Madam,
Sir,

Report on Characteristics of International Search Reports

1. This Circular is addressed to your Office in its capacity as an International Searching Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). In that capacity, and as a member of the quality subgroup of the Meeting of International Authorities under the PCT, your Office is invited to comment on the annexed draft report on characteristics of international search reports.

Background

2. For the past nine years, the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has prepared reports presenting various characteristics of international search reports for discussion by the International Searching Authorities (see Circulars C. PCT 1360, 1398, 1434, 1463, 1490, 1524, 1552, 1580 and 1614).

Updated Report

3. The Annex to this Circular presents a report on characteristics of international search reports, updating the data presented in Circular C. PCT 1614 up to the end of the fourth quarter of 2020. The underlying data and a further explanation of the description of the data and definitions used are made available on the WIPO website¹.

¹ The full details are available with the electronic version of this circular from http://www.wipo.int/pct/en/circulars/index.html.
4. Various changes have been proposed over recent years to add to or improve the characteristics. Most of these require additional data from national Offices, most notably in respect of documents cited in the national phase, and will be considered further when reliable feeds of such information become available. Alternatively, some may be considered when the availability of more recent data from XML international search reports is sufficient to warrant work on providing new data feeds based on that source. In the meantime, the format and content of the reports are unchanged from those presented in Circular C. PCT 1614, save to update the results to provide information concerning international searches transmitted to the International Bureau in 2020 (or in 2019 for the technical breakdowns).

5. As noted for the previous reports, the data for the final year is not complete because some search reports had not been processed by the European Patent Office in time to be reflected in the Autumn 2021 version of PATSTAT, which is the basis of the citation data in the reports. The data in particular for the final two quarters should be treated as highly provisional.

6. Technical breakdowns have again been made for four of the characteristics, with a table being included in the package available from the website. As a result of the above concerns, the breakdowns have been made on the characteristics for international search reports from 2019, rather than 2020.

Issues for the Quality Subgroup

7. This subject will be discussed at the next meeting of the quality subgroup. Your Office is invited to provide comments on the characteristics, how the characteristics can be used effectively, and what improvements to the presentation or content of characteristics and other metrics would be useful. Comments should be registered on the quality subgroup’s electronic forum in advance of the meeting to assist delegations to prepare for an effective discussion of such issues during the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Jorgenson
Deputy Director General
Patents and Technology Sector

Characteristics of International Search Reports

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1.1: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH AT LEAST ONE X, Y OR E CITATION
1.2: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH A CITATIONS ONLY

![Graph showing the percentage of search reports with A citations only for different search dates and countries.](Image)
1.3: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH P OR E CITATIONS

[Graph showing the percentage of search reports with P or E citations over the years and quarters, with lines for CN, EP, JP, KR, US, and Total, and sub-graphs for AT, AU, BR, CA, CL, EG, and Total.]
1.3A: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH P CITATIONS

[Graph showing percentage of search reports with P citations for different countries over the years and quarters from 2011 to 2020.]
1.3B: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH E CITATIONS

Percentage of search reports with E citations

Search date (year and quarter)

- CN
- EP
- JP
- KR
- US
- Total

Percentage of search reports with E citations

Search date (year and quarter)

- AT
- AU
- BR
- CA
- CL
- EG
- Total
1.4: PERCENTAGE OF CITATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF P OR E

[Graph showing percentage of P or E citations over time for different countries, with a total trend line.]
1.5: PERCENTAGE OF CITATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF P AND X

Percentage of PX citations

Search date (year and quarter)

Percentage of PX citations

Search date (year and quarter)
1.6: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH Y CITATIONS AND WITHOUT X CITATIONS

[Graph showing the percentage of search reports with Y citations and without X citations over years and quarters for different countries.]

- CN
- EP
- JP
- KR
- US
- Total

[Graph showing the percentage of search reports with Y citations and without X citations for different countries.]

- AT
- AU
- BR
- CA
- CL
- EG
- Total
Percentage of search reports with Y citations and without X citations

Search date (year and quarter)

- ES
- FI
- IL
- IN
- PH
- RU
- Total

Percentage of search reports with Y citations and without X citations

Search date (year and quarter)

- SE
- SG
- TR
- UA
- XN
- XV
- Total
1.8: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH O/T/L CITATIONS

[Graphs showing percentage of search reports with O/T/L citations over years and quarters for different countries and the total.]

