

Guide for Best Practices for Patent and Trademark Resource Centers (PTRCs)

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Education Committee

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Purpose

To create a document to assist PTRCs in providing the highest quality resources and services possible “to disseminate patent and trademark information and to support the diverse intellectual property needs of the public” (USPTO [Local Assistance](#)) and to update and maintain said document for the benefit of future PTRC libraries and representatives.

Goals

- Provide reference material for librarians who are new to PTRC services
- Provide reference material for librarians explaining their services to supervisors, administrators, and possible programming partners
- To make a case for funding, equipment, and support for PTRCs
- Provide training materials for library colleagues at PTRCs
- To increase buy-in from stakeholders
- Ensure PTRC practices are reasonable, comprehensive and consistent
- Provide information that is tiered to basic (for those who have limited time as PTRC Representatives) and optimal (for PTRCs that are able to provide comprehensive services)

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Duties of PTRC Representative

Notes on Becoming a Patent and Trademark Resource Center

The term "Patent and Trademark Resource Center" (PTRC) refers to a library (*currently over 100 public, academic, state, and special libraries in the U.S. and its territories*) which has made commitments to the [United States Patent and Trademark Office \(USPTO\)](#) to provide public accessibility to products and services, offer patent and trademark training, provide reference assistance and outreach to the public, and collect metrics to demonstrate use of the resources. PTRCs are listed as USPTO [locations](#).

Recognition as a PTRC is authorized under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 2 (a) (2) (which provides the USPTO shall be responsible for the disseminating to the public-information with respect to patent and trademarks) and 35 U.S.C. § 12 (which provides for the dissemination of agency information to libraries for an **annual statutory fee, currently set at \$50**. Note that USPTO is not currently collecting this fee following the cessation of depositing patents in physical formats.)

To be designated a Patent and Trademark Resource Center, a library must fulfill the following [requirements](#):

1. **Assist the public** in the efficient use of patent and trademark information resources.
2. **Provide free access to patent and trademark resources** provided by the USPTO including USPTO patent and trademarks databases.
3. **Provide quarterly metrics** on the use of patent and trademark services provided by the member library as stipulated by the USPTO.
4. **Provide quarterly metrics** on outreach efforts conducted by the member library as stipulated by the USPTO.
5. **Send PTRC representatives to attend the annual USPTO-hosted PTRC training seminars** generally held on an annual basis.
6. **Statutory Fee**, Annual \$50. [After USPTO ceased depositing patents in physical formats, the fee was no longer invoiced or collected. This was effective February 2024.

Training for PTRC Representatives and Colleagues

Training from USPTO PTRC Program Office

Annual USPTO PTRC Seminar

- Traditionally held in March or April, Monday through Thursday 9 AM to 5 PM at USPTO Headquarters, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, with optional evening activities beginning Sunday evening for dinner (additional cost) around 6 PM. The Seminar is currently offered in a hybrid or virtual format and may follow an abbreviated noon to 5:00 p.m. ET schedule. Seminar attendance is for PTRC representatives and their colleagues and is free. Representatives' institutions pay for travel, lodging, and meals. A block of rooms is reserved at a local hotel. Reserve your room early because

the block fills up. You will receive an invitation to the Seminar from the Patent and Trademark Resource Center Program (PTRCP) Office with registration details. See the [PTRCA](#) webpage for more Seminar tips. Librarians interested in learning about the PTRC Program are encouraged to email PTRCOffice@uspto.gov and request an invitation to Seminar.

- Proper storage/access of annual seminar training documents: Keep annual training documents accessible for staff. Not to be shared in their original state with patrons. Remove USPTO branding and presenter names before sharing information with patrons.

One-on-one training

- Patent and trademark concepts, PTRC representative duties and database searching instruction via MS Teams or conference call - send an email request to PTRCOffice@uspto.gov to request an appointment. The PTRCP Office also hosts instructional IP webinars announced via email. Specific training includes IP Overview, Trademark Concepts and Searching, and Patent Concepts and Searching. Requests for customized training or advanced versions of the trainings are welcome.

Email support

- PTRCOffice@uspto.gov for questions relating to your particular PTRC. (E.g., “Can you send me some brochures?”). A PTRC request form is available by email request to ptrcoffice@uspto.gov.
- ALLPTRCS@uspto.gov for questions where you would like to send a message to both the PTRC Program Office and all PTRC representatives.
- PTRCP@uspto.gov for use by members of the public.
Be sure to update PTRCOffice@uspto.gov promptly for any changes in your library’s contact information including designated PTRC Representative or Library Director - furnