

Authority File Definition File

The UK Authority File provides an index of all the patent documents published by the UK IPO from the earliest UK patents in 1617 to the end of 2025. New publication data is added annually, with each year's data being included in the Authority File published on 1st March of that year.

The UK Authority File is produced using WIPO standards ST.37 and ST.96; from January 2027 this will utilise ST.37 version 3.1 on the assumption that version 3.1 is adopted at CWS 14 in November 2026.

Multiple Files by Decade

Authority files produced using ST.96 XML are extremely large files which are difficult for consumers to open and view. For this reason, the UK IPO creates two files per decade for UK New Act patents with a two-stage publication process and one file per decade for UK Old Act patents which only has a single stage publication process. NB UK patents published before 1850 are published in three files, by century (1617-1699, 1700-1799 & 1800-1849), due to the smaller number of patent documents published during these periods.

Document Kind Codes

Each Authority File is sorted by Publication Number, Publication Date and Document Kind Code with each file containing either A, A8 & A9 document kind codes or B, B8, C, C2 &/or C3 document kind codes.

A codes

- Document kind code A: first or single stage of publication
- Document kind code A8: errata document produced when an error is identified on the front page of an A publication document; note that multiple A8 documents can be published for the same publication number.
- Document kind code A9: errata document produced when an error is identified in an A publication document requiring the complete document to be reproduced; note that multiple A9 documents can be published for the same patent number.

B & C codes

- Document kind code B: second stage of publication (UK New Act only).
- Document kind code B8: errata documents produced when an error is identified in a B publication document; note that multiple B8 documents can be published for the same patent number.
- Document kind code C: a document produced when an error is identified in an A or B patent document for a granted patent specification. If multiple C documents are required, document kind codes C2 and/or C3 should be used.

Update Frequency

The UK Authority file is currently produced annually for publication on March 1st each year. As noted above, files are produced by decade which means that the only files to be updated each year are for the current decade or starting a new decade file.

For example: the current pair of Authority Files for the 2020-2029 decade include all published patent documents published in the period 1/1/2020-31/12/2025. These files will then be augmented with 2026 data prior to republication on 1/3/2027. All earlier Authority Files will not be modified unless an error has been brought to the UK IPO's attention e.g. via a gap analysis report.

Exception Codes

The UK Authority currently uses the following exception codes:

- D – documents which were incorrectly published requiring them to be removed from all Offices collections.
- H – historic documents which have recently been identified as available in PDF format but for which significant metadata is unavailable. Access to these documents may be requested by interested parties using the email address (foi@ipo.gov.uk).
- M – PDF documents which have been identified as missing from the UK IPO's collection though bibliographic data may be available.
- W – publication numbers assigned to a patent document which is then removed from the publication cycle and not published; the use of this exception code results in a publication number remaining unused.
- X – published patent documents which have been assigned a dummy publication date of '9999-12-31' despite many of the documents being publicly available. Note these are primarily UK Old Act documents.

Most Recent Document

Due to the split of published documents by decade this data is provided in each Authority File. See below for the overall date and number range(s) of the UK IPO's documents.

Data Coverage

The UK IPO has multiple number ranges across the whole Authority File:

- 1617-1915; numbers in this range have the format CCYY#####, e.g. 161700001, 185600030.
- In 1916, a new number format was adopted starting at 100001 then incremented by 1 for each published patent document up to the latest number, 1605470 published on 2017-06-21.
 - Note this number range is still current for UK Old Act patent documents as some patent documents remain unpublished due to national security restrictions.
- In 1977, the new UK patent act was introduced with a two-stage publication process and a new publication number range starting '2000001'.
 - The 2000001 number range has now been split between documents published via the UK IPO's legacy system and the new OneIPO system.

- Legacy: 2000001 – 2644883 (@ 2026-06-03); this range will continue to be used until the legacy system is switched off, expected to be late 2026, but will not conflict with the new number range for the OnIPO system.
- OnIPO: 2700001 – 2702415 (@2026-06-10); this range will become the only live number range once the legacy system is switched off.

