

# WIPO



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**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**  
GENEVA

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**  
**STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTATION WORKING GROUP**

**Second Session**  
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WIPO STANDARDS AND IPC REFORM TASK FORCE

*Document prepared by the Secretariat*

1. The ad hoc International Patent Classification (IPC) Reform Working Group, at its fifth session, held in May 2001, agreed that, in view of the reform of the IPC, WIPO Standard ST.8 and some other relevant standards (“electronic data processing standards”) needed revision. The IPC Reform Working Group also agreed that the revision of WIPO Standard ST.8 should be initiated and completed as soon as possible so as to give industrial property offices sufficient time to accommodate their computer systems to the revised Standard before the entering into force of the reformed IPC. In this respect, the IPC Reform Working Group authorized the International Bureau to submit a request to the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) for inclusion of the revision of Standard ST.8 (and as necessary, recommendations concerning other relevant standards) in the SCIT work program.
2. In order to provide comprehensive material for ensuring a timely revision process under the SCIT, the IPC Reform Working Group requested the European Patent Office (EPO) to prepare a detailed revision proposal by September 1, 2001, and invited its members to submit comments on the proposal by November 1, 2001. On November 16, 2001, the EPO submitted to the Secretariat the above proposal of a request for revision of WIPO Standard ST.8, as well as related standards.

3. At its seventh session, held in May 2002, the IPC Reform Working Group discussed a new presentation of classification symbols on the front page of patent documents, required by IPC reform. The IPC Reform Working Group also considered a review of existing WIPO standards, prepared by the EPO, that could require modifications in view of the new presentation of classification symbols on the front page, and requested the International Bureau to inform the SCIT accordingly.

(See paragraphs 41 to 43 of document IPC/REF/5/3; paragraphs 39 and 40 of document IPC/REF/7/3; and documents SCIT/7/7 and SCIT/7/7 Add.1.)

4. The request for revision of WIPO Standard ST.8 and related standards referred to in paragraph 1, above, and the review by the EPO referred to in paragraph 2, above, were presented for consideration by the SCIT Plenary at its seventh session, held in June 2002. The SCIT Plenary agreed:

(a) to create a task for the revision of all WIPO standards which may require modification in view of the IPC reform;

(b) to establish a Task Force to handle the revision of all WIPO non-electronic data processing and exchange standards which may require modification in view of the IPC reform;

(c) to assign the revision of all WIPO electronic data processing and exchange standards which may require modification in view of the IPC reform to the Electronic Data Processing and Exchange Standards (EDPES) Task Force.

The SCIT Plenary welcomed the offer of the EPO to be the leader of the Task Force. (See paragraphs 31 to 33 of document SCIT/7/17.)

5. Subsequently, the International Bureau (IB) distributed, by e-mail, a letter of the EPO, dated July 5, 2002, inviting those Offices wishing to participate in the discussions to nominate a representative. 19 representatives were nominated.

6. Upon setting up the electronic forum, the WIPO Standards and IPC Reform Task Force (ST.8 Task Force) began its discussions on the basis of a draft project description prepared by the EPO on August 7, 2002. On November 14, 2002, the EPO, as leader of the Task Force, submitted the report of the Task Force on the work carried out, the issues addressed and the agreements reached for its presentation at the Standards and Documentation Working Group (SDWG). The Task Force requested, through the Secretariat, input from the EDPES Task Force in order to complete the mandate given to it. The report of the Task Force, as well as the project description, a draft version of WIPO Standard ST.8 and the request to the EDPES Task Force, are reproduced as an Annex to this document and Appendices I to III thereto.

7. The results of the deliberations of the EDPES Task Force shall be presented as an oral progress report to the SDWG. Another oral progress report of the work carried out by the WIPO Standards and IPC Reform Task Force since submitting the report referred to in paragraph 5, above, and the latest results reached will be also presented at the current session of the SDWG in order to inform the Working Group on the status of the revision of WIPO standards which may require modification in view of the IPC reform.

