO

The JPO provided various kinds of information in relation to intellectual property, and most of the member companies of Japan Intellectual Property Association (hereinafter called JIPA) and patent attorneys were found well aware of the contents. However, small and medium-sized enterprises, which in many cases do not have intellectual property departments, and those in the financial, insurance and distribution industries made negative responses at the rate of 34.7% to 54.7%, stating, "We do not know what the contents are", with respect to information on the intellectual property provided from the JPO.

(2) Information To Be Enriched in Future

Many of the members of JIPA; financial,

insurance and distribution industries; and patent attorneys expressed their desire for further enrichment in information needed in their practice, such as "information on applications", "Examination Guidelines and Operational Guidelines" and "Information on infringement lawsuits".

On the other hand, many small and medium-sized enterprises wanted to see an enhancement in information on the future direction, such as "Information on information search", "Government policy on industrial property rights", "Various promotion on industrial property rights" and "Technical trend including patent information".

(3) As to the "JPO Annual Report"

As to the "JPO Annual Report", 65.7% of the members companies of JIPA and 69.9% of patent attorneys among the respondents replied that they knew about it, but 11.6% of small and medium-sized enterprises and 13.3% of those in the financial, insurance and distribution industries were found to have no idea of it.

As to the contents of the "JPO Annual Report", approximately 70% of both the member companies of JIPA and patent attorneys replied "decent."

As to points to be improved, there was the opinion that the JPO should suggest its own views on the the future image concerning intellectual property or the outcome of a law amendment.

Also, concerning statistics, there was the opinion that analysis and evaluation should be carried on statistics, while there was another opinion desiring that the data appeared in the former "Annual Report" such as the data concerning the opposition decisions should be reintroduced for continuity of the data.

Furthermore another opinion suggesting to limit the range of data to be contained, as the current contents are too comprehensive, and those data not contained in the "JPO Annual Report" should be published in some other media.

(4) As to JPO Website

Among the member companies of JIPA and patent attorneys, 55.0% and 64.1% of the respondents, respectively, replied "often visit there," and together with those who replied "occasionally visit there", 90.8% and 94.8% of them, i.e. nearly all of them visit the website of the JPO.

On the other hand, only 4.2% of those in the small and medium-sized enterprises and 8.4% of those in the financial, insurance and distribution industries replied "often visit there," and even together with those who "occasionally visit there", the rate remains at the level of 44.2% and 37.3%, respectively.

As to the contents of the website, many

member companies of JIPA and patent attorneys feel "desired information is fully available" or "the latest information on intellectual property is provided there." On the other hand, many of those in the small and medium-sized enterprises and those in the financial, insurance and distribution industries feel "with too much information to access desired information."

This is considered closely associated with the frequency of the visits at the website. In other words, the member companies of JIPA and patent attorneys constantly visit the website, hence they know well where to find what information, and never feel "too much information to access desired information." On the other hand, those the small and medium-sized enterprises and those in the financial, insurance and distribution industries seldom visit the website, so they can hardly reach the right information.

Thus, it can be said that the current website of the JPO is loaded with enriched information, but not easy to use for beginners.

The following items were desired by many as information that should be provided on the website in the future:

- Information concerning the regulations, system and operation amendments not only in Japan but also in other countries, and information on the trend in international organizations
- Information on file history as provided by PATOLIS commercial database
- Appeal Examination Guidelines
- Full texts or summaries of rulings of suits against appeal decisions
- Information on infringement lawsuits

Educational Texts and materials distributed at briefing sessions

- Various forms and their specimen

Many wanted such information as regulations, Examination Guidelines which have already been provided on the website. While if they were fully familiar to the contents of the website, it should be easy to reach, those who do not know about the contents may hardly be able to reach them.

(5) Others

In regard to the contents of the website, many wanted prompt or more frequent update or immediate uploading of the various information such as file histories contained in the Intellectual Property Digital Library (IPLD).

There were other opinion that when updating information on the website, old information should be provided in the form of CD-ROM or the like for the purpose of retrieval at any later time.