Data Provided

In addition to publication data, where available, each UK Authority File provides:

- Application information
- Priority information
- Availability of abstract, description and claims of the publication in text-searchable format
- Additional publication exception codes

Exception Code Coverage:

A Documents

Exception code D: 10

Exception code H: 322,738

Exception code M: 8

Exception code W: 4,187

Exception code X: 32,265

Exception Code Coverage:

B and C Documents

Exception code D: 23

Exception code M: 44

Kind Codes

- Whilst Old Act patents were not formally assigned document kind codes as used today, the “A” kind code is applied to UK Old Act patent data to indicate that the patent specification was published via a single-stage process.
- Following the advent of the 1977 Patent Act the following kind codes were introduced:
 - A: Patent application published with search report.
 - A8: Front page of a published patent application which has been corrected subsequent to publication.
 - A9: Published patent application which has been corrected subsequent to publication.
 - B: Granted patent based on an application which has been searched and examined.
 - B8: Front page of a granted patent based on an application which has been searched and examined and has been amended or corrected subsequent to grant.
 - C: Granted patent based on application which has been searched and examined and has been amended or corrected subsequent to grant.
 - C2: Granted patent based on the amended or corrected specification (C document) which has been further amended or corrected.

- C3: Granted patent based on the amended or corrected specification (C document) which has been further amended or corrected.

Document Kind Code Coverage:

- UK Old Act, A documents:
 - 1617-1699
 - 368 A documents
 - 1700-1799
 - 2,001 A documents
 - 1800-1899
 - 1800-1849 – 10,504 A documents
 - 1850-1859 – 23,735 A documents
 - 1860-1869 – 34,862 A documents
 - 1870-1879 – 44,931 A documents
 - 1880-1889 – 81,506 A documents
 - 1890-1899 – 124,826 A documents
 - 1900-1969
 - 1900-1909 – 157,356 A documents
 - 1910-1919 – 130,942 A documents
 - 1920-1929 – 185,622 A documents
 - 1930-1939 – 192,527 A documents
 - 1940-1949 – 117,556 A documents
 - 1950-1959 – 192,287 A documents
 - 1960-1969 – 349,462 A documents
 - 1970-1979
 - UK Old Act: 382,511 A documents
 - UK New Act 23,320 A documents
 - 1980-1989
 - UK Old Act: 46,921 A documents
 - UK Old Act: A8 1 A document
 - UK Old Act: A9 1 A document
 - UK New Act: 195,965 A documents
 - UK New Act: 148,286 B documents
 - 1990-1999
 - UK Old Act: 85 A documents
 - UK Old Act: A8 2 A documents
 - UK New Act: 118,150 A documents
 - UK New Act: 87,818 B documents
 - UK New Act: Errata documents:
 - A8 = 1,110
 - A9 = 145
 - B8 = 24
 - C = 27
 - C2 = 1
 - C3 = 0
 - 2000-2009
 - UK Old Act: 37 A documents

- UK New Act: 121,748 A documents
- UK New Act: 79,589 B Documents
- UK New Act: Errata documents:
 - A8 = 2345
 - A9 = 391
 - B8 = 403
 - C = 360
 - C2 = 13
 - C3 = 1
- 2010-2019
 - UK Old Act: 7 A documents
 - UK New Act: 112,926 A documents
 - UK New Act: 60,151 B Documents
 - UK New Act: Errata documents:
 - A8 = 2474
 - A9 = 287
 - B8 = 981
 - C = 557
 - C2 = 31
 - C3 = 5
- 2020-2025
 - UK Old Act: 0 A documents
 - UK New Act: 67,018 A documents
 - UK New Act: 53,374 B Documents
 - UK New Act: Errata documents:
 - A8 = 1,782
 - A9 = 327
 - B8 = 659
 - C = 288
 - C2 = 18
 - C3 = 1