



2016 Name Standardization Workshop Summary

General

- WIPO Standards Workshop on Applicant Name Standardization
- Held at WIPO in September 2016
- 28 IP Offices and 12 other entities attended
- Goal: coordinating and streamlining efforts to address applicant names issues with patent applications

Attendees

- IPOs: Austrian Patent Office, IP Australia, German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA), Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO), EPO, INPI France, JPO, KIPO, Rospatent, Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (OEPM), USPTO
- Observers: Patent Documentation Group (PDG), Patent Information Users Group (PIUG), PatCom
- Others: OECD, Philips, Siemens, Magister Ltd., Extract Information, CENTREDOC, Thomson Reuters, FIZ Karlsruhe, Regimbeau, Fairview Research Barcelona.

Main issues

- Need to handle large data sets where applicant name information wasn't presented consistently due to misprints, using different variants of the same name, etc.
- Lack of guidance from IPOs to applicants on matters related to names
- Difficulties to retrieve information on the changes of ownership
- Inconsistent results of transliteration and issues related to presenting names in different languages
- Different name structure in different countries

Possible Solutions

- Development of a WIPO standard to provide recommendations assisting IPOs in providing better “quality at source” in relation to applicant names
- Creation of a Task and a Task Force under the umbrella of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) to provide forum for all interested parties to discuss priorities and ways to overcome difficulties related to applicant name standardization
- Exchanging normalized or harmonized applicant names assigned by IPOs, adding corresponding fields in patent databases

Possible Solutions

- Changes in national IP legislation empowering IPOs to request using one form of an applicant name on all applications filed by the same applicant
- Enforcement at the national level of provision of the change of ownership information by right owners (for example, along with fee payments) and of other data quality policies related to applicant names
- Addressing transliteration of applicant names in the framework of PCT

Possible Solutions

- Creation of a worldwide unique numerical identifier for patent applicants
- As the first step, carrying out a study on how useful the identifiers can be and what might be the problems associated with that.

Outcomes

- Created a new task in the CWS Work Program with the following description:

“Envisaging developing a WIPO standard assisting Industrial Property Offices (IPOs) in providing better “quality at source” in relation to applicant names,

- i. conduct a survey on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs and on the problems, which might be associated with it; and
- ii. prepare a proposal for future actions aimed at the standardization of applicant names in IP documents and present it for consideration by the CWS.”

Survey

- Created a name Standardization Task Force within CWS to carry out the proposed actions.
- Prepared a survey of IP Offices on the use of identifiers:
 - What they are doing or planning
 - What they perceive as the issues with identifiers
 - What would be useful for the task force and WIPO to do

Study Paper

- WIPO (International Bureau) prepared a study paper on applicant name standardization
- Identified problem caused by non-standard applicant names for both public and private sector
- Identified obstacles faced by IPOs to improving name standardization
- Looked at approaches by EPO (NACM project), PATSTAT, DOCDB, OECD

Available at https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/cws/en/cws_5/cws_5_14-annex1.docx

Types of approaches

- Existing practice: four levels of name standardization changes are possible
 - Normalization – correction of “trivial” errors (which leave open the possibility of multiple name variants for one applicant)
 - Harmonization – using one name variant for an applicant (which might not be the ultimate owner, as IP rights can be registered in the name of a subsidiary when the beneficiary is the parent company)
 - Bringing applicant name information in context by disclosing the corporate structure (at the time of filing the application)
 - Keeping accurate dynamic ownership record

Current practice

- Three main approaches to standardization of applicant names:
 - assigning applicant identifiers / codes (KIPO)
 - including an additional field in patent information databases for normalized or harmonized names (EPO PATSTAT)
 - maintenance of a database of applicants which contains one single record per applicant with their harmonized name and address (EPO NACM)

Conclusions

- Solutions for applicant name standardization should be sought on the international level, as well as on regional and national levels.
- There is a room for developing a WIPO standard to cover certain aspects of applicant name standardization
- For many issues identified, the development of a WIPO standard seems premature or not appropriate.

Conclusions 2

- To assist its Members, the CWS can conduct a survey on the use of identifiers and name “dictionaries” by IPOs and publish the result in the WIPO Handbook.
- WIPO can also assist its member States in exchanging experience and practices by organizing workshops, training sessions and round tables on specific problems related to applicant name standardization.

Questions and discussions

■ Thank you for your attention!