

Inventorship of AI-generated Inventions



June 2024

Background

- ✓ At the IP5 Heads meeting held in June 2023, the IP5 Heads endorsed the launch of the project regarding “Inventorship of AI-generated Inventions”.
- ✓ The objective of the project is to provide an overview of the IP5 Offices’ examination practices and case law on AI-generated inventions to help users understand the examination practices regarding inventorship of AI-generated inventions.
- ✓ The scope of the project is to compile relevant legal texts and resources of the IP5 Offices, including laws, examination guidelines, practice manuals, case law, etc., and then to publish them on the IP5 website.

Results of collection of existing materials

- ✓ By listing materials in the form of hyperlinks to webpages, obsolescence of the output will be avoided. Users could access the latest materials by clicking the links even in the future.
- ✓ Overview table of answers from the IP5 Offices is shown from the next page.

Disclaimer

While the content aims at promoting transparency in practices of the IP5 Offices on Inventorship of AI-generated inventions at the time of the data collection, it may not be considered or construed as legally binding in any way. The IP5 Offices cannot guarantee the completeness, accuracy, or fitness for specific purposes of the data presented.

	EPO	JPO	KIPO	CNIPA	USPTO
1. Laws related to the inventorship of an invention or designation of the inventor	<p>The European Patent Convention (EPC), Article 60 Right to a European patent [English] [German] [French]</p> <p>EPC, Article 81 Designation of the inventor [English] [German] [French]</p> <p>EPC, Rule 19 Designation of the inventor [English] [German] [French]</p>	<p>Patent Act, Article 29</p> <p>Patent Act, Article 36(1)</p> <p>Patent Act, Article 184-5 [English] [Japanese]</p>	<p>Patent Act, Article 33 Persons entitled to patent</p> <p>Patent Act, Article 42 Patent applications</p> <p>Patent Act, Article 203 Submission of documents [English] [Korean]</p>	<p>Patent Law of the People's Republic of China, Article 6, 16, 26 [Chinese]</p> <p>Rules for the Implementation of the Patent Law of the People's Republic of China, Rule 14 [Chinese]</p>	<p>35. U.S. Code 100 Definitions [English]</p> <p>35. U.S. Code 101 Inventions patentable [English]</p> <p>35. U.S. Code 115 Inventor's oath or declaration [English]</p> <p>35. U.S. Code 116 Inventors [English]</p>
2. Examination results, case law related to the inventorship of an AI-generated invention, including inventions generated by DABUS listed as an inventor in Stephen Thaler's patent application	<p>Decision of the Receiving Section dated 25.11.2019 concerning applications EP 18 275 163 and EP 18 275 174</p> <p>Abstract: The applications are refused in accordance with Article 90(5) EPC since the designations of inventor filed for each of the applications do not meet the requirements of Article 81 and Rule 19 EPC. Grounds:</p> <p>a) a designation indicating a machine as inventor did not meet the requirements of Article 81 and Rule 19(1) EPC, because an inventor within the meaning of the EPC had to be</p>	<p>Decision of the Tokyo District Court; Reiwa 5 (Gyo-U) Case No. 5001. [Japanese]</p>	<p>Examination results of Stephen Thaler's patent application (press released) [English] [Korean]</p> <p>Abstract: A natural person only is accepted as a valid inventor under the Korean Patent Act and a relevant precedent, so it is not permitted to name AI as an inventor in a specification. Such an application is invalidated, and therefore the application is deemed not to have been filed.</p>	<p>Reexamination result of Stephen Thaler's patent application (press released) [Chinese]</p> <p>Abstract: The CNIPA's decision on the reexamination of the patent application for the invention entitled "Food container and device and method for attracting enhanced attention" was to uphold the decision of rejection. The reexamination decision was based on the basic principles of civil law and a interpretation of the legislative purpose of the patent inventor system. It made it clear that an artificial intellige</p>	<p>Case law of the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, <i>Thaler v. Vidal</i>, 43 F.4th 1207 (Fed. Cir. 2022) [English]</p> <p>USPTO Petition decision on an application listing AI ("DABUS") as the sole inventor [English]</p>

