

Minutes of the 2021 50th British Patent Information Professionals (BPIP) Meeting

Wednesday, 10 November 2021 08:30 – 17:30

Hosted virtually by Christopher Harrison, Head of IP Analytics and Data Insights
at Intellectual Property Office, Newport

Agenda

Please see [Appendix 1](#).

Attendees and Apologies

Please see [Appendix 2](#).

50.01 [Welcome to the 50th BPIP meeting & Introduction from the Meeting Chair](#) (Chris Harrison)

After setting some ground rules for this virtual meeting and showing the agenda for the day, Chris then provided an overview of the IPO (see [slides](#)), identifying that the IPO in the UK particularly highlighting the increase in staff (from ~1200 to ~1700 over the last year), mainly through recruitment of trademark examiners to manage activities for UK's exit of the EU.

The IPO's priorities for 2021/2022 were then described (see also [Corporate Plan 2021-2022](#)) – to be the best IP office by

- Delivering excellent IP services
- Creating a world-leading IP environment
- Making the IPO a brilliant place to work

and these points were then explored with details about the prioritised activities, some of which are well on the way to being achieved, transforming all the services provided (for the different kinds of IP rights: patents, trade marks and designs) through a five-year "One IPO" transformation; see the **transformation map** on the penultimate slide – for example, the renewals service has already been overhauled.

Aspects such as **Research IP** will kick off in 2022, to highlight what IP data can contribute to research, where the IPO is developing similar tools for analytics as have been done by WIPO, EPO, etc., to help patent information professionals in particular.

50.02 [Chairperson's Report](#) (Nathan Pennington)

The report includes details of the membership breakdown and individual member role changes.

Nathan also confirmed that he has been in post for last 5 years, and he has not been working in the IP area for some years so the BPIP Chair position is now vacant. See later discussion of roles in agenda item [50.11](#).

50.03 [Secretary's Report](#) (Jeanette Eldridge)

The report gave a quick overview of

- BPIP representation at external meetings
- BPIP 2020-2021 highlights – a busy year!
- BPIP communications summary for handover to a new BPIP Secretary (see also item [50.11](#))
- BPIP history/timeline for proposed publication

finishing with a reminder for QPIPs that attendance at BPIP meetings and contributions to BPIP publications count towards CPD points.

50.04 Matters and Actions arising from the [49th BPIP meeting minutes \(draft\)](#)

Various actions outstanding relating to BPIP roles and responsibilities ([48.2.1](#), [48.2.4](#), [48.4.2](#), [49.01.1](#)) are revisited in agenda item [50.11](#).

One outstanding action to follow up after the meeting was identified: Follow up on website developments progress towards launch ([47.2.5](#)).

The minutes for the 49th BPIP meeting in 2020 are approved and the [final version](#) uploaded.

50.05 Reports from formal representatives of BPIP at other meetings since 49th BPIP meeting

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
50.05.01	Kathy Burrows; Jane List	30/11/2020	Handover of CEPIUG Board representation

After the 49th BPIP meeting on 11 November 2020, a handover meeting between Jane (outgoing BPIP rep on CEPIUG Board) and Kathy (new BPIP rep on CEPIUG Board) took place.

Key points discussed were to:

- share an awareness of the dates and agendas of forthcoming CEPIUG (roughly monthly) Board meetings and Annual meetings
- highlight actions or inputs required from BPIP – the challenge often is that with only having an annual meeting, BPIP do not currently convene as a group to discuss feedback to CEPIUG calls for input in a timely way, so this is often on an individual basis – but see report item [50.05.05](#)
- explore potential support/sponsorship from CEPIUG for our celebratory event
- explore potential financial support for the BPIP website costs
- discuss similarities/differences between the different member groups with regard to their membership criteria

Particular points also noted include:

- the CEPIUG Board make-up has changed through the year, with Muriel stepping down from CEPIUG Chair, Alexander is relatively new into the Secretary role

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathy Burrows will be formally approved as BPIP representative on the Board at the Annual Meeting – see item 50.07.01 <p>CEPIUG are reviewing their Vision and future Mission, particularly as the QPIP qualification process has now been established, see report item 50.05.05</p>			
50.05.02	Kathy Burrows; Jeanette Eldridge; Jane List	01/12/2020	5 th WIPO IP Info Roundtable
<p>This meeting was attended by invitation only, although invited individuals were encouraged to include other patent information users and colleagues.</p> <p>The WIPO Invitation and other materials can be accessed from this folder on the BPIP website, including various presentations by WIPO staff, and meeting notes compiled by Bettina de Jong and other CEPIUG/PDG member attendees, as well as Jeanette’s own lengthier (!) notes.</p> <p>A key topic of interest was Topic 4: “Possible Collaboration/Partnerships with user groups”.</p> <p>Stephen noted that the specific remit of the IP Info Roundtable is for gathering user views rather than actual contributions into WIPO programs and workflows; CEPIUG, PDG and PIUG are all accredited observers on WIPO committees, e.g. Standards, etc., and are entitled to send delegates to working groups or committees.</p> <p>The IP Info Roundtable is relatively new (started in 2016); initially it had only invited attendees, but they don't have to be accredited observers.</p> <p>Kathy noted that CEPIUG, PDG and PIUG had worked to get a user group item on the agenda at the next WIPO (6th) meeting on 23 November 2021, which has been included on the agenda : Topic 1: “Users groups presentation”.</p>			
50.05.03	Kathy Burrows	Roughly monthly	CEPIUG Board Meetings
<p>CEPIUG Board is made up of volunteers, busy with other demands, on other groups as well, so hard to see progress; 1 hour monthly meeting probably not enough.</p> <p>CEPIUG was a key organisation in the setting up of ISBQPIP – main <i>raison d’etre</i>; some still heavily involved and continuing commitments there. Struggling to know what main aim now is.</p> <p>Strategy input – presentation will be at 27th CEPIUG meeting; Kathy noted that BPIP was the member group which gave the most comprehensive feedback, not sure what has been taken on board; mission statement may not be ambitious enough.</p> <p>Stephen commented that slow progress can also be because of multi-lingual group and not picking up on British body language?</p> <p>Kathy also noted lots of internal change within Board, Muriel leaves Board at the end of the year.</p>			

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
			<p>Kathy would like to see more people from member groups included (e.g. per group); would mean bigger committee (perhaps chair and committee plus executive members?), so challenge vs decision making but better for taking on tasks and making progress.</p> <p>Stephen – preferable to stagger elections so at least 1/3 of existing board still in place for good transition, or have same number of seats on committee but have nominee and alternate – useful if nominee retires, alternate steps up and new alternate agreed.</p> <p>Coincidence of retirements and terms ending makes continuity and capacity challenging.</p> <p>Hasn't been the chance to interact with ordinary members at external meetings, when CEPIUG has usually often held meetings alongside others.</p> <p>Overall membership has grown a lot through Muriel's stewardship and outreach.</p> <p>Kathy will revisit the constitution of Board membership alongside new mission statement, e.g. if rep steps up to Board, can new rep be added? Identified importance of BPIP input to CEPIUG new mission / vision (see 50.05.05)</p> <p>Kathy has set up roughly monthly meetings with the current Secretary to provide updates on CEPIUG discussions (see, for example, this email); in addition, the CEPIUG Secretary issued comms through January to July 2021 (see this folder for these comms and other correspondence).</p>
50.05.04	Hannah Sophia	18/03/2021	38 th SACEPO PDI
			<p>In advance of the 38th SACEPO/PDI annual meeting, Hannah had a preparatory discussion with Stephen Adams, our former representative, then also met with other patent searching representatives to have an introductory chat about backgrounds and interests, and to review the formal agenda for the meeting.</p> <p>Hannah's notes from the SACEPO/PDI meeting on 18 March 2021 are available here; the presentation by Bettina de Jong and the meeting minutes were also provided by Susanna Kerntaler (skerntaler@epo.org) at the end of May 2021.</p> <p>WIPO: Patent documents now 2/3 from Asia; 97% of all utility models Chinese.</p> <p>World IP indicators published in Patent Knowledge Week – separates patents from utility models.</p> <p>Contacted President of EPO – no role descriptor exists for SACEPO/PDI rep. Focus is on interactions, to provide input and support EPO with new ideas.</p> <p>Last meeting three key points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10-fold increase in utility models in Indonesia 2. EPO significantly involved in EU Datathon, development of new applications, similarly to UK IPO Research IP initiative, e.g. in terms of making open data sets available 3. Colour coding – Stephen Adams elaborated that SACEPO are developing colour coding applied to the bibliographic record to show whether filed, pending, granted, etc., but not the documents themselves

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
50.05.05	See attendee list	11/08/2021	BPIP discussion of CEPIUG Mission
<p>This discussion was hosted virtually and included a small number of current BPIP members.</p> <p>The discussion resulted in a summary of our feedback, which was shared with CEPIUG via our representative, Kathy Burrows</p>			

50.06 [Strategic alignment of patent information to the business innovation process](#)
(Geetha Basappa)

Geetha joined the call and presented from Bangalore. She has 13 years of career as IP analyst, now a patent engineer, based in engineering, partnering with IP.