As it is difficult to understand what is available in the huge amount of information on the

website, there is an opinion to request the publication in print of all the information provided on the website.

In regard to the search function for the website, many respondents wanted improvements in the response speed, especially that of IPDL, in parallel with higher resolution of the image data of the official gazette in IPDL and batch print capability there of.

Other respondents called for downloading capability to be provided in PDF file forms or the like, for all the information provided on the website, including those currently uploaded, or those to be provided in the future such as the texts of the rulings of suits against appeal decisions or infringement lawsuits.

III Information Dissemination in Other Countries

1 Object of Survey

As reference for determining the future ways to disseminate information from the JPO, we conducted a survey on the current status of dissemination of information relating to intellectual property at the patent offices of other major countries. Also, we gathered opinions of attorneys at law of law firms, patent attorneys, as well as researchers in colleges and universities in foreign countries on what they desire the JPO to do.

2 The Results of Survey

(1) Current Status of Information Dissemination at Patent Offices in Major Countries

(i) UK Patent Office

① The UK Patent Office Website^(*2)

The website went through full design change in December 2000. Up until then, the indices in the front page was so complicated that it was not easy for a user to find the desired information.

Therefore, they made a drastic change simplifying the front page composition of their websites. The front page now is hyperlinked with each site of patents, trademarks and designs, etc. Each site has a uniform style and indices, though differentiated in color, and its composition enables the user to see each page without scrolling. Also, the icons were rearranged to facilitate searching for the right information. These changes received quite favorable responses from the users.

The target recipients of disseminated

(*2) URL(<http://www.patent.gov.uk>)

information include not only patent specialists, but also beginner users. For the convenience of such beginners, sufficient information can be obtained through hyperlinks with other sites.

They often exchange views and opinions on the website with user organizations, and properly accept their advice. Also, opinions from those who accessed the website are surveyed, and the results are reflected at the website.

Constant updating of information on the website is desired by some of the users, but is hard to realize for the reasons of computer system maintenance. Timing of information updating is determined in view of efficiency and necessity.

② Publications in Print

While the Annual Report is published in print, they are not positive in making any other publications.

(ii) European Patent Office (EPO)

① Website of the European Patent Office (*3)

Only a few years have passed since the European Patent Office (EPO) started offering information through its website. Therefore, no clear-cut policy necessarily has been established yet generally on the ways they offer information on the website.

They consider the website to be an excellent medium to communicate with more people.

Whether to place the information on the website or not, or what the contents should be, is determined by different persons depending on the information. Various discussions in the EPO determine whether or not and what contents should be uploaded.

As to third parties' websites hyperlink is made to websites which are chosen on the basis of how frequently the users of the EPO website are visiting.

As to the information and the contents on the website or the page design, users' views are collected at the annual meeting of PATLIB or some other users meetings. Appropriate attention is also paid to users of small and medium-sized enterprises. "E-mail" and "Feedback" are also regarded as useful sources of information.

Records of the latest internal meetings are also disclosed on the website, which plays a role in the information disclosure efforts. Such efforts are part of the general trend for the future and a way to gain people's trust.

They gather information to be uploaded on the website from inside the EPO and spend a considerable amount of time to prepare their original information.

Their assume that target users include not

only patent specialists such as legal departments of large corporations or patent attorneys, but also small and medium-sized enterprises, and college and university students so that beginners' needs are well taken care of with pertinent and sufficient information. The frequency of updating varies depending on the part; some parts are updated from time to time, and others only once a year.

New concept of the website is also currently discussed, and they are now in the process of preparing a new one, which will be easier to see and use, toward sometime next year. Hot topics (latest news) will be so arranged as to be easier to find out, and search functions will be improved.

And for the convenience of frequent users, the revised parts will be specifically described in "Recent updates" in "News and updates".

One of the problems unique to the EPO is translation of information (three languages - English, French and German - are designated as official languages), and they are seeking to solve it in one way or another in the future.

