

Minutes of PatCom /UK IPO Meeting in Newport 6/10/10

Introductions:

Present from UK IPO:

Andy Bartlett – Deputy Director of Patents (Classifications, Vancouver Group)

Graeme Jarman – Head of Business IT Change

Geoff Court – Admin Support

Steve Chadwell- Commercial services

Peter ??IT Services , patent policy, EPO relationships.

Sean Dennehey – Assistant Comptroller, Director of Patents

Present from PatCom:

Rob Willows (Thomson Reuters,Chair)

Jurjen Dijkstra (LNU)

Ann Chapman (Minesoft)

Rahman Hyatt (Minesoft)

Jane List (Dialog)

UK IPO were very welcoming, but clearly some of their initiatives are on hold, due to change of government and budgetary reviews.

Some main action points for PatCom:

- Many of the initiatives undertaken by individual offices (including UK) are funded / supported by WIPO. This leaves the position unclear as to the ownership, and therefore the ability to license, the resulting data. PatCom should seek to clarify this with WIPO.
- Set up a technical call with UKIPO during the next 6 months (or meet with their technical folk at EPOP technical meeting.).

- Monitor the situation with regard to UK Office being able to offer file history data, at the moment it is not possible because of privacy of information regulations in the UK. The private data is integrated with the public data so this is a real problem for them in the way it was originally stored.

General notes:

Sean Dennehey gave an introduction:

USPTO has a good relationship with UKIPO. USPTO Director Dave Kappos spoke to Lady Wilcox, new UK Minister and Spokesperson for IPO (Wilcox is showing interest and understanding of IP.) Kappos is regarded as a thought leader, good for change in IP world. GB needs reform of copyright, FOI to allow information to be made available, for GB file histories. In file histories, private information is mixed in with technical information.

Machine translation:

Crown Copyright issue – UK Law would need to be changed by Statute to enable the machine translation ambitions of EPO or WIPO to go ahead, so it is not going to be resolved quickly (apparently). There is Crown Copyright in patent data but it is currently not exercised.

Sean represents the UK IPO on the EPO TOSC (The Technical and Operational Support Committee) and felt EPO should take responsibility for distributing all the rights to use dictionaries, no office should have a monopoly.

UK IPO IS strategy

TM 10 programme, TM are modernising first. IT resources are an issue. TM register and bibliographic info on mainframe (Fujitsu). UK IPO interested to learn from others on effecting change from mainframe to server based system, or cloud. IT services operated on contract (Xerox). Reviewing with stakeholders, hold workshops, what should they do. Patcom may participate in one of these sessions.

They had been given a budget and said though budgets are under review, this is something that has to happen and they expect to have the go-ahead for the next 24 months but overall budgets are under review (awaiting UK Budget decisions made by Government in Spending Review for country).

Overall, they say they will have less resources and money than before but the intention is to get off the mainframe in the next 2-3 years so by end 2013.

They develop their own software but outsource mainframe services currently. First to move over will be Trade Marks, then Patents & Designs. When they re-design in a web environment, they will plan in viewing of documents and navigation around the site so it will be completely re-vamped.

56% of patent filings at GB are electronic, 60% of search requests and 56% of examination requests. 25% of applications are from unrepresented inventors. Epoline and smartcard are both alternative methods of filing, good for minimising downtime.

UK IPO said online file inspection is one of 6 top priorities, but data protection issues are holding this back (see earlier comments). Electronic cases were introduced 2006.

Patent filings not adversely affected by economic downturn, they have noticed a 6% decrease in filings but considering the state of the economy this was felt to be relatively light as an overall decrease. They remarked that patenting business appears relatively recession-proof (as opposed to trade marks, where they have seen more effect overall with a 20% approx decrease in filings).

They had just added RSS capability to their website (confirmed in later email).

Vancouver Group (Oz, CA, UK initially, maybe others later!)

Share Best practice - Sharing of search and examination results was discussed, and is now being facilitated by WIPO, for infrastructure assistance, and so that WIPO can have access to programme also. They mentioned WIPO may develop and host it.

- Upload search and examination reports to share with other offices
- Act as a hub / portal to use as an online inspection data source
- Software to be shipped by WIPO early 2011
- To make available to Vancouver Group PTO's
- Idea is that once tested, other offices can use system to take data and ultimately upload their own
- CASE – Centralised Access to Search & Examination data – CASE is post publication date
- Prototype – examiners can search for equivalents and download it if available. MT tool will be added.
- WIPO paid for the development
- There may eventually be some pre-pub data included but this is a security issue
- EPO is interested in pre-pub citation data: e.g. search & examination reports.

Electronic publication: Archive no longer on paper

Changing biblio to an XML feed in agreement with EPO, all data feeds to be ST36 by 2012

They asked us about the impact of apps filed in colour. UK IPO currently publishes in b/w only.

National phase PCT has to be re-published so UK IPO will have to do this (PCT apps filing in colour – they asked us about the impact for us, we all said no problem envisaged if they publish in colour).

Strategic plans for the future:

Electronic filing

Full text at point of filing

OCR capture of full-text - budget not available at present but long term desirability

Licensing of data – Need to assess budget cuts/ impact and there will be a review. However in favour of data being freely available so specialised services can be provided by a thriving commercial sector.

Date for next meeting:

This was left open, but Sean stated that once a year should be the minimum frequency for our meetings, and he would be will to meet more frequently as and when both sides thought it was appropriate.