Baker Hughes is an “energy transformation” company – hydrogen, CCS, energy storage, taking a capability-based approach and focused on invention harvesting – both internal and external.

Geetha described the links between patent management processes, culture and organisation. Clients are not focused on the nuts & bolts, more on how IP can be used, both in defence and protection, also academic, rewards to inventors within the company, for example, through revenue from sales, licensing, as well as tax incentives, which all encourage patenting.

Geetha's role provides a privileged connection across the organisation, as well as challenges of different ways of working, upward communication of complex work delivered – also an asset for the role of IP in the innovation lifecycle within the organisational ecosystem. Also strategic alignment to processes in non-IP areas to provide value.

In answer to questions, Geetha noted that the IP/Intelligence group comprises 1 patent engineer and 1 IP counsel in the UK, with 15 colleagues in Houston and 4-5 patent analysts in Bangalore. So a lean team in a huge organisation. She also noted that the team has responsibilities for training for engineers and other non-patent IP users through structured training, 1:1s/group discussions, lunch & learn sessions.

50.07 Since last BPIP meeting, other meetings feedback
(PIUG annual conference, IPI ConfEx connect, CEPIUG annual meeting, etc.)

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
50.07.01	Kathy Burrows; Jeanette Eldridge; Jane List	02/12/2020	25 th CEPIUG Annual Meeting
<p>As a wholly virtual meeting, the sessions were recorded and the meeting slides and notes were made available on 09/04/2021 on the BPIP website.</p> <p>Kathy Burrows was formally welcomed as BPIP representative on CEPIUG Board.</p>			
50.07.02	Jeanette Eldridge; Jane List; Akshay Thaman	29/03/2021	8 th EPO USPTO CPC

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
<p>This was a combined session for EU and US industry users.</p> <p>A key theme was the progress made in dealing with all of the CPC backlog. More details and other materials and notes can be found here.</p>			
50.07.03	Jeanette Eldridge; others?	19/05/2021	IPI ConfEx Connect
<p>See invite and notes in emails shared previously.</p>			
50.07.04	Kathy Burrows?; others?	24-28/05/ 2021	PIUG 2021 Combined Annual and Biotechnology Virtual Conference
<p>This was the second PIUG meeting held virtually; this was NOT free of charge, as they had to recoup on their losses from the cancellation of the 2020 physical meeting.</p> <p>Some of the topics covered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin of invention • Software searching • Landscapes on vaccines • Leveraging exam results in other countries 			
50.07.05	Jeanette Eldridge; Paula Jukes; others?	30/09/2021	CEPIUG 26th Annual Meeting
<p>See the meeting notes circulated from CEPIUG.</p> <p>The meeting was focused on online learning opportunities for QPIPs, and talks were very informative. Paula noted this was a useful meeting for information about tools improvements, and the important role of AI going forward.</p>			
50.07.06	Chris Harrison; Jane List; members from Reckitt Benckiser, Syngenta, Unilever?	04-06/10/ 2021	AI-SDV
<p>This conference had a big focus on patent information in AI tools.</p>			
50.07.07	Simon Wilson	6-8/10/2021	Search Matters
<p>Simon had attended these meetings in the 2000s, finding them less and less relevant, but now restarted with last year's and this year's online events. This year's theme was medical technologies, so of key interest to Simon.</p> <p>He noted a particularly good keynote speaker (Andrea Davidson) and workshops, and would recommend attendance at future events.</p>			
50.07.08	Chris Harrison	2-5/11/2021	EPO Knowledge Week
<p>EPOPIC replaced by EPO Knowledge Week, which had over 2500 attendees. Developing from patent information to patent knowledge, aiming for a deeper understanding of patent information by users.</p>			

Item	Attendee	Date	Event
50.07.09	Chris Harrison	17-19/11/2021	GTM2021: 11th Global TechMining Conference
Chris is chairing a session at this 11 th annual meeting – its scope is especially around developing semantic search and mining – see also https://www.gtmconference.org/journal-special-issues/			

50.08 [Structure searching or not?](#)

Personal thoughts on why and when and a little on how to search for chemical (sub)structures (Nigel Smith)

Nigel has recently retired (see [Appendix 3](#)) from his role as Senior Information Analyst at Unilever after 40 years, and gave us some highlights of his career, alongside tips from his intimate knowledge of structure searching, including how to decide when it might be prudent NOT to engage upon this relatively expensive activity (in terms of time AND money), thinking about the value for each case more objectively, and giving some examples of questions to ask [oneself].

