W I P O

MINUTES
STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTATION WORKING GROUP
ST.36 TASK FORCE INFORMAL MEETING
Geneva, November 20, 2008

INTRODUCTION

1.   The ST.36 Task Force held its informal meeting during the week of the tenth session of the SDWG on November 20, 2008, at WIPO premises. Delegations from 15 industrial property offices (IPOs) participated in the meeting. The participant list and the adopted meeting agenda are attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this document, respectively.

DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT

2.   The discussion started by reviewing items in the Action Plan of the previous meeting's minutes. There were five items in the Action Plan from the previous meeting and all items had been completed with the exception of the consideration of the recommendation from the Citation Practices Task Force (see Item 4, below).

Item 3: Discussion on the pending PFRs (Proposals For Revision)

3.   The following pending PFRs were discussed:

    (a)   PFR ST.36/2008/002 regarding "second last name"
    (b)   PFR ST.36/2008/005 regarding "earlier search request"
    (c)   PFR ST.36/2008/007 regarding "e-mail"

4.   With regard to PFR ST.36/2008/002, the participants agreed on the addition of the element "first-last-name" as well as "second-last-name" as proposed by the European Patent Office (EPO).

5.   With respect to PFR ST.36/2008/005, the participants also agreed on the change of the element name of "earlier-search" to "srep-earlier-search". The revision to the original PFR is related to an inconsistency in the naming of elements that are sub-elements of the element srep-for-pub. as proposed by the EPO. The representative of the EPO said that the change of existing element name should be carefully dealt with because making the change could lead to backward compatibility problems. According to the EPO's observation, no IPO uses the element at this moment. Thus, the participants expressed the expectation that the change would not cause any backward compatibility problems and thus agreed on the EPO's proposal.

6.   In relation to PFR ST.36/2008/007, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) had previously objected because the USPTO felt that the PFR was not compliant with the PCT Rules. After communication between the USPTO and the International Bureau (IB) prior to the meeting, the USPTO withdrew its objection to the PFR. Therefore, the participants agreed on the PFR as proposed.

7.   The revised PFRs ST.36/2008/002 and ST.36/2008/005 are available on the ST.36 Task Force website at: http://www.wipo.int/scit/en/taskfrce/st36/background.htm. After adoption of the minutes, the revised PFRs will be available on the PFR website at: http://www.wipo.int/scit/en/taskfrce/st36/pfr-intro.html and be circulated to the ST.36 Task Force members for their consideration and approval.

Item 4: Discussion on the recommendation by the Citation Practices Task Force

8.   The participants reviewed comments made by the Task Force members regarding the recommendation by the Citation Practices Task Force.

9.   With regard to the importance of the consistency of numbering parts of patent documents and importance of minimizing long paragraphs, in relation to the current WIPO Standard ST.36, the participants thought that the Task Force could take no further action to support the requests or recommendation by Citation Practices Task Force.

10.   Although the WIPO Standard ST.36 ICEs contain the necessary elements to identify different parts of a patent document, e.g., paragraph numbering tags, there are no best practice guidelines or tools (such as style sheets) to apply the elements in a consistent way to patent documents. The said best practice guidelines could include, for example, recommendations for implementation of paragraph numbering, long paragraphs, and how documents should be rendered consistently. Such guidelines would be of benefit to optimize consistent rendering of documents across different formats of a single patent document (e.g. html, xml, or PDF) as well as across different IPO and commercial provider publication platforms. It was noted that, a single patent document could potentially be rendered quite differently with different paragraph numbers depending on where and how the document is rendered. This issue is particularly prevalent for patent applications filed electronically. Consistent rendering of documents, can optimize the creation and retrieval of unambiguous citation references that are stable over time.

11.   With regard to XML tagging for Maths and Tables, the relevant elements already exist in WIPO Standard ST.36. No agreement on chemistry standard within the W3C has been reached. Therefore, it was agreed that the addition of a chemistry standard to WIPO Standard ST.36 should be postponed until the W3C standard for chemistry was ready.

12.   Regarding further XML tags to aid the creation of citation references, such as "example", the participants noted that the different XML tagging for citation references were available and had already been implemented by some IPOs.

