

8th EPO-USPTO CPC Annual Meeting with Industry Users

29/03/2021

BPIP attendees included Jeanette Eldridge, Jane List, Akshay Thaman

Other participants included Bettina, Muriel, Gerben, Christiane Emmerich, Paul Peters, Margolaine Thulin, Guido Moradei, Philippe Bodart, Dieter Geiss (FIZ/STN)?, Chris Torrero (Clarivate), Daniel Lowe (Minesoft)

This is a combined session for EU and US industry users

Welcomed by **Jose Alconchel Ungria**, Director, Classification and Documentation at the European Patent Office and **Christopher Kim**, Director, Classification Quality and International Coordination, Office of International Patent Cooperation, USPTO.

Presentation by **Pierre Held**, Project Manager International Cooperation in Classification at European Patent Office:

CPC was launched in 2012, as a bilateral initiative, which now has 30 participating offices.

Official languages - English, German, French, Dutch.

USPTO has transitioned from USPC to CPC (see <https://www.lexisnexisip.com/knowledge-center/cpc-classification-the-new-approach-to-assigning-art-units/>); CPC is now used to route work to examiners.

USPTO is researching use of AI for classification (see USPTO Director blog <https://www.uspto.gov/blog/director/entry/artificial-intelligence-tools-at-the>) - "We are incorporating AI tools into two critical areas of patent examination: search and classification".

USPTO has set up Search & Classification Examiners (SCE) program - 140 new roles (see USPTO blog <https://www.uspto.gov/blog/director/entry/advances-in-searching-for-prior>) - "Establishing a Search and Classification Examiner position in every utility technology center to serve as an added resource for examiners by providing searching expertise and training".

USPTO & EPO are collaborating to ensure harmonised classification practices and develop a common understanding. The SCE program is running alongside "business as usual" examination activities.

Note that some of these topics are also discussed in the EPO Annual Workplan 2021: https://www.epo.org/modules/epoweb/acdocument/epoweb2/472/en/CA-105-20_en.pdf and in 2020 CPC Status Report for 75th PDG IMPACT Meeting: https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/classifications/en/ipc_ce_52/ipc_ce_52_p1.pdf

The CPC has achieved a complete reduction in the revision backlog. "The focus in 2021 will be on gradually reducing the average duration of the CPC revision process to nine months".

Some of the revision projects can be huge, especially for new emerging tech areas.

The CPC website is being revamped this year.

CPC is made available currently in bulk data sets, but after formal approval from SACEPO, will soon be available on EP cover page and will also appear in the Bulletin and Patent Register. This means that the CPC on the EP front page will appear in DOCDB in a more timely way, so on the day of publication rather than weekly.

The Chinese Patent Office is looking at using AI in auto-classification of utility models - at an early stage of discussions with EPO, challenge of already working on 14 million applications annually. (Post-meeting note: see also WIPO's Index of AI initiatives in IP offices: https://www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/artificial_intelligence/search.jsp.)

All DE docs already classified in CPC at EPO.

All CPC C-sets (combination sets, see <https://www.cooperativepatentclassification.org/wcm/connect/cpc/661b9799-529f-43c5-bc90-aadfe8bafd15/CPC+Combination+Sets.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=>) already in espacenet.

Other countries to join CPC - India, Taiwan, Japan, ASEAN countries.

A number of people in the audience emphasised that it was crucial to have an easy way to look up changes and revisions to classifications, particularly for retired symbols. So would like to see a searchable database and have raised this quite often before.

The presenters responded with details of the CPC Validity File and the List of CPC Valid Symbols, which can be downloaded from <https://www.cooperativepatentclassification.org/cpcSchemeAndDefinitions/Bulk>.

The audience member (Gerber) responded that this means it is necessary to work back through to the notices of changes, which is not really feasible for 1000s of corporate alerts!

Gerber was asked to provide a list of the searchable database features needed.

Presenters reassured the audience that "retired" symbols won't be reapplied elsewhere

Symbols can have further sub-divisions and scope may also change

Japanese documents have been classified in ECLA, translated to CPC Y02/Y04 in the past - may not be core collection.

[CPC scheme – Y section: General tagging of new technological developments; general tagging of cross-cutting technologies spanning over several sections of the IPC:

Y02: Climate change mitigation technologies (CCMTs)

Y04: Smart grids]

CPC Reclassification achieves significant backlog reduction

<https://www.cooperativepatentclassification.org/wcm/connect/cpc/d5979fad-1018-4fff-b454-dacb99e7dbd3/8th+CPC+Annual+meeting+22-23+March+2021.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=>

<https://www.cooperativepatentclassification.org/wcm/connect/cpc/970c93f0-c03f-4cde-a88a-a72bac6b7c2c/CPC+Annual+meeting+with+industry+users+29+March+2021.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=>