Generally speaking, the users' responses to the current website are favorable. However, there is a tendency toward limited usage only by a specific range of users, and they think their future tasks will be to produce their website attracting new users. Like the USPTO website, they are considering an approach to youngsters so that children can familiarize themselves with intellectual property system.

② EPO Publications

Publication media are transforming from the currently used paper form to electronic media, and access to information will be made by not only personal computers, but also mobile phones.

Therefore, the concept of publication will have to change drastically.

(iii) German Patent and Trademark Office

① Website of German Patent and Trademark Office (*4)

For the current website, various departments are independently working on the contents, and therefore no uniformity is maintained within the website and among the contents, and the target users are not defined clearly.

Thus, from March 2001 the section called "Industrial Property Information for the Public, Supply of Literature (Schutzrechtsinformation für die Öffentlichkeit, Literaturversorgung)" will take responsibility of the website for uniformity of the website.

The current website is only offered in German, but they plan to add an English edition before the end of this year. The contents and scale of it are undetermined yet.

(*3) URL(<http://www.patent.gov.uk>)

(*4) URL(<http://www.dpma.de>)

They believe that it is important to raise the level of the nation's awareness of intellectual property, and along this line, students and the general public are part of the major target users of information dissemination.

In addition, they take for their target users those who have seldom made applications or who are supposed to make applications in the future, and attempt to offer to help them in their applications.

Targeting patent attorneys and specialists in the patent departments of enterprises, various information to satisfy their needs will be provided.

Among such targets users, the highest priority is given to beginners from now on, believing that the website is the best medium as it can disseminate information most widely.

② Publications

They offer textbooks for patent specialists, but not for the general public. Information for the general public may be offered in the form of brochures or the like.

Publications includes base data such as (a) bibliographic data, (b) patent specifications, (c) full texts in an electronic form and (d) legal data concerning the maintenance fee and procedures, and anybody can purchase them. Unlike the EPO that offers most of their data free of charge, there is a charge in German Patent and Trademark Office, partly due to government regulations. Certain private enterprises purchase these data, and work on them to sell in the form of CD-ROM, which the German Patent Office purchases and sends to patent offices of other countries.

They assume that in the future such data will be offered mainly through their website, and they decided to amend the patent law to allow electronic processing.

One of the future problems may be that, when the general public conducts prior art search, the search result could be unreliable.

As search specialists make searches for the present, the search results are highly reliable. However, it is anticipated that from now on the number of cases where searches are conducted without relying on search specialists will increase.

(iv) Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO)

① Website of Canadian Intellectual Property Office^(*5)

Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) They have made it their policy to publish basically all the information on their website, because it has the following advantages, (a) wider and easier access to information by users, (b) efficient use of the budget, (c) information offer to meet the different types of user demands, and (d) a new

way of attracting the attention of the users, etc. Especially as Canada is a large country in terms of area, there exist large gaps in information accessibility depending on the locality. They think that all such problems will be eliminated by the full use of their web site.

The CIPO opened the website in 1994, and then in summer 2000, started working on the renewal of the page design along with the increased volume and complication of information. The main aim of the design renewal was set at simplification, with a view to realizing easier and quicker access to the right location where the desired information is.

In the CIPO, there is Internet Advisory Committee consisting of 12 or so members chosen from each department. This committee is studying outside views to reflect them on the website, and at the same time gathering views from inside departments. Each department takes responsibility for the contents, but overall and eventual responsibility lies with Information Branch (IB), which coordinates projects, decide the contents and quality of information (in both English and French), updates the website and handles computer programming.

They check access to the website by category, instances of access amounting to 30 thousand a month in average excluding those to patent and trademarks databases. The access to the patent database amount to 40 to 50 thousand a month, while that to the trademark database is 30 to 40 thousand a month. To facilitate access to information on the website, the capacity of the server was enlarged with increased storage capability in cache memory, thus the second access and onward has been expedited avoiding access delay.

② Publications

Their publications are made according to the user needs and priority at the CIPO for publications, and Information Branch makes final decisions on the contents. Each department takes responsibility for the basic contents of the publications, but Information Branch is responsible for editorial and graphic works and overall expressions. IB also manages publication contracts. The contents are updated from time to time, once in every two years in average.

