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Changes to the Duties of Disclosure and Implications of Using the Global Dossier

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Global Dossier

The Global Dossier is a set of business services that give users/stakeholders secure, online, one-stop access to and management of dossier information of all applications that comprise a family and that have been filed in multiple patent offices by establishing a common user interface to each patent office's electronic dossier system. However, the Global Dossier is not a single IT application or system. Rather, it can be viewed as a collection of services designed to meet the business needs of multiple users/stakeholders of the patent systems of the IP5 Patent Offices. The IP5 represents the five largest patent offices in the world – European Patent Office (EPO), Japan Patent Office (JPO), Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China (SIPO), and the USPTO.

The information available via Global Dossier includes searching and examination results. USPTO examiners received access to the IP5 dossier information as part of the Patent End to End (PE2E) rollout beginning in the spring of 2015. Such information allows examiners to build on the results from the partnering IP5 Patent Offices to help strengthen the patent record as well as assist in improving overall examination quality.

Global Dossier was released for public access in November 2015, providing stakeholders with the ability to access the full file history information on a patent application family from all participating IP5 Patent Offices. It benefits external stakeholders and the user community as a whole by providing the ability to track and manage related applications across the five IP5 Patent Offices. It will arguably also make it easier and less costly for users to perform functions associated with due diligence, technology transfer, litigation and appeal processes.

The USPTO provides its data to the other IP5 Offices Global Dossiers (each office has its own interface in the language and format familiar to their users. In FY 2016, the USPTO received over 2.4 million requests for data from examiners in the other IP5 Offices.

So that dossier information can be provided to the general public and USPTO examiners on a regular and daily basis seven days a week, the USPTO is continuing to work with and encourage all IP5 Offices to increase the days and hours of availability to their own dossier information.

A Global Dossier Task Force (GDTF) was created in 2013 to assist with defining Global Dossier business requirements and to work together with users. The GDTF includes representatives from the IP5 Offices, WIPO, and IP5 Industry Groups: the American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA), Business Europe (BE), International Property Owners Association (IPO), Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA), Korea Intellectual Property Association (KINPA), and Patent Protection Association of China (PPAC).

As a result of the GDTF discussions, the IP5 agreed that each Office would define the scope of a particular short-term/high-priority goal that the industry groups identified, as follows:

- USPTO – "Document Sharing (Proof-of-Concept for Inter-Office Exchange)" –sharing documents between offices, including for example, supporting documents for other initiatives, e.g., PPH, CSP, etc., prior art exchanges, and bib data updates. This is viewed as a first step towards cross-filing.
- EPO – "Alerting" – An automated mechanism whereby each office alerts all the other offices, and applicants and their representatives, of changes in status to the application.
- JPO – "XML" – Enabling each office, and possibly applicants and their representatives, to download all application-related data from applications pending in other offices, in XML format
- KIPO – "Applicant Name Standardization" – An automated mechanism that will assign a single unique name to entities with applications pending in multiple offices, including in instances where those entities may have used multiple names, or variations of a single name, to identify themselves.
- SIPO -- "Legal Status" – A mechanism to allow one office to view the legal status of an application in another office.

The USPTO's current action plan for Document Sharing includes demonstrating a functional document sharing solution, collaborating further with all IP5 office partners, establishing standards for document transition and sharing, and investigating the potential of incorporating other Global Dossier short-term goals.

This functionality will allow the sharing of documents and information between the IP5 Patent Offices, including, for example, supporting documents for other initiatives, e.g., Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH), Collaborative Search Pilot Program (CSP), prior art exchanges, etc. This proof of concept is viewed as a first step toward cross-filing among offices. The USPTO has been working closely with stakeholders and the user community on Document Sharing to better understand the functionality and systems that would deliver the greatest benefit to its users. Eliminating certain administrative tasks will alleviate the burden on offices and users.

In addition to working on Document Sharing, the USPTO continues to enhance Global Dossier functionality and services. In July 2016, updates included enhancing the Office Action indicator to show the number of actions available, providing additional alerts regarding availability of the IP5 Offices' dossier systems, and providing users with greater sorting abilities. In December 2016, the USPTO linked Global Dossier to WIPO CASE, providing access to the dossiers of additional Offices.

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