UKIPO PatCom 2020 Meeting Minutes

Location and date of meeting: Virtual Meeting held on 14 September 2020

1. Chris Harrison (CH) welcomed PatCom to the virtual meeting.   New attendees were present from UKIPO and PatCom, so everyone introduced themselves.

2. The agenda was approved. (*See below*).

3. Impact of COVID restrictions on UKIPO operations (CH / GH)
   The UKIPO went into 'lockdown' mid-March and continues to provide services with the vast majority of staff working from home. Only essential functions which really need to take place at the office do so, e.g. post opening and distribution, printing items.
   There is no target date for staff to return to the office, and this is unlikely to happen before 2021. Electronic and remote working has led to improved productivity for patent and trademark examination. However, some support services which were more paper based have been slower than usual. The UKIPO are establishing electronic processes as far as possible and these should be in place by the end of September. COVID has accelerated the adoption towards electronic handling of all IP registrations at the UKIPO.

   Recruiting and training new staff when everyone is working remotely is more of a challenge.   Lack of availability of childcare has also had an impact on productivity

   Interrupted Days
   The office declared a 'Period of Interrupted Days' from 24 March 2020 to 29 July 2020, this allowed for an automatic extension of deadlines by 24 hours relating to all IP processes.
   https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-important-update-on-ipo-services

   Number of Applications (designs, trademarks and patents)
   After an initial slump in applications, the volume of trademark applications increased by 20% in 2020 to date.   This could be due to Brexit and applicants double filing at UKIPO and EUIPO (see 9.) , but many of the new applications are from single person or very small companies, other reasons could be change in business practices, and catching up with delayed filings. Patent applications are down slightly possibly due to a reduction in R&D whilst organisations were in lockdown.
   CH provided the link for the minutes to UKIPO monthly statistics:
   https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/patents-trade-marks-and-designs-monthly-statistics
   giving the latest information on UKIPO application and registration counts for patents, trademarks, and designs.

4. **Update on UKIPO data and patent analytics projects. (JD/ GH / SO/ CH)**
   Data
   Julie heads a new data team who are supporting the Transformation programme at the UKIPO.   The data team needs additional staff, and is currently using contractors to fulfil the work. The transformation project encompasses data governance, meta data, and long term UKIPO goals for the provision of management information and business intelligence. An initial Proof of Concept will review tools to support these goals in 2021. The Proof of Concept stage will be used to get feedback from internal users on the type of information which will be useful. The PoC is aiming to offer data above simple 'counting' to more detailed analysis, as indicated in the draft strategy. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the need for information.
   A scanning and OCR programme at the UKIPO aims to improve data quality. The team are making

quality improvements beyond text, and are taking a strategic approach. Changes are no longer made on an ad-hoc basis, but must be assessed, based on metrics, and validation of the proposed changes to ensure quality digital files are created.

The UKIPO participates in an EPO working group on data quality for full text patents, a single meeting was held before lock-down, which reviewed full text quality.

The new IPO monthly statistics provides the latest information on UKIPO application and registration counts for patents, trademarks, and designs.

Analytics

Chris reported that the IPO have published a number of reports based on analytics of IPO data. Links to the reports were shared in the meeting and are reproduced below:

- Gender profiles in worldwide patenting: An analysis of female inventorship (2019 edition)
- IP filing habits of UK Higher Education Institutions
- Use of Intellectual Property rights across UK industries
- AI-assisted patent prior art searching – feasibility study (on a separate note, a paper relating to this for the WPI journal has also been submitted)

Two analytics projects which are in process at the UKIPO were introduced, 1) AI for processing IPRs and 2) AI for patent examination.

In more detail:

The AI for processing IPRs project is implementing a TM images search capability for pre-filing "knock out" searches. This is available for testing now. It will also help TM filers find NICE classes.

Stephen Otter introduced the AI for patent examiners project. The UKIPO, and other national offices are collaborating with the EPO to develop the next generation search tool for examiners. Harmonising tools and ensuring quality and consistency are important goals in the project, offices are providing input which will guide the development of the AI-enabled, interactive search tool.

The AI works well for some domains, but all languages and all technical areas will be addressed with different emphasis. The AI improves based on examiner relevance selections which are stored and accessed to build connections in the neural network.