The target readers are set at small and medium-sized enterprises, inventors, researchers of colleges and universities and other people.

(v) US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

① Website of US Patent and Trademark Office^(*6)

All the information held by the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is published in

(*5) URL(<http://opic.go.ca>)

(*6) URL(<http://www.uspto.gov>)

principle on the website.

The website carries information not only for general users, but also for children such as educational games so that they may be interested in the patent system by means thereof or for students such as basic information designed for them, thus offering information to meet different user interests. Also special attention is paid to researchers of colleges and universities and small and medium-sized enterprises who have so far felt there has been little information satisfying their needs. While the majority of currently published information is rather for specialists, however, that for the general public is comparatively limited, so that the USPTO is now working on a long-term plan to enrich such information.

The organizations involved in the information service are departments related to Electronic Products and Public Services.

Each responsible department prepares information to be placed on the website, and in many cases examiners are invited to work together as specialists.

The USPTO opened the website in 1993, which carried at the early stage only the information on examination process and general information concerning the USPTO. Now in an attempt to comply with various user needs, their website has come to have so many indices and the contents have become complicated, just like the website of the JPO. To solve this problem, they have been studying for the past half-year what the users actually need and how the page design can be renewed. The key issue to the page design renewal is how easily desired information can be reached. To this end, the page design will be simplified and the number of indices will be drastically reduced, using more subtitles. They are listening to views from a wide range of users through "Feedback" on the website E-mail and the telephone.

Such website renewal requires a lot of time and efforts, and may cause some confusion on the part of users because of drastic changes in the page design and structure of the website. However, they think that it should be implemented soonest, in view of strong user demands. Specifically for those who have no legal backgrounds, the current website is hard to understand, and therefore they take into consideration the needs to change the page structures suited to satisfy every different type of user's need, after properly sorting and classifying such user's needs. They hope that these objectives will be accomplished within next year, but no official plan has been set yet partially due

to budget constraints.

② Publications

They issue a list of publications, and at the same time release it on the website.

Some of the publications such as the Annual Report are not free of charge, but general brochures are distributed free.

Most of the publications are mainly intended to facilitate examination procedure, such as patent classifications and guidebooks for patent search, and few are intended to the general public. Those publications are useful for those desiring to utilize the patent system and conducting patent search, and they are also accessible through the website.

Also, the USPTO have service rooms such as search room and libraries open to the public and being expanded. The library plan was started in 1986, and approximately 20 thousand documents and search programs are maintained.

(vi) Korean Intellectual Property Office

① Website of Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) ^(*7)

The contents of the website are examined by each department and handed over to the website team, after having been discussed and approved by the departments concerned. The team examines whether the contents are appropriate for publication on the website, and makes necessary corrections.

Their website was set up in December 1996. Various webpages have been set up on the website, for individuals or small and medium-sized enterprises and so on, meeting the needs of a wide variety of target users.

Quite many users desire to see the application procedures or examination status of their own applications more quickly through the Internet. Questions and requests may be written on the bulletin board within the website. Within 24 hours after a question is entered, an examiner or a staff member of the KIPO shall reply to it. The KIPO provide a unique service in which when entering the reply on the bulletin board, an e-mail is sent to the questioner telling that the reply was put on the bulletin board.

In the corner of "My patent?" they inform applicants of the examination status of their applications.

Specifications may be searched for at the site of Korea Industrial Property Information Service (KIPRIS)^(*8). At this site, searches can be made free of charge for each patent, utility model and design, each specification of which can be seen through a viewer of SGML format may be downloaded in a compressed file format.

The KIPO also has set up an electronic

(*7) URL(<http://www.kipo.go.kr>)

(*8) URL(<http://www.kipris.or.kr/>)

library which can be used at the Seoul Office and the main office in Daejeon.

At the present time, the webpages are described in Hangul, but in view of globalization and for the convenience of foreign users, they are contemplating conversion of all the contents into English.