Nigel also reminded us that in the 1980s, at the start of his career, complex chemical structure searching was a pretty hard ask, with limited availability of structure systems beyond indexes such as Beilstein (avoided!) and Chemical Abstracts (preferred!) – 1981 saw the release of CA online, but with very limited functionality in regard to true structure search capabilities, reliant on detailed indexing to track down relevant chemical literature and patents.

Now we are used to the wealth of structure information available through a wide range of resources, e.g. STN structural information – CAS Registry & new Formulations database, Derwent Registry, Reaxys, etc., and many new tools and resources (e.g. PatSnap, Patentscope).

Some of Nigel's key recommendations included that science graduates should understand any topic [enough] in order to do a search, through developing their knowledge of topic-specific terminology from wider reading, but also need to understand that relevant literature may be badly written and that the people telling you about the topic may not understand it, or the search process, themselves very well! So a searcher needs to be prepared to modify search premises to take account of new descriptors identified during the search process.

And consider other approaches alongside structure search, particularly if you need to represent the structure in all the possible ways it might be described in the literature:

- HILL notation – non-unique representation
- Other line notations, SMILES, InChe key – latter is easiest to read and draw out, but IUPAC is incomprehensible! In the future, applicants may be able to provide SMILES, InChe – facilitating searching?

Acronyms to help you construct each search query appropriately:

- KISS – keep it simple, stupid! – Keep each concept separate, especially for more complex queries
- SWEAT – search with every available term

Nigel insists that structure searching capabilities are still a unique skill set even in the era of everyone having easy access to the internet; others added that Nigel has highlighted good practice tips – do your homework first, understand the context. We might only wish for search manuals to be available online and frequently updated!

Others noted that in contrast to Unilever perhaps, there exist different industry approaches, e.g. in agrichem rather than pharmaceutical and consumer goods, there is always a necessity to complete structure searching.

Stephen Adams finished the comments by stating there was no shame in being old school, e.g. using fragmentation code searching still! Best wishes from all for your retirement!

50.09 [The future of patent searching](#) (Jeremy O'Hare) (on the role of the patent searcher and where the future opportunities lie)

Jeremy gave us an overview of his background; having completed a history degree, he then worked as an information expert in business, before embarking on a career in libraries; he has been with the British Library since 2005, heads up BL research team.

The British Library is our national patent library, including a comprehensive collection of British and foreign patent documentation. It is part of a national network (with a grant from the IPO) – including regional business and IP centres (e.g. Nottingham).

The Business & IP Centre at BL makes use of the strong IP collection to support the analysis of trends, tracking ideas and providing predictions.

Several general trends were identified:

- 100s entrepreneurs make use of the library support
- People are 4 times more likely to be successful if they use the centre (only 1 in 10 businesses fail by year 3 compared with 4 in 10 across London), making use of the sustained level of support provided by the Business & IP centre
- Numbers of applications are down, but there is a consistent level of grants
- There has been a drop in the number of individual patentees – see this report on [the changing profile of users of the UK patent system](#) from the IPO
- Industries: Civil engineering, Computer technology, Transport, Telecommunications have dropped
- Largest industries with the highest number of applications listed – not surprisingly, computer tech – across a broad area of technology
- IPO still commonly used as office of first filing (40% of applications used as priority claim)
- Now those applying for patents are more likely to be serious about seeing applications through to grant
- Larger corporates showing consistent filing
- Most patents in force in UK are EP patents (and likely to increase further)
- Smaller portfolio applicants have halved since 2000 (those with 1-10 applicants)
- Trends in technology seen are those with a lot of capital, investment, innovation, e.g. software patenting in electric aviation – 50% of flights globally only short (under 800km)