5. **Access to UKIPO data for commercial sector e.g. legal status, full text data, sequence listings (CH)**
   The UKIPO are aware there have been delays in providing access to the ftp site for new users from the commercial sector, and they are working to improve timeliness. This is another service which will be improved through the 'Transformation' project, currently there is a shortage of people in the IT resources. The UKIPO are considering adding API access as an interim solution whilst the Transformation project is on-going.
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   Q: are sequence listings published for GB patents
   The UKIPO do not currently publish sequence listings for GB patents, although providing this data is something that we are working on as part of our wider Transformation project which is looking at all UKIPO services, both internal and external. Providing this data is something that will come out of this Transformation project, or possibly earlier through adoption of the new ST.26 WIPO standard which the UKIPO plan to adopt. St.26 comes into force in January 2022.

   Action: UKIPO to follow up with a contact name for PatCom data queries.

6. **Liaison** with other UK government departments, e.g. companies' house. Use of data.
   UKIPO is part of BEIS department as is UKRI, the departments collaborate. The UKIPO provides patent analytics for the various departments (see links provided). IP Policy work is outsourced.
   UKIPO does not use companies house data to verify IPR applicant names. Facilitating applicants themselves to do so may be feasible in transformation.

7. **UKIPO Cooperations with WIPO**

UKIPO has an attaché in Geneva who works closely with WIPO. In 2019 the focus was on AI. Julie leads the UKIPO involvement with the legal status, and other standards setting task forces at WIPO.

8. **UKIPO Cooperations** with other offices. OECD, Vancouver Group, (VG = UKIPO, Canada, Australia). The Vancouver group cooperate and share best practice in patent examination. The offices are a similar size. The search group was established in 2017 to focus on quality, search tools, and training for examiners. Training provided is legal, technical and search focussed. The offices do trials where each search the same application and then review findings and methods.
Chris takes part in the OECD bi-annual IP statistics meetings.

9. **Brexit** preparations and implications for IPRs and IP information
The UKIPO has mirrored the EUIPO register. All EUIPO registered trademarks are automatically in force in the UK until the next renewal. The applicant must then choose to renew in UK if desired.
PatCom requested sample data files for the upcoming EUIPO CTMs and RCDs that will transition over to national UK rights on 1 January 2021.
PatCom asked for a direct contact at UKIPO for any and all questions relating to TM and RCD transition. It is vital that the commercial provides are aware of all changes to XML and are able to view schema and sample data in plenty of time to implement changes.

Contact provided after the meeting:
Lucy Mills (Lucy.Mills@ipo.gov.uk) a Senior Project Owner on our Brexit and Transformation projects is a contact point going forwards for PatCom members with any questions for the UKIPO relating to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Lucy will confirm be in communications with those who receive UKIPO data already regarding EUIPO data transition to national UK rights from 1 January 2021.

10. **The 2021 meeting**
will be scheduled for September or October, hopefully in person in Newport.

Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Impact of COVID restrictions on UKIPO operations
4. Update on UKIPO Data and Patent analytics Projects
5. Access to UKIPO data for commercial sector e.g. legal status, full text data
6. Liaison with other UK government departments e.g. companies' house. Use of data.
7. UKIPO Cooperations with WIPO
8. UKIPO cooperations with other offices. E.g. Canada, Australia.
9. Brexit preparations and implications for IPRs and IP information.
10. Date of next meeting in 2021.

Attendees:

UKIPO
Glyn Hughes, Head of Business Intelligence (GH)
Chris Harrison, Head of IP Analytics and Data Science (CH)
Julie Daltrey, Senior Data Architect (JD)
Stephen Otter, Head Internal IP Search Tools (SO)
Chris Evans, Technical Design (CE)

PatCom
Ann Chapman, Minesoft, President
Jurjen Dijkstra, LexisNexis Univentio
Armin Foerderer, FIZ Karlsruhe
Paul Peters, CAS
Felix Coxwell, Questel
Rob Adams, Clarivate Analytics.
Lee Smith, RWS.
Margit Hoehne, PatentGate.
Jane List, Extract Information, Secretary

Jane List, Secretary, PatCom, Cambridgeshire 30 September 2020.