8. *The SDWG is invited:*

*(a) to note the contents of the report of the WIPO Standards and IPC Reform Task Force as given in the Annex to this document and the three attached Appendices;*

*(b) to note the oral progress report by the EDPES Task Force on the request received from the WIPO Standards and IPC Reform Task Force;*

*(c) to note the oral progress report by the WIPO Standards and IPC Reform Task Force and consider its proposals, if any; and*

*(d) eventually, to approve proposals made by the Task Forces in their oral progress reports concerning the work carried out in respect to the revision of WIPO standards which may require modification in view of the IPC reform.*

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

REPORT ON THE SCIT TASK FORCE ON WIPO STANDARDS AND IPC REFORM  
(November 2002)

1. Introduction

In the framework of WIPO, the IPC Committee of Experts and the ad hoc Working Group on the IPC Reform are currently considering changes in the use and structure of the IPC, which induce revisions to several WIPO Standards, dealing with classification codes. In this respect, the Working Group authorized the International Bureau to submit a request to the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) for inclusion of the revision of Standard ST.8 (and as necessary, recommendations concerning other relevant standards) in the SCIT work program and to establish a Task Force as it deemed necessary.

Upon request of the seventh session of the SCIT, held in June 2002, 16 patent offices nominated members for the Task Force on WIPO Standards and IPC Reform, and work started in August 2002 on the basis of the documents SCIT/7/7 and SCIT/7/7 Add.1.

2. Task Force activities

The Task Force started by defining its project brief, which is attached as Appendix I. The Task Force concluded that the electronic standards were an integral part of the problem to be addressed, and therefore drafted a project brief for both this Task Force and the Task Force on Electronic Data Processing and Exchange Standards (EDPES).

The discussions then commenced on the revision of ST.8 with the title "Standard Recording of International Patent Classification (IPC) Symbols on Machine-Readable Records" in order to achieve compliance with the new specifications set by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group. In its discussions the Task Force concentrated on clarifying these specifications and ensuring a wording, which should permit users to achieve maximum interchangeability through the use of a coherent standard.

In particular, a column, defining the values allowed in the various fields of the machine-readable records, has been added to the table defining the structure of the records. A comprehensive example, derived from SCIT/7/7 Add.1, has been included in the standard.

3. Current result and further work

The members of the Task Force agreed on the attached version 5 of ST.8 (see Appendix II), to be presented to the SDWG meeting in December 2002. In the mean time, the Task Force will continue its discussion for the revision of ST.10/B and ST.10/C, which deal with the presentation of classification symbols. It is expected that this revision might result in a short document, which could still be presented to the same meeting of the SDWG mentioned above. The remaining non-electronic standards ST.7, ST.11, ST.12 and ST.18 will be considered as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the revised standard ST.8 is forwarded to the EDPES Task Force for further modifications in the “electronic data” standards, see Appendix III.

It is, however, important to remember that the IPC Committee of Experts has not yet given final approval for the IPC presentation on the front page of documents. The ad hoc Working Group on the IPC Reform might request further small changes to the structure of classification codes. In this respect, this report has been prepared on the basis of information available as of November 1, 2002. Further changes may be needed, and the implementation will have to be closely coordinated with the ad hoc Working Group.

[Appendices follow]

APPENDIX I

PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR THE TASK FORCES WORKING ON REVISIONS  
TO WIPO STANDARDS RESULTING FROM IPC REFORM

1. Problem to be addressed

The current WIPO standard ST.8 defines the format of the IPC for computer interpretation and is used in exchange standards. Concerning the content of data handled by ST.8, the reform of the IPC is ongoing and it is planned to have the new IPC available from July 2004 onwards for internal use by the Industrial Property Offices (IPO's). The new symbols should be used on the published documents from January 2005 onwards.

The reformed IPC itself as well as the needs for a smooth and correct retrieval of the information are resulting in fundamental changes of the currently existing indicators as well as the creation of new indicators. Standard ST.8 with the title "Standard Recording of International Patent Classification (IPC) Symbols on Machine-Readable Records" needs, therefore, to be updated in accordance with the objectives determined by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.

2. How the need was determined

Documents SCIT/7/7 and SCIT/7/7 Add.1 contained the information on the history of this need.

3. Objectives of the task

The main objective of the task is to translate the new requirements for IPC symbols into a revised ST.8, providing a standard machine-readable form for the new symbols and their presentation. The task force(s) will also determine the impact on other WIPO standards and revise them accordingly. The impact on electronic data standards (e.g., ST.8, ST.30, ST.32, ST.33, ST.35 and ST.40), in particular, will be dealt with by the permanent Task Force on Electronic Data Processing and Exchange Standards. The impact on non-electronic standards (e.g., ST.7, ST.10, ST.11, ST.12 and ST.18) will be dealt with by the Task Force on WIPO standards and IPC Reform.

4. Options for solutions

Options for solutions will be worked out by the two task forces, taking account the work already done by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group. The outcome of this work is summarized in the annexes to SCIT/7/7 and SCIT/7/7 Add.1.