Trends the Business & IP centre are seeing

- Interest in the historical collection remains high (40% IP enquiries relate to this collection)
- High interest in IP protection
- Prior art searches will continue to play a key role
- Drop in individual patentees vs companies ("hobbyist" vs entrepreneur)
- Similar drop in individual fee-based services (searches)

Role of the searcher (at BL)

- Follow the money (where is the focus of innovation)
- Demand for patent searching in large companies
- Focus on where industries are growing – specialisation will continue
- Be an IP Educator
- More about informing individuals about IP pitfalls/advantages
- Give them training on at least starting their own search activities, what they need to know about attorney fees, etc., and also business aspects, e.g. market research

Emerging trends:

- Microneedles for painless injection and test
- Sun-Powered Chemistry (photo catalysts)
- Virtual Patients (for clinical trials)
- Spatial computing (beyond virtual and augmented reality)
- Digital medicine (apps that diagnose and even treat)
- Electric aviation
- Lower-Carbon cement (bacteria in cement)
- Quantum sensing (metrology)
- Green Hydrogen (zero carbon energy to supplement wind and solar)
- Whole genome synthesis

Stephen Adams posed some questions around the scenario that searching limitations are potentially limiting the formats that could be submitted to IPOs – e.g. CAD/CAM drawings could be submitted as part of application, but the back file can't be searched in the same way. Could AI provide a solution to this? How usable are patent documents as a form of disclosure? You need to understand “What is the invention?”. Is the patent document an adequate working disclosure of the invention?

50.10 [Planning ahead for 51st meeting celebratory event to mark 50 meetings milestone](#)

(Chris Harrison)

Chris ran through a few elements for the meeting in 2022. The IPO will host this as a hybrid meeting, a celebratory event looking back over the previous 50 meetings. The decision is to stick with November for the meeting (we had considered Spring) and to have a 1.5 day meeting (with dinner for those attending in person) and hybrid sessions for those unable to travel.

Stephen suggested 'old' Derwent contacts for next meeting (e.g. Charles Oppenheim).

50.11 [BPIP internal roles](#) (Jeanette Eldridge)

As noted in section [50.02](#), the [49th meeting minutes](#) and [documents shared by email](#), we have been attempting for some time to identify both a new BPIP Secretary and BPIP Chair. The slides were aiming to generate a discussion about the future of these and other roles in the group, and hopefully to persuade people to step up. And don't forget that helping organise user groups does give CPD points for QPIP!

The [draft role descriptors](#) were prepared by the current BPIP Secretary (for Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Meeting Chair, Meeting Host, Meeting planning team member, etc.), and proposals were made to describe more explicitly responsibilities and expectations for both internal and external representation roles (e.g. CEPIUG Board, SACEPO/PDI), so that people can see what opportunities and activities they might take forward, and to develop and direct where BPIP goes for the future.

People discussed a number of scenarios for different roles and how meetings might be run in the future:

- For the external roles, what are the expectation from those groups about responsibilities? Do role descriptors already exist? Can we anticipate their duration so as to plan ahead for new reps to be nominated in good time?
- There are supposed to be expectations that QPIPs provide mentoring. What could BPIP members who are QPIPs do – training? What can benefit the group but also contribute to their own CPD?
- Can we articulate clearly the context of representation and level of commitment for individuals – clarity around when they are representing BPIP (or CEPIUG?) vs their own or their company's interests, etc.?
- Clearly defined roles across a group would help reduce duplication of effort.
- With the lack of volunteers (so far), we may need to move to nominations.
- We have rotated meetings round different venues and had meeting chair from host company as well as chair for group – do we need to rethink the change in meeting chair for each meeting? So would the meeting chair actually revert to organisation chair? Will we need all identified roles?
- Going forward – next year want a hybrid event, so do people want physical meetings or hybrid or virtual? Side conversations are beneficial.
- Things have changed, so look at frequency of meetings, virtual/hybrid/face-to-face.
- Canvassing opinions of BPIP meetings – do we want to identify jobs and get people to do chunks – maybe a meeting of interested parties?
- Hannah would be prepared to take on combined chair & secretary role; then could have a co-chair e.g. meeting host.
- Some said they would personally it daunting to do it all [both chair & secretary roles], good to have a subteam
- Get rid of website? Could get UKIPO, or CILIP, to host our materials? But our materials need to be independent and IPO itself not likely to host our materials.
- Distinction between Chris's role, as it relates to his role at BPIP, and UK IPO – he is not an examiner – would be conflict of interest – and is not connected to them, as the rights granting arm is separate from his department.

