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WIPO

IPC/CE/33/4
ORIGINAL: English
DATE: August 22, 2003

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC UNION)**

# COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

## Thirty-Third Session
## Geneva, October 2 to 10, 2003

CONTENTS OF THE CORE LEVEL OF THE REFORMED IPC

*Document prepared by the Secretariat*

1. At its thirtieth session, held in February 2001, the IPC Committee of Experts discussed the most appropriate contents of the core level of the reformed IPC (see document IPC/CE/30/11, paragraphs 19 to 26). The discussions were based on a study conducted by the European Patent Office (EPO) relating to an automated procedure using file size of IPC groups as a main parameter for distribution of groups between the core and the advanced levels. Having agreed that the ideal file size of the core level groups should be in the range of 100 to 150 documents per group and having estimated a potential largest volume of national patent collections, the Committee came to the conclusion that the use of the parameter of the maximum file size of 5,000 documents in the EPO study would result in a core level of sufficient stability and sufficient searching power with respect to national patent collections. The Committee noted that the use of that parameter would result in the overall inclusion in the core level of approximately 30% of IPC groups currently present in the IPC.

2. Following the above decision of the Committee of Experts and using the data provided by the EPO, the International Bureau implemented the division of the IPC into the core and advanced levels in the form of a prototype of the reformed IPC which was made available on WIPO's IBIS website.

3. Further consideration of the contents of the core level of the reformed IPC was carried out by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group in the framework of Task No. 14 on the IPC reform program. The Working Group noted that, in the IPC areas where the first place rule or the last place rule applied, all IPC groups at the same hierarchical level should belong either to the core or to the advanced level of the IPC and requested the International Bureau and the EPO to prepare proposals concerning the distribution of IPC groups in those areas.

4. At its eighth session, held in November 2002 (see document IPC/REF/8/2, paragraphs 30 to 37), the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group approved a proposal by the International Bureau concerning the distribution of IPC groups between the core and the advanced levels in the first place rule and last place rule areas of the IPC, with the exception of classes C07 and C08. The Working Group noted that the rearrangement of groups in those areas had been made by the International Bureau on the basis of the principle of majority, which meant that for each hierarchical level, it had been determined whether the majority of groups belonged to the core or the advanced level and that all other groups had been moved to the level of majority.

5. At the same eighth session, the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group also considered a study made by the EPO concerning the distribution of IPC groups between the core and the advanced levels in classes C07 and C08. The Working Group noted that, according to that study, only a few main groups in classes C07 and C08 contain a significant number of non-PCT minimum documents. Having also applied other criteria, such as the number of subgroups in main groups, importance of the IPC as a search tool in a given field and difficulties in using a detailed IPC scheme for non-experts in the field, the Working Group identified the following main groups in classes C07 and C08, in which one-dot subgroups should also belong to the core level: C07C 51/00, C07K 14/00, C07K 16/00, C08 F 2/00, C08J 3/00, C08J 5/00. The Working Group agreed that, with this exception, only main groups in classes C07 and C08 should be included in the core level.

6. Following the above decisions of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group, the International Bureau carried out the corresponding rearrangement of groups in the first place rule and the last place rule areas and made the results available on WIPO’s IBIS website.

7. At its ninth session, held in June 2003, the IPC Revision Working Group approved a proposal by the International Bureau relating to checking of notes and references from the core level to the advanced level of the IPC (see document IPC/WG/9/8, paragraphs 21 to 25). The Working Group noted that the solutions proposed by the International Bureau for avoiding references from the core level to the advanced level mostly related to the rearrangement of IPC groups between the levels. The Working Group requested the International Bureau to implement the approved rearrangement of core and advanced level groups on the IBIS website. The Working Group also authorized the International Bureau to make any further minor adjustments if necessary, that is, rearrangement of groups between the core and the advanced levels or modifications of wordings of notes and references, in order to achieve compatibility of the two levels. The Working Group agreed that such adjustments should be considered as minor amendments to the IPC.

8. As shown in the preceding paragraphs, the contents of the core level of the reformed IPC has been nearly completely determined. However, the distribution of IPC groups between the core and advanced levels should be further specified with respect to groups introduced in the seventh edition of the IPC and groups created during the current revision period. It is expected that the EPO will collect the data, where available, relating to file size of groups introduced in the seventh edition. This will allow the application, for these groups, of the automated procedure described in paragraph 1, above.

9. Similar data for groups created during the current revision period will not be available. It is suggested that a general approach with respect to these groups be followed, for example, including in the core level only new main groups and one-dot groups.

*10. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the contents of this document and to make decisions as necessary.*

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