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	<p>a natural person.</p> <p>b) the "statement indicating that the applicant acquired the right to the European patent from DABUS as employer", and "the correction of this statement to indicate succession in title" did not meet the requirements of Articles 60(1) and 81 EPC, because a machine had no legal personality. Therefore, it could neither be an employee of the applicant nor transfer any right to him.</p> <p>Case law of the EPO Board of Appeal J 0008/20 (Designation of inventor/DABUS) (21/12/2021) [English]</p> <p>Abstract: The main request is not allowable because the designation of the inventor does not comply with Article 81, first sentence, EPC. Under the EPC the designated inventor has to be a person with legal capacity. This is not merely an assumption on which the EPC was drafted. It is the ordinary meaning of the</p>		<p>Case law of the Seoul Administrative court (press released); decision rendered on case No. 2022GuHap89524 [English] [Korean]</p> <p>Abstract: Under Article 33(1) of the Korean Patent Act (KPA), a person who makes an invention or his or her successor shall be entitled to a patent. In other words, 'an inventor' according to the KPA refers to 'a natural person' who makes an invention. At present, under the Korean Patent Act, it is not permitted to designate 'Artificial Intelligence (AI)' only as an inventor in a patent application because AI is not a natural person.</p>	<p>nce could not be recognized as an inventor in patent administrative procedures.</p>	

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	<p>term inventor (see, for instance, Oxford Dictionary of English: "a person who invented a particular process or device or who invents things as an occupation" There is no reason to assume that the EPC uses the term in a special way departing from its ordinary meaning (J 0008/20 point 4.3.1 of the Reasons)</p> <p>The auxiliary request does not comply with Article 81, second sentence, EPC in conjunction with Article 60(1) EPC, and is not allowable. Article 81, second sentence EPC requires that where the applicant is not the inventor, they must file a statement on the origin of the right to the European patent. A statement that the applicant is the owner and creator of the machine does not bring the applicant within the scope of Article 60(1) EPC because it does not refer to a legal transaction which would have made him a successor in title within the meaning of EPC. (J 0008/20 points 4.4.1 – 4.4.2 of the Reasons).</p>		<p>Case law of the Seoul High court (press released); decision rendered on case No. 2023Nu52088</p> <p>[English] [Korean]</p> <p>Abstract: In view of interpretations of Articles 33 and 42 of the Patent Act, it is obvious that an inventor refers to a natural person. It is beyond the limitations of legitimate legal interpretation to incorporate AI into the inventor, under the regulations set forth in the Act, in view of AI's emergence and development, the current AI level, social perception of AI, etc. If there exists a certain subject matter sufficient to be protected as an AI invention in the future, its legal protection needs to be guaranteed, in a supplemented manner, by legislation to be processed through social discussion.</p>		

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3. Any materials including examination guidelines, manuals, reports, webpages regarding AI-generated invention	Guidelines for Examination in the European Patent Office (2024) on designation of inventor (not limited to AI) A-III, 5.1	Indication of Inventor in Patent Applications (not limited to AI-generated inventions) (JPO webpage) [Japanese]	Inventorship of AI-generated inventions (KIPO webpage) [English] [Korean] White Paper on Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property [Korean]	Guidelines for Patent Examination (2023) , Part 1, Chapter 1, Section4.1.2, Part 2, Chapter 9, Section 6 [Chinese]	USPTO guidance and examples on inventorship for AI-assisted inventions [English]
Please specify where this information can be searched	Dedicated EPO website on Artificial Intelligence [English]				

Summary

- ✓ At this point, designating or listing AI as inventor doesn't meet the IP5 Offices' requirements because an inventor has to be a natural person within the meaning of IP5 Offices' legal systems.
- ✓ EPO, JPO, KIPO and USPTO have case law regarding AI-generated inventions.

