

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Fourteenth Session
Geneva, November 23 to 27, 2026

REPORT ON DIGITIZATION GUIDELINES AND RELATED WORKSHOP

Document prepared by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

1. This document describes the results of the online workshop which was held to discuss the preliminary analysis of the survey results on digitization of IP documentation and potential next steps to follow up these results.

BACKGROUND

2. At its thirteenth session of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), the CWS approved the distribution of a survey via joint CWS and Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) circular seeking feedback from IP offices on the challenges that they have experienced digitizing their Industrial Property (IP) document collections (see paragraph 212 of document [CWS/13/33](#)). The CWS also noted that the International Bureau intended to host an online meeting to discuss the results of the survey and present their preliminary analysis.

3. The main objective of the survey was to better understand the challenges experienced by Offices in digitization of their IP document collections so that the International Bureau could produce a set of guidelines for Offices to overcome their challenges.

4. The survey questionnaire, individual responses and collated results of the survey were published in Part 7 of the WIPO Handbook on Intellectual Property Information and Documentation (the WIPO Handbook) as [Part 7.19.2](#). The complete analysis by the International Bureau of the survey responses, presented for consideration and approval at this session, is captured in document CWS/14/7.

WORKSHOP

5. On July 29, 2026, the International Bureau held an online workshop and presented its preliminary analysis of the responses to the digitization guidelines survey. There were 68 participants representing 32 Offices and Organizations around the world.

6. During the Workshop, the International Bureau presented the improved *WIPO OCR Solution*, a tool which supports the production of structured patent document information following the scanning and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) of said documents. An important component of this tool is a proof-reading interface supporting manual review of scanned documents following OCR. The most recent version presented has an improved OCR engine, removing its dependency on ABBYY FineReader Engine which requires a license to be purchased. The goal of this upgrade is to produce a free API for all Offices which contribute to Patentscope, without the need for them to build their own. Offices who are interested in the *WIPO OCR Solution* should contact the International Bureau.

7. Participants at the Workshop were enthusiastic about the WIPO OCR Solution. They also raised issues including poor quality original copies, temporary versus permanent preservation of IP documents and how to preserve computer listings within the digitized version of a document. The International Bureau noted the issues raised and will consider how to address them when considering next steps.

8. The program and presentations made during the workshop are available on the WIPO website at: https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=91248.

PREPARATORY WORK CONDUCTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

9. Following the closure of the survey, the International Bureau established an internal cross-sectorial Task Force comprising of experts from several relevant business units in order to prepare the set of guidelines, in light of the challenges indicated in the survey responses.

Guidelines and OCR tools

10. In light of both the responses to the survey and the feedback received during the Workshop, the International Bureau has considered possible next steps and two potential solutions that could address the challenges:

(a) Production of a set of digitization guidelines to help Offices address the challenges raised. The guidelines should be flexible so that Offices can implement them upon their specific needs; and

(b) Improvement of the *WIPO OCR Solution* to support Offices to digitize their patent documents. Offices may not have the opportunity to tailor for the OCR Solution to meet their specific needs because it allows only limited customization.

11. There are obvious advantages and disadvantages to be considered for both options, and individual Offices are in the best position to determine which of these options best meets their needs, based on their own prioritization and resourcing. In addition, their analysis may reveal that both solutions could be viable. The International Bureau considered that achieving optimal OCR results may require the use of a common tool across Offices. Offices should be also provided with a set of guidelines on document pre-processing to ensure that materials are properly prepared before digitization begins.

12. The International Bureau also considered that an update to WIPO Standard ST.22 would be required to practices and technologies. The Standard has not been updated for 18 years. It should be noted that paragraphs 43 to 45 of the Standard currently provide basic recommendations on the scanning of documents prior to the commencement of OCR. It should also be noted that this Standard is limited to recommendations for patent documents and may need to be expanded to other types of IP documents.

PROPOSED WORKPLAN AND TIMELINE

13. The International Bureau considers the following actions are relevant to this work:

- (a) Review WIPO Standard ST.22 to determine a potential revision and draft said revision, if needed;
- (b) Prepare digitization guidelines comprising a set of recommendation for the preparation and scanning of IP documents that will be processed by OCR solutions. This document can be referenced by WIPO Standard ST.22 as part of the update; and
- (c) Investigate means of promoting OCR solutions such as WIPO OCR Solution, which will be available for Offices.

14. The International Bureau plans to present a report on the status of their work at the fifteenth session of the CWS, a revision to WIPO Standard ST.22 and a proposal for a set of digitization guidelines.

15. *The CWS is invited to:*

(a) note the contents of the present document, in particular the proposed workplan, as indicated in paragraphs 13 to 14 above; and

(b) encourage its Members to contact the International Bureau if interested in the WIPO OCR Solution, as indicated in paragraph 6 above.

[End of document]