5. Expected benefits

The reformed IPC should allow all IPO's to allot the IPC symbols of a chosen level (core or advanced ) in the same way.

The Master Classification Database, storing the allotted symbols for all documents, should allow the retrieval of the IPC information as well as its maintenance. Therefore an exchange of information between the IPO's and the Master Classification database is to be carried out.

With the IPC reform, the quality of IPC symbols allotted by IPO's should increase and the benefit for all offices and the public will be high and proportional to the number of first filings worldwide. The revision of ST.8 is the necessary condition to materialise the benefits of the improvement in the quality of the classification data, by providing a standardised exchange format.

[Appendix II follows]

## APPENDIX II



## HANDBOOK ON INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

## STANDARD ST.8

STANDARD RECORDING OF INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC)  
SYMBOLS ON MACHINE-READABLE RECORDS

*Under revision by the Task Force ST.8 : version 5 (2002.11.07)*

## INTRODUCTION

1. This recording convention provides that symbols of the International Patent Classification (IPC) should be presented on machine-readable records for the exchange of information in machine-readable form in a fixed-length field in 50 positions, each part of the Int. Cl. symbol being recorded in specific positions and in the manner prescribed.
2. The examples given are intended to clarify the text and should not be considered as comprehensive.

## RECORDING

3. For the recording of IPC symbols on machine-readable records a field of 50 positions should be allotted for each symbol, the 50 positions of the field to be used as follows:

<i>Position(s)</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Values</i>
1	Section	A,...,H
2	For future use	Blank
3,4	Class	01,...,99
5	For future use	Blank
6	Subclass	A,...,Z
7	For future use	Blank
8 to 11	Group (right aligned)	1,...,9999, blank
12	Slash as separator	/
13 to 18	Subgroup (left aligned)	0,...,999999 , blank
19	For future use	Blank
20 to 27	Version indicator	YYYYMMDD date format
28	For future use	Blank
29	Classification level	CA,S,O
30	For future use	Blank
31	First or later position of symbol	F,L
32	For future use	Blank





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33	Classification value (inventive or non-inventive)	I,N
34	For future use	Blank
35 to 42	Action date	YYYYMMDD date format
43	For future use	Blank
44	Original or reclassified data	B,R
45	For future use	Blank
46	Human or machine classified data	H,M
47	For future use	Blank
48-49	Generating office	AA,...,ZZ (ST.3)
50	For future use	Blank

4. [Deleted, see version 1]

5. Unused positions in the IPC classification fields Group (positions 8-11) and Subgroup (positions 13-18) should be left blank. The only other positions that may be left "blank" are the ones reserved for "future use". All other positions must be assigned one of the acceptable "values" listed in the table of paragraph 3. Any zero appearing in the symbols should be recorded.

6. Considering the numerals appearing after the separating character, the most significant digit (including the case where it is zero, e.g., subgroup 02) should be in position 13. Any unused positions should be left blank.

7. Representation of the indicators

*Position 1 to 19: Recording of the parts of the IPC symbol*

IPC symbols are defined in Part 5 of the WIPO Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation and in the latest version of the Guide to the IPC.

*Position 20 to 27: Version indicator*

Although a version indicator may contain on the paper publications four or six digits, the version indicator in machine-readable record contains 8 digits namely YYYYMMDD with Y for year, M for month and D for day.

*Position 29 :Classification level*

Offices are expected to classify only in one level (core or advanced). However both levels need to be completely represented in the master classification database and thus a level indicator is needed. The level indicator is also useful for indicating situations where an office does not classify in either the core or the advanced level classification, i.e., when an office only assigns classifications to the subclass level or gives other broad classifications to documents. The level indicator enables to make the difference between core, advanced, subclass and other levels. The letters C (Core), A (Advanced), S (Subclass) and O (Other) are used for this one-digit field.

*Position 31: First or later position of symbols*

The position of the first invention information classification can be recognised by this field. The letters F and L are used for respectively first and later position.



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*Position 33: Classification value (inventive or non-inventive)*

The difference between invention information and other information is important for the retrieval of the information. The letters I and N are used for respectively the invention and non-invention information.

*Position 35-42: Action date*

The date of assigning the classification symbol (action date) is represented by 8 symbols namely YYYYMMDD. This date can be used to check if a classification needs to be reviewed after revision of the scheme e.g. in case of creating new subdivisions.

