



President's Report June 24, 2020

Meetings held in the 2019-2020 year include WIPO, EPO, INPI, UKIPO, OEPM as well as the regular Executive Committee and occasional management/administrative meetings. Appreciation for the smooth organisation of the meetings and the group correspondence are due to the PatCom Secretary, Jane List and to Treasurer Armin Foederer for their generous time and effort without which the smooth running of PatCom, the overall administration and the payment of accounts, would not be possible. We give a very special vote of thanks to Armin today, as he is about to stand down from the Treasurer role after several years and pass the baton on to Jurjen Djistra. And we welcome Jurjen to the management team as well as thanking him and all Exco members for their work this past year.

All meetings ran successfully with engaging discussions and were well received by the PTO's, who have commented on the smooth running and positive talks / relationships created. Thank you to everyone for the contributions made and issues raised at the various meetings. A good, representative attendance at the meetings is essential and does make a difference, especially when the PTO's go to the trouble of creating presentations and bringing several staff in for us.

We were very happy to rekindle the UKIPO relationship and what a shame the 2020 meeting was cancelled in early Covid lockdown. We will try for a virtual meeting in Autumn, it was not possible for UKIPO initially but hopefully we can reschedule and if not, meet again in April 2021.

The DPMA invites PatCom member companies to their new User Forum (Nutzerforum), however it does not offer us the same level of engagement as a separate PatCom meeting. Minesoft and FIZ attended in 2019 but the 2020 meeting scheduled for March (I had registered) was cancelled.

Since the last AGM, the new Espacenet platform has been launched with more advanced functionality and the EPO is now offering searchable full text. This is a threat to commercial services as Espacenet is a very widely accessed free of

cost search platform for patent information from the Public sector and this is a major step beyond their previous offering. We will see how this affects the industry in the coming few years as they add further collections and translations.

WIPO continues to add full text without a robust delivery service for the commercial sector, although there may be changes in future with API provision of data either from WIPO or possibly from other PTOs direct – this is an area we will monitor and I just received a positive email from WIPO about the role 3rd party companies play in the dissemination of patent information.

What scenario are we looking at for 2020/2021 and beyond?

Blockchain in IP continues to be a theme, with the upcoming WIPO virtual meeting on this topic that we have been invited to attend. The area of IP ownership, authentication, certification, security of IPR etc are all interesting areas in patent management and patent landscaping. Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies for management of IP as well as analytics and areas like classification seem to be of wide interest.

IP perspectives in 2020 include patent translating and AI is featuring here too, with Machine Translation & Machine Learning tools within this group. Technology benchmarking, clustering, qualitative and quantitative patent data analysis are being talked about, all of these are issues for PatCom and the high level of interest in patent data is a good omen. Not only in patents, but also Trademarks and Designs, as we see from WIPO initiatives in these fields too, such as automated translation tools. The impact of AI on Patent Law framework itself is a current topic, with decisions being made that will impact what can (and cannot) be patented. Blockchain will be another area to watch for legal implications.

Overall, the future looks bright for PatCom companies and COVID-19 has directed a spotlight on the incredible importance of global R&D and subsequent knowledge sharing. Not only with regards to drugs and treatments that can alleviate symptoms but also in the Tech side of medical aids and equipment. An article (an obituary) in The Times very recently caught my attention and we published a short blog post at Minesoft. George Weisz, father of British actress Rachel Weisz (married to current James Bond...) was a lifelong inventor in mechanical engineering technology who emigrated to the UK. He holds original patents for ventilation that form the basis of UK Hospital ICU

equipment used for Covid patients. Caught my eye! It is good to see inventors and pharma being talked about (positively) in the press regularly for their intensive efforts to find a vaccine or drug treatments for the fight against Covid – a vindication for huge R&D budget expenditures and science programmes.

Digital technology also took a hot spot in the EPO statistics published literally at lockdown – on 12th March 2020. This bears a relationship perhaps to the future Digital Economy, Smart Cities, etc – there is no escaping technology - good news as patents will need to be filed and new standards agreed. The Environment sector adds further fuel to IP overall.

Finally, I noticed the increasing co-operation between IPO's, in knowledge sharing, working groups and patent examination. This is often mentioned in the meetings we have with IPOs and seems to be increasing as a trend to reduce their costs. IP is in globalisation mode, this should be good for us and PatCom may be able to increase its exposure within some PTO working groups, since our own co-operative approach is also viewed positively.

There is plenty of opportunity to look forward to in 2020/2021.

Thank you all for your contributions!

Ann Chapman-Daniel