② Publications

In principle, patent information (Annual Report, etc.) is disseminated free of charge. However, there are cases where patent or utility model gazettes are requested in a large quantity in the CD-ROM format and in such cases, the actual cost for producing CD-ROMs are charged. Gazettes were published in the book format until 1998, but now only published on CD-ROMs in the SGML format.

The Annual Report for domestic use (in Hangul) does not contain statistics, which is separately issued as Intellectual Property Statistical Report. The foreign-use version of the Annual Report (in English) contains statistics in the same issue, but in less detail than in the domestic version. Intellectual Property White Paper is published every year, which contains the information concerning the system, procedures and administrative services.

The targets of disseminated information are set at enterprises, research institutes, schools, and individuals, namely the nation as a whole, and dissemination is finely tuned to meet the level of needs of each segment.

For general use, a standard textbook for the industrial property rights is planned, and first such textbook will be issued this year for college and university students.

As the result of the KIPO's statistical data analysis, New Technology Trend Survey Report has been published and production of patent maps for 24 technical fields was carried out last year.

In this connection, at the end of last year, the information-processing program for automatic production of patent maps (patent information analysis system) was completed and explained at meetings. Enterprises, research institutes, schools and individuals may retrieve and download the program from the website free of charge.

The future issuance of gazettes through the Internet is in preparation. A new push mail service is also under consideration, whereby an enterprise submits in advance a request for information concerning, for example, "a ballpoint pen", then every time a new gazette is published, parts concerning the invention related to requested information "a ballpoint pen" are extracted therefrom and sent out to the enterprise.

③ Others

They have established patent information support centers in 15 local regions to provide patent information, reply to the inquiries from users and hold remote training sessions with images.

Designated 51 colleges and universities constitute a patent network and act as local bases for patent information dissemination. Korea also has a problem that the results of research at colleges and universities have not been well converted into patent rights, nor spread for wide utilization. So, the enterprises are encouraged to obtain a patent right especially if an excellent art is derived from colleges or universities.

Other services offered directly by the KIPO include intellectual property seminars and training sessions for small and medium-sized enterprises and individuals. They also carry out on their own, or indirectly through entrusted local centers, free on-site training sessions on the user premises to teach how to conduct electronic filings and how to conduct searches, etc. Up until recently the KIPO had held a passive attitude, waiting for users to approach, but now is turning into a new positive stance, making approaches to users to spread intellectual property knowledge more widely. The push mail service is one of the typical examples.

For information exchange with other countries concerning patent information dissemination, they are now negotiating with the JPO about exchanging priority certificate documents as electronic data. If they succeed in constructing such a system with Japan, they seem to plan to proceed further to work with the USPTO and EPO.

(2) Requests to JPO

Described below are the major requests made by patent practitioners or researchers of other countries to the JPO:

Information concerning court decisions such as those of infringement lawsuits is important for practical work. Recently many important court decisions are rendered in Japan. It would be very useful if representative decisions such as those by the Supreme Court of Japan were translated into English and made public on the website of the JPO. Even summaries would be useful.

· English versions of Japanese laws, rules, guidelines, manuals and examination status of applications (latest information) should be very valuable for practical business use. As to information concerning system revision, it would be useful, if information concerning the past amendment were also included and it were made clear which amendment applies to which applications filed when.

· In foreign countries it is hard to obtain various

publications issued by the Japanese government, and therefore, if even only the data contained in them were made available at the website, it would be useful. When a book is published, a web-version thereof is desired on the website in the PDF format.

- Information concerning business model patents, which are a current hot topic, statistics information and information concerning trends in enterprisers would also be useful.

- Most information is now available on the website, but the large volume of information sometimes makes it difficult to obtain desired information. If information on what is available on the website is provided in paper medium, it would be useful.

- Whereas they often visit IPDL, but they are aware of the problem that a search result is indicated only in the number. If the title were also displayed as in the case of the CIPO or USPTO, it would be useful when screening the search result. Also to solve the problem of time-consuming access, it is suggested that mirror sites be set up.

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