13.   It was agreed that the ST.36 Task Force would prepare draft notes containing the above-mentioned comments raised during the discussion about the recommendations by the Citation Practices Task Force stated in paragraph 12 of document SCIT/SDWG/9/3, as well as any other further contributions that might be added when discussing the draft in the ST.36 Task Force e-forum. Then the ST.36 Task Force would invite the Citation Practices Task Force to review the said draft notes, which, subsequently, should be included in the progress report to be presented by the ST.36 Task Force for consideration by the SDWG at its eleventh session. It was also agreed that the ST.36 Task Force should invite the SDWG to consider whether there was a need for guidelines that should be followed in order to uniquely identify the different parts of a patent document across different publication platforms. The ST.36 Task

Force should also invite the SDWG to consider whether a new task for the preparation of the said guidelines should be added to the SDWG Task List.

Item 5: Discussion on the new versions of industry standard DTDs

14.   A survey on using XML tagging for non-text elements had been conducted within the Task Force. Seven IPOs, AU, CH, DK, EP, JP, KR, and RU, replied to the survey questionnaire. According to the survey, most of the IPOs are using the versions of industry standard DTDs (Document Type Definition) which are recommended in WIPO Standard ST.36. Thus, participants agreed that WIPO Standard ST.36 did not need to be revised to reflect the new version of industry standard DTDs at this moment because IPOs were not currently in a position to change or update their practices. This issue would be revisited later.

15.   The Task Force should be invited to review the agreement and report the Task Force's final decision to the SDWG at its eleventh session in 2009.

Item 6: Consideration of using the element *amended-claims* in *wo-ocr-published-aplication.dtd*

16.   An issue was distributed in relation to wo-ocr-published-application.dtd which uses a structure for the element *amended-claims* that is different from that specified in WIPO Standard ST.36. This DTD produced by WIPO has been already in production use, and ideally should comply with WIPO Standard ST.36. The background document of this issue is available on the ST.36 Task Force website at: http://www.wipo.int/scit/en/taskfrce/st36/background.htm.

17.   The observation leading to this discussion was not generated as the result of any particular problem. Thus, the DTD could be changed at a time convenient to the IB. The participants, however, urged the IB to address this matter sooner rather than later, as fewer IPOs would be impacted by the resultant change. The participants requested that the IB, first, to add a comment regarding the non-compliance with WIPO Standard ST.36 in the DTD, and then later, at a convenient time, change the DTD.

18.   During the discussion, a quick survey was conducted to know how many, or which, IPOs are using the DTD. According to the survey, AT, AU, KR and US do not use it, and JP and EP use it. The EPO stated that the EPO would have no problem with the change in format because it converts data using the DTD produced by the IB into their own format.

Item 7: Introduction to the new provisional e-forum facility, i.e., WIKI, established by the International Bureau

19.   The IB made a presentation on the new provisional e-forum platform, i.e., WIKI Confluence that would replace the current email-based e-forum platform. According to the request by the XML4IP Task Force, the IB has established a new platform. The IB expected that the WIKI Confluence would provide better accessibility and more interactive communication among members than the current email-based platform.

20.   It was agreed that the WIKI Confluence would be trialed by the four Task Forces dealing with XML-related WIPO Standards, i.e., the ST.36, ST.66, ST.86 and XML4IP Task Forces as pilot users. According to the agreement, the IB would set up a trial single Space for the four Task Forces. It was agreed that a member who has membership in one of the four Task Forces could participate in the discussions of the four Task Forces. If the trial does not work, it may be necessary to revert to the original plan of setting up four Spaces, one for each of the XML Task Forces.

21.   The participants noted that an individual ID and initial password would be given by the IB to the members. The format of the ID would be composed of "xx(ST.3 code)-initial letter of first name and last name(first last name, if there are two last names)". It will be recommended to edit My Profile to change the initial password and a profile picture when members receive a notification by the IB.

22.   The IB said that the WIKI Confluence might be ready for Task Force members to use in December 2008 or January 2009. A series of test emails would first be conducted. Then if successful and the Task Forces are using the WIKI Confluence, the current email-based platform would no longer be available and the WIKI Confluence would be the authentic version.

Item 8: Others

(a) Discussion on the proposals made by the EPO

23.   The EPO made a presentation regarding "Search Report Database Management System" which included mapping tags to existing places in a real system.

24.   The EPO briefed the 17 proposals that it submitted on October 21, 2008 to discuss at the informal meeting before preparing PFRs for WIPO Standard ST.36. The list of proposals is available on the ST.36 Task Force website at: http://www.wipo.int/scit/en/taskfrce/st36/background.htm. The participants noted as follows:

    (a) the EPO dropped the first proposal, i.e., changing the order of sub-elements of the element *classification-ipcr*, because the element is already widely used by IPOs;

    (b) the proposals which are related to search report would be handled separately later by the EPO and the IB;

    (c) in item 6, for the optional a new element *formula-text,* it could be useful to add simple maths inline formula such as 2x2=4 instead of MathML, since inline formulae cost less to produce;

    (d) in item 7, the EPO prefers to include descriptions such as "amended-claims" within the tags rather than leave it to style sheets; and

    (e) for items 12-14 used only by the EPO should have a different order for ease of use. But as no others appear to use the codes, there would be no backward compatibility issues. The EPO would drop the requests if anyone is using the elements and raises a problem during the PFR/PFC process.