Action: Further conversation on BPIP roles – Jeanette and Nathan can liaise with interested parties.

50.12 [Where do we go from here? Starting a patent system](#) (Stephen Adams)

Stephen's talk was subtitled:

“Designing from scratch – a *Gedankenexperiment* in building an IP system”

and took us on a tour of the problems and pitfalls for IP management when countries decide to divide or (re)join. This is based in part on Stephen's past presentation on the impact of the Scottish referendum, updated post-Brexit (with some light-hearted asides).

We had a quick snapshot of some countries' key moments of division or reunification, highlighting IP-related consequences for a few, then, using post-Brexit UK (= "Poundland"!) as our exemplar new state, walked through some of the issues that must be taken into account, particularly with regard to international and regional treaties and patent conventions.

Stephen noted that we have to remember the trade rules are independent of IP legislation, but there are consequences from Brexit that have implications for both, such as what happens to SPCs when individual free-trade agreements are achieved? States cannot ratify PCT without also ratifying Paris Convention.

There is nothing automatic about the transition, and it does NOT have a small impact!

So what about designing from scratch vs readoption of existing treaties, agreements etc. – more work but also more opportunities? Could start by ensuring compliance with WIPO principles, would make things easier for data usage.

When the UK left the EU, there was no geographical statute, so we had to create one for maintaining rights for IP owners overseas for the UK.

We then looked at various aspects of standards and the implications of how they might be implemented (or discarded) in new states and the complications caused to patent information retrieval.

Then we had a deeper dive into the potential opportunity offered by exiting the EU, to introduce utility models, which are seen to be more business friendly (but attorneys see them as having little value; Stephen is also ambivalent about the value of introducing utility model law to the UK; there seems to be no appetite for this from the UK government).

It is difficult to get reliable statistics, but around 100-130 countries have some sort of utility model system in place, sometimes called a "utility model", some separate from patents, some "short-term unexamined patent" – but directories miss the latter if a specific Utility Model law does not exist. In 1890, Germany was the first; ~5 countries per decade have developed similar legislation – so not really recognising a "local need"!

In the period 1991-2000, 25-30 countries introduced a utility model system, which may have been as a response to ratifying TRIPS in order to join WTO, based on the Western model patent system. Model laws have their emphasis on the granting process, very little on publication for information, so those lobbying for utility models have overlooked the impact on search and examination.

Establishing a patent office is not just for granting patents but also to publish to the public, particularly according to WIPO recommendations. Standards do exist for what to do in setting up a patent office; the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) was established in the early 1960s, and provides guidelines for outputs (publications) to be easy to exchange and easy to understand.

A new state will want to keep and attract inward investment – "patent box" legislation – to generate revenue from the patents system, and to have the opportunity to set its own fees or renegotiate on regional fees due for things like an EP to be registered in the UK.

In Stephen's last slide he highlighted how uncertainty about ownership and/or validity of existing IP rights (especially those owned by foreign applicants) could be a major disincentive for foreign investment, and gave the example of a particular type of IP, the [Volkseigener Betrieb](#) (VEB) patents held by conglomerates in East Germany (the DDR) – “known” patent owners disappeared, so could not serve lapse notices on them, so DD patents are still in existence – even if not “in force”!

Hannah said she enjoyed this more than she expected! She has both a government role and a defence role. Her role's mission to see how to keep the UK competitive; part of which involves highlighting innovation to venture capitalists, and investors like utility models, because they are interested in the ideas! And she found it worrying that China has so many Ums, but they might mostly be rubbish.

Stephen reiterated that utility models have their place in small economies, but they don't serve corporate entities wanting to have the same protection across many territories, partly because they are not substantively examined, they are effectively just journal articles, incremental inventions, but form a substantive part of search files so highly relevant for FTO. An example of a small economy where utility models may be valuable is the Philippines; an invention of a “redesigned plough” has a UM number, which gives reassurance of a certain quality standard.

Utility models more generally form a thicket of prior art for novelty and might not (always) be novel; but there is a risk of ignoring them and then possibly be found to be infringing.

Brexit leads to the issue of the critical mass of a smaller country which is more dependent on inward investment to establish manufacturing output – utility models in that case would not contribute to growth or maturity of the economy.

Stephen argued that utility models therefore don't meet the needs of owners or searchers and aren't fit for purpose even for innovation tracking, as so many documents exist which are too close to call between. And it should not be forgotten that utility models are only ever valid nationally.

