

PTRC Open Forum—PTRC 34th Annual Seminar, Monday, March 26, 2012

Compiled/ transcribed by Martin Wallace, Secretary, PTRCA

Moderator: Christine Kitchens, PTRC Program Manager

Panelists: John Fairbank, Head of Call Center at USPTO

Donna Cooper, Director at Public Records Division at USPTO

Doug Salser, Acting Manager, Public Search Facility

Martha Sneed, Director, Public Search Services Division

Michael Hydorn, Analyst at PTRC Program Office

Q1. Jared Hoppenfeld, College Station, Texas: Can you talk about the issues with accessing PubWest in IE 8/ IE9?

A1. Christine Kitchens: It's a money issue to have it changed to work with IE 8/ IE9. USPTO is aware of the problem, there is no immediate resolution.

Q2. John Meier, University Park, Pennsylvania: [expressed concern over the seemingly endless changes that the USPTO website is undergoing, making it difficult to train PTRC customers how to use the website. "Another new look, another new system, another user interface..." etc.

A2. Christine Kitchens: With the latest website redesign, USPTO will be addressing overall look as we drill down, instead of just top layer [of web site]. Anyone who wants can contribute input or participate in user study. You can talk to Wei Ding [wei.ding@uspto.gov or newhomepage@uspto.gov] to find out how to get involved in the user study.

Q3. Connie Wu, Piscataway, New Jersey: Users don't like new web page. The link to the site index is gone. Users must use the site search to find the site index. Why hide stuff under third layer?

A3. Martha Sneed: Please use the website survey popup whenever you are given the opportunity. Survey results indicate the same opinions that site has problems. Data is being captured and studied, and opinions are being rendered by the survey company. Quarterly reviews and meetings and lots of attention is being given to them. But it isn't all about usability, we are a govt. agency and there are always other kinds of considerations when presenting your agency to varying degrees of the public. There's been annual changes for at least the last three years and we agree that this can be frustrating to people. The right people are seeing it and considering it. Hopefully things will get better. The PTRC program's own home page was redesigned as of about a month ago.

Q4. Esther Crawford, Houston, Texas: There is a problem with the hit list link on existing search results in PubWest that prevent the user from getting to original hit list from the document view.

A4. Christine Kitchens: We'll ask to expedite correcting this, and make priority.

Martha Sneed: As soon as we were made aware of this problem, we immediately escalated it and followed up and need to follow up again next week after the seminar.

Q5. Andrew Wohrley, Auburn, Alabama: What do we need to do to retire CASSIS disks and machines? What do we need to have ready?

A5. Martha Sneed: The machines are property of the libraries now; you may do whatever you like with them. As for disks, send an email or call and we'll see if anyone else wants them and we'll discuss disposition of them then.

Q6. Charlotte Erdmann, West Lafayette, Indiana: Will PDFs ever replace the TIFFs on the public website? What are your plans to make this available?

A6. Martha Sneed: We have money and we're looking into it. It may be implemented at end of 2012 or sometime in FY 13.

Q7. Charlotte Erdmann: Are classification changes going to be updated every two months with the new [cooperative] classification system?

A7. Martha Sneed: Classification has always been a separate database, the Master Classification Data File. It will continue to be like this on Pat FT and App Ft.

Q8. Paulina Borrego, Amherst, Massachusetts: Nobody uses plant patents. We like getting them but nobody uses them.

A8. Martha Sneed: There are some libraries that do get use.

[There is a lull in questions from participants at this point, so Chris Kitchens decides to read some email questions that she has received in advance of the open forum.]

Q9. [Undisclosed questioner]: Can a patent applicant arrange installments for application fees and other fees.

A9. Christine Kitchens: No.

Q10. [Undisclosed questioner]: Does the PTRC program office see anything like adobe connect or other conferencing software coming along for PTRC use?