25.   The participants noted that the EPO would provide individual PFRs/PFCs corresponding to each proposal. The Task Force would be invited to review and approve them.

(b) Presentation by the International Bureau

26.   The IB made a presentation on the Search Report DTD and considerations affecting the development of style sheets in the context of the various search and examination reports that are used in the PCT process. The IB had been investigating the ability of the Search Report DTD to satisfy the requirements of the new supplementary international search report form 501. The IB had generated a sample XML instance from the DTD and is in the process of making the reconciliation of the data elements available in the XML instance and the layout of the physical form through the creation of a style sheet. The EPO and JPO are also both working on related issues and it is expected that there would be a number of significant PFRs and PFCs in the coming months, which will need to be aligned with the ST.36 ICEs. The given presentation is available on the ST.36 Task Force website at: http://www.wipo.int/scit/en/taskfrce/st36/background.htm.

ACTION PLAN

  1. The ST.36 Task Force members to be invited to review and adopt the revised PFRs ST.36/2008/002 and ST.36/2008/005 *(see paragraph 7, above)*;

  2. The ST.36 Task Force to prepare draft observation notes about the recommendations by the Citation Practices Task Force which will be presented at the SDWG eleventh session for its consideration. The Citation Practices Task Force to be invited to review the said draft notes before consideration by the SDWG. The ST.36 Task Force also to invite the SDWG to consider the need of the said best practice guidelines and the creation of a new task for the preparation of the said guidelines *(see paragraphs 9 to 13, above)*;

  3. The Task Force to be invited to review the agreement on the introduction of new versions of industry standard DTDs and report the Task Force's final decision to the SDWG at its eleventh session in 2009 *(see paragraph 15, above)*;

  4. The Task Force Leader to convey the request to the IB regarding the element *amended-claims* in *wo-ocr-published-aplication.dtd (see paragraph 17, above)*;

  5. The IB to set up a trial single Space for four Task Forces dealing with the XML-related WIPO Standards *(see paragraph 20, above)*; and

  6. The EPO to provide individual PFRs/PFCs corresponding to each proposal and the Task Force members to be invited to review and approve them *(see paragraph 25, above)*.

[Appendix 1 follows]

Appendix 1

W I P O

STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTATION WORKING GROUP

ST.36 TASK FORCE INFORMAL MEETING

Geneva, November 20, 2008

Agenda (adopted)

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Adoption of the proposed agenda

3. Discussion on the pending PFRs (Proposals For Revision)
    Further information is available at
    http://www.wipo.int/scit/en/taskfrce/st36/pfr-files.html

    (a)   PFR ST.36/2008/002 regarding "second last name"

    (b)   PFR ST.36/2008/005 regarding "earlier search request" related to
          PCT/EF/PFC_08/003

    (c)   PFR ST.36/2008/007 regarding "e-mail" related to PCT/EF/PFC_08/006

4. Discussion on the recommendation by the Citation Practices Task Force
    See document SCIT/SDWG/9/12, paragraphs 20 and 35.

5. Discussion on the new versions of industry standard DTDs such as mathml2.dtd
    See document SCIT/SDWG/10/5, paragraph 21.

    (a)   Review of the survey on XML Tagging for non-text elements in patent documents
          by industrial property offices

    (b)   Consideration of revision of WIPO Standard ST.36 (main body,
          Annexes A and C)

6. Consideration of using the element *amended-claims*
    in *wo-ocr-published-aplication.dtd*

7. Introduction to the new provisional e-forum facility, i.e., WIKI,
    established by the International Bureau

8. Others

    (a) Discussion on the proposals made by the EPO
    (b) Presentation on Search Report DTD by the International Bureau

The meeting was held at the headquarters of WIPO, 34, chemin des Colombettes, Geneva on November 20, 2008 (the week of the SDWG/10 meeting).

[Appendix 2 follows]

Appendix 2

List of Participants at the ST.36 Task Force Informal Meeting

November 20, 2008

No.	Name	Office	E-mail
1	AL-MUQUIM Hussam	GCCPO	hmuqhim@gcc-sg.org
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