50.13 Comments and current issues re hosts, databases, search systems, analytics tools, etc., general Tips & Tricks

EPO Register

It appears that the EPO is trying to control scraping of EPO Register by robots – seem to be monitoring search operations per minute by IP address – Stephen was caught out by a search for several hundred dossier records, where he was flipping from one to the next, as he needed to see the “all citations” tab to identify particular documents, then found he was blocked for the next 24 hours from using the Register. This was a [manually] repeated sequence, but system thought it was multiple [automated] searches! Stephen has not needed to do this type of search since, but was interested if anyone else had seen this, and perhaps if there were any workarounds?

Cristina thought that more guaranteed access can be requested by registering your IP address. EPO is more flexible than US PAIR, but EPO may now be blocking more.

Paula has had a similar experience with PAIR but with not so many at the same time – the system didn't seem to like fast typing! ReCAPTCHA itself blocks users with incorrect selections of the test items.

PatBase export to BizInt SmartCharts

Paula came across this problem with PatBase when exporting records to BizInt, there was duplication, so an error in the report, may be due to the reload of the database during the summer, some fields not reloaded properly. Just to be aware of issues (seems to have been corrected).

Call for views on Standard Essential Patents data

Chris highlighted this IPO call – for views around standard essential patents – do we make use of SEP data, and if so what data source are we using – Orbit, IPlytics, etc.?

Action: Susan B will forward presentation (after checking with colleague) which highlighted that IPlytics most comprehensive.

Indian form 3

This is used to find a full list of the history of countries with corresponding applications – Susan noted that there is now a similar form from Israel, might find family members you haven't found elsewhere.

"Net Zero Agenda"

Hannah is interested to know what people do to search for inventions across any area that meet these criteria. Stephen suggested looking at CPCY02 tags for alternative (green) technologies – quick & dirty search!

50.14 Any Other Business

Geetha noted that from Espacenet, you don't get GB granted patent claims – is there any intention to put GB information onto the Espacenet website?

Action: Chris will ask for relevant response from colleagues.

50.15 Meeting round up

Nathan & Jeanette – thanks to Chris for hosting – look forward to next year!

Appendix 1: Agenda 2021 50th British Patent Information Professionals (BPIP) Meeting

Hosted **virtually** by Christopher Harrison, Head of IP Analytics and Data Insights
Intellectual Property Office, Newport

Wednesday, 10 November 2021

08:30 – 17:00

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08:30-09:10

[Welcome & Introduction from the Meeting Chair](#) (Chris Harrison)

[Chairperson's Report](#) (Nathan Pennington)

[Secretary's Report](#) (Jeanette Eldridge)

09:10-09:55

Matters and Actions arising from the [49th BPIP meeting minutes](#)

Reports from representatives of BPIP at other organisations' meetings
(CEPIUG Board, SACEPO/PDI, WIPO)

09:55-10:10

Break

10:10-10:55

[Strategic alignment of patent information to the business innovation process](#)

(Geetha Basappa)

10:55-11:30

Since last BPIP meeting, other meetings feedback

(PIUG annual conference, IPI ConfEx connect, CEPIUG annual meeting, etc.)

11:30-11:45

Break

11:45-12:30

[Structure searching or not?](#)

Personal thoughts on why and when and a little on how to search for chemical
(sub)structures (Nigel Smith)

12:30-13:15

Lunch

13:15-14:00

[The future of patent searching](#)

(on the role of the patent searcher and where the future opportunities lie)
(Jeremy O'Hare)

14:00-14:30

[BPIP internal roles](#) (Jeanette Eldridge)

14:30-14:45

[Planning ahead for 51st meeting celebratory event to mark 50 meetings milestone](#)

(Chris Harrison)

14:45-15:15

Break

15:15-16:00

[Where do we go from here? Starting a patent system](#)

(If you had to design a patent system from scratch, what would it look like?)
(Stephen Adams)

16:00-16:30

Comments and current issues re hosts, databases, search systems, analytics tools, etc.

General Tips & Tricks

16:30-17:00

Any Other Business

Meeting Round up

17:00

Close

Presentation abstracts

Strategic alignment of patent information to the business innovation process (Geetha Basappa)

For a technology company, patents are one of the most important forms of intellectual property (IP), both as an asset and a strategic tool. Due to the vastness and techno-legal nature of patent information, the uninitiated may find it quite difficult to navigate and extract the best value from this resource. Large corporate technology organisations have their own, many times complex innovation and commercialisation processes. To ensure that maximum value is extracted from freely available patent information, it is imperative that IP processes are strategically aligned and intertwined with other organisational processes. During this presentation ways to strategically align IP processes with the innovation and commercialisation processes and extract value from patent information and will be presented.