A10. Christine Kitchens: I have to answer in two parts. First, we are about to change to WebX for training between program office and individual PTRC representatives. Second, there is nothing planned for utilization between PTRCs and their customers. That will be left up to individual libraries to implement with their customers.

Q11. John Meier: Have there been referrals from the call center to PTRCs? Don't want to give customers runaround. We need a system for referrals that involves us a little more.

A11. John Fairbank: We do track through our tracking system all referrals out, but can't transfer calls directly.

Martha Sneed: Just tell the customer to tell the call center that they were referred by a PTRC.

Q12. Angela Willie, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: We still have the original CPU/system sent to us when we became a PTDL. Our IT department won't touch it and say they can't load stuff on it. We need a new CPU/monitor, ... the whole nine yards.

A12. Martha Sneed: No, this belongs to your library now. We're no longer providing equipment to PTRCs. PubWest will work on any new computer as long as IE is compatible. Contact us offline to discuss what we need to make it work.

Q13. Charlotte Erdmann: I've been trying to use the grid system on PubWest to get list of all Purdue inventors. All it gives are first inventor and first assignee. It would be best to have all of them.

A13. Michael Hydorn: It may happen this year, the ability to do this stuff. It's on the wish list, it may happen soon. Has also been requested by other users.

Q14. Hal Mendelsohn, Orlando, Florida: A couple years ago there were concerns about the reasons for needing statistics to reinforce funding for our programs. Are we a necessary part of the system?

A14: Martha Sneed: The agency had no information about what was going on in the field. Director Kappos wanted to examine every program to see if they were still valid and this was one of them. It has strengthened our program. Metrics were asked for and will be ongoing. We're showing them our value. People up above have been impressed. Statistics are telling a good story. Hope to have benefit in our own libraries, with our directors, and administrators. We want to thank everyone for working with us on the metrics.

Christine Kitchens: I concur. The level of visibility of this program has been raised within the USPTO. The America Invents Act road show is evidence of this.

Q15. Connie Wu: Thank you, Chris [Kitchens] for sending daily updates to let us know what's happening. USPTO has summer internships for students. Students don't get that information; we don't get enough updates about when to apply for internship.

A15. Christine Kitchens: We don't get that information before you do. We will try send out notices when we get them, on the ALLPTRCs email list.

Martha Sneed: Another thing is that they are now extern programs with no pay, but the experience is still great for students.

Connie Wu: I'm interested in internships or externships. Anything that gives temporary field experience.

Q16. Hal Mendelsohn: I have another question about statistics. When I get questions on phone, I didn't use to write it down but now I am. My question is how many of you [PTRC librarians] have called the 800 number for help? I'm afraid to call because they won't be able to help, won't know anything or they give me another number to call.

A16. Oddly, no response from panel.

Q17. David Morrison, Salt Lake City, Utah: How many have done historic work on patents prior to 19th century? How many can find searchable database? [No hands] How many would find such a thing useful? [Everyone raises hand.]

Q18. Stephanie Barrett, Albany, New York: historical patent research can't find, not in annual report, etc. Wondering why a name may not be in the annual report, when I know I have the right name.

A18. Martha Sneed: Use PTRC listserv, get your question out there. There are anomalies. There might not have been right date, or it may not have been issued.

Q19. Jim Miller, College Park, Maryland: There are still 600,000 dead trademarks, useful to historians, which are not searchable in TESS/X-Search or even TSDR except by number. Is there any hope that this roughly 10% of all US Trademarks will ever be indexed or possibly roughly OCR'd? When will those be made available?

A19. Martha Sneed: Tom Tiedeman is working on missing trademarks. They've been working on solution in last few months. Let me know if you want to approach Tom. I know there's been work done on this in the last month.

Q20. Alison Bradley, Charlotte, North Carolina: NC person: how to store plant patents. How quickly do they accumulate?

A20. Martha Sneed: It was discussed on the PTRC list and got quite a response. Get her on the PTDLA list and share responses from this.