*Position 44: Original and reclassified data*

Original data is the first data allotted to the document. In case of the core level, the publishing office assigns this data. For the advanced level, the original classification symbols can be assigned by another office. Reclassified data is data changed due to a change in the schemes. An incidental change due to an error is considered as a correction and keeps the status original. The indication of original and reclassified data is marked by the letters B or R respectively for the basic or original and reclassified data.

*Position 46: Human or machine classified (e.g. family generated) data*

As propagation of classification data occurs a difference is to be made between the intellectual and propagated data. Since propagation via common priorities can lead to errors this indicator facilitates later correction. The indication, if the data is given by a person or is family-propagated by a machine, is placed in this field and the letters H and M are used respectively for human and machine classification.

*Position 48-49: Generating Office*

Since part of the original data in the advanced level and the reclassified data can be delivered by offices other than the publishing office, the information source of such data is recorded by a 2 digit field. The country or office code CC, as defined by ST.3, must be used.

8. Recording of complete IPC symbols.

The full classification symbol must always be used when recording it on machine-readable records. The IPC section, class and subclass should be provided for each group or subgroup classification, even if previously provided with another group or subgroup classification on the same document. See WIPO Standard ST.10/C, paragraph (new #), for the recommended presentation of IPC classifications on machine displays or in printed documents.

9. A schematic representation of the contents of the 50 positions is as follows:

Section	Blank	Class		Blank	Subclass	Blank	Group				Slash as separator	Subgroup						Blank	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	



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Version indicator								Blank	Classifica- tion level	Blank	First or later position of a symbol	Blank	Classifi- cation	Blank
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34

Action date								Blank	Original or reclassified	Blank	Human or family data	Blank	Generating office	For later use	
35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50

Example

One sample representation of IPC classification symbols and indicators is:

Int. Cl. (1995)

<b>B28B 5/02</b>	<b>core level classification</b>	<b>invention information</b>
<b>B28B 1/29 (1996.03)</b>	<b>advanced level classification</b>	<b>invention information</b>
<i>H05B 3/18 (1997.06)</i>	<i>advanced level classification</i>	<i>non-invention information</i>

According to this Standard, this example would be recorded on machine-readable records as follows:

Record 1:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
B		2	8		B					5	/	0	2					

20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
1	9	9	5	0	1	0	1		C		F		I	

35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
2	0	0	4	0	6	0	1		B		H		E	P	



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Appendix II

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Record 2:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
B		2	8		B					1	/	2	9					

20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
1	9	9	6	0	3	0	1		A		L		I	

35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
2	0	0	4	0	6	0	1		B		H		E	P	

Record 3:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
H		0	5		B					3	/	1	8					

20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
1	9	9	7	0	6	0	1		A		L		N	

35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
2	0	0	4	0	6	0	1		B		H		E	P	

[End of Standard]

[Appendix III follows]

APPENDIX III

November 8, 2002

Mr. Angel Lopez Solanas  
Head, Standards and Documentation Service  
World Intellectual Property Organization  
34, chemin des Colombettes  
1211 Geneva 20  
SWITZERLAND

Dear Mr. Lopez Solanas:

The Task Force on WIPO standards and IPC Reform has concluded its deliberations regarding changes to WIPO Standard ST.8 to a point where the expertise of the Electronic Data Processing and Exchange Standards Task Force (EDPES Task Force) will be useful and necessary.

The Task Force on WIPO standards and IPC Reform requests that you forward the concerns listed below to the EDPES Task Force and request they begin work on this task as soon as possible. If at all possible, first comments from the EDPES Task Force should be provided at the next meeting in Geneva of the Standards and Documentation Working Group (SDWG).

The cooperation of WIPO and the EDPES Task Force on this matter is extremely important due to the importance of this task. IPC classification codes are an essential added value to patent documents.

The EDPES Task Force is requested to consider the Project Brief for this task and the draft revision 5 of ST.8 attached and the impact these changes might have on the standards, which are under its competence. It is expected that the EDPES Task Force will come up with the necessary revisions of these standards.

Considering the timing of these changes, I would like to recall that the new version of the IPC will come into force on January 2005, but that all changes must be ready by July 2004. Any further progress in the preparations for the Reformed IPC will significantly depend upon the recommendations of the EDPES Task Force after it considers the detailed impacts on the electronic standards, databases and search systems.

Please let me know if you or the EDPES Task Force needs further information or clarification with regard to this request.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Task Force on WIPO standards and IPC Reform,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Krier', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Marc KRIER  
Director Applied Research and Development  
P. D. Documentation, DG1  
European Patent Office

[End of Appendix III and of document]