Structure searching or not? (Nigel Smith)

Personal thoughts on why and when and a little on how to search for chemical (sub)structures; from his viewpoint of 40 years in the industry, applying his extensive chemical knowledge and search expertise as a Senior Patent Information Analyst at Unilever, Nigel provides us with his insights on how this particular area of patent searching has developed and changed over that time.

The future of patent searching (Jeremy O'Hare)

This presentation will assess current trends in patent applications, current and future technologies and its impact on the role of the patent searcher. Jeremy will be speaking of his experience working in the public sector but will be broadening out the presentation to include all industries related to searching. Findings presented are designed to open up a conversation rather than to be a final word!

Where do we go from here? Starting a patent system (Stephen Adams)

The departure from a political or trade bloc (Brexit?), or the reordering of a national boundary (IndyRef2?) can give us an opportunity to start from a blank sheet of paper. What would a modern patent office look like, if designed from ground zero, with no historical practices or standards to be accommodated? This talk will give a bird's-eye view of the considerations in founding a modern IP agency, ranging from the international treaties or agreements which might be adopted (or rejected), to the minutiae of preparing documentation to be fully WIPO-compliant. There may be trouble ahead....

Appendix 2: Attendees and Apologies

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Attendees


Stephen Adams	Magister
Rebecca Ashton	IP Pragmatics
Geetha Basappa	Baker Hughes
Susan Bates	Shell International Limited
Alyson Birch	Unilever
Veeresh Bm	Shell (guest)
Kate Buddle	Unilever
Kathleen Burrows	RB
Susan Cooper	Dyson
Jeanette Eldridge	Unaffiliated
Cristina García Crespo	Pilkington Group
Helen Gavin	Johnson Matthey
Paul Gilbert	Marks & Clerk LLP
David Goodchild	David Goodchild Ltd
Christopher Harrison	UK IPO
Paula Jukes	UCB
Joanne Kirkwood	JA Kemp
Emmanuelle Laurine	Bio-logicIP
Rachel Lewis	RB
Jane List	Extract Information
Jim Maddison	Dyson
Pushpa Narayanam	Shell (guest)
Raeesa Nawaz	Marks & Clerk
Stuart Newbold	Patent Search & Information Management Ltd
Jeremy O'Hare	British Library, Business & IP Centre
Nathan Pennington	Unaffiliated
Lyn Poole	Innovia Films
Jan Powell	Foseco
Catherine Pringalle	UCB (guest)
Steve Royle	Reckitt
James Rudman	GSK
Elliot Sagar	Dyson
Jo Shaw	Victor Green & Company
Nigel Smith	Unilever (retired)
Anna Song	Dyson
Hannah Sophia	independent
Akshay Thaman	GovGrant
Rachel Walkley	RB
Simon Wilson	DePuy Synthes

Apologies

Sheena Zuberi
Tania Zuberi

Appendix 3: Retirement News

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	<p>Nigel Paul Smith BA (Oxon), MSC (Sheffield Univ.) QPIP since 2019</p>
<p>After completing a Chemistry degree and an MSC in information Studies Nigel joined Unilever’s information department at their Port Sunlight Laboratory in 1981. Over the next decade he undertook a variety of information science (IS) roles including training end-user searchers and newer members of the IS team. This included a few years’ secondment to Competitor Technology Intelligence. During the late 1990s he acted as a co-opted member of the R&D Information Management Team. In 1999 he joined Patent Group as a Patent Information Analyst where he remained until his retirement. During the last twenty years he was an active member of various working groups of the Patent Documentation Group (PDG) – PDV, IMPACT and R&E. He also had an active interest in the standards and certification of Patent Information Professionals since the early 2000s and led a team setting some of the QPIP exams.</p> <p>Nigel has not yet made any concrete retirement plans due the COVID pandemic, but hopes to revisit his former Bridge skills, join a walking club with his wife Pauline, and maybe take up writing some science fiction. Nigel will be missed by his colleagues at Unilever for his willingness to help, generosity of time, extensive chemical knowledge and search expertise. We all wish him well!</p>	