- CN
- EP
- JP
- KR
- US
- Total

- AT
- AU
- BR
- CA
- CL
- EG
- Total
1.9: P/E CITATION BREAKDOWN FOR PCT SEARCH REPORTS

P/E citations breakdown: ISA = AT

P/E citations breakdown: ISA = AU
1.10: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH AT LEAST ONE X OR Y CITATION BY TOP APPLICANT’S ORIGIN
2.1: AVERAGE NUMBER OF CITATIONS PER SEARCH REPORT

Average number of citations per search report

Search date (year and quarter)


Average number of citations per search report

Search date (year and quarter)

AT  AU  BR  CA  CL  EG  Total
2.2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF NPL CITATIONS PER SEARCH REPORT

![Graph showing average number of NPL citations per search report over time by search date (year and quarter).](image)

The graphs illustrate the average number of NPL citations per search report for various years and quarters, with different colors representing different countries and the total average across all countries.
2.3: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PATENT LITERATURE CITATIONS PER SEARCH REPORT

![Graph showing the average number of patent literature citations per search report over time, with data for different countries and a total average.](image-url)
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2.4: AVERAGE NUMBER OF X/Y PATENT LITERATURE CITATIONS PER SEARCH REPORT

![Graph showing average number of PL citations in X/Y category per search report by year and quarter for different countries and the total.](image)

The graph above illustrates the average number of PL citations in the X/Y category per search report over the years from 2011-2020. The data is divided by search date (year and quarter) and shows the average number of citations for countries such as CN (China), EP (Europe), JP (Japan), KR (Korea), US (United States), and Total. The graph highlights trends and variations in citation practices across different time periods and jurisdictions.
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Average number of PL citations in X/Y category per search report

Search date (year and quarter)

Average number of PL citations in X/Y category per search report

Search date (year and quarter)
2.5: PERCENTAGE OF SEARCH REPORTS WITH AT LEAST ONE NPL CITATION

Percentage of search reports with at least one NPL citation

Search date (year and quarter)

- CN
- EP
- JP
- KR
- US
- Total

Percentage of search reports with at least one NPL citation

Search date (year and quarter)

- AT
- AU
- BR
- CA
- CL
- EG
- Total
2.6: PERCENTAGE OF NPL CITATIONS IN THE CATEGORY OF X OR Y IN ALL CITATIONS
2.7: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS WITH AT LEAST ONE X/Y NPL CITATION

Percentage of search reports with at least one X/Y NPL citation

Search date (year and quarter)

- CN
- EP
- JP
- KR
- US
- Total

Percentage of search reports with at least one X/Y NPL citation

Search date (year and quarter)

- AT
- AU
- BR
- CA
- CL
- EG
- Total
2.8: PERCENTAGE OF NPL CITATIONS IN ALL CITATIONS

![Graph showing percentage of NPL citations by year and quarter for different countries and the total.]

- **CN**: China
- **EP**: European Patent Office
- **JP**: Japan
- **KR**: Korea
- **US**: United States
- **Total**: Combined percentage

The graph illustrates the percentage of NPL citations over the years, with each line representing a specific country or the total. The data is segmented by year and quarter, providing a clear visual representation of how NPL citations have varied over time.
2.9: DISTRIBUTION OF PATENT & NON PATENT LITERATURE CITATIONS

Distribution of patent and non patent literature citations: ISA = AT

Distribution of patent and non patent literature citations: ISA = AU
Distribution of patent and non patent literature citations: ISA = CL

Distribution of patent and non patent literature citations: ISA = CN
3.1: PERCENTAGE OF PATENT CITATIONS IN NON-OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
3.2: PERCENTAGE OF PATENT CITATIONS BY TOP PUBLICATION AUTHORITIES

Percentage of patent citations by publication authority (2020)
3.3: PERCENTAGE OF PATENT CITATIONS BY PROCESSING AUTHORITIES

Percentage of patent citations by processing authority (2020)
3.4: PERCENTAGE OF PCT SEARCH REPORTS BY TOP APPLICANT’S ORIGIN
Annex to Circular C. PCT 1634

Percentage of search reports by applicants' origin: ISA = KR

Percentage of search reports by applicants' origin: ISA = PH
Percentage of search reports by applicants' origin: ISA = XN

Percentage of search reports by applicants' origin: ISA = XV

[End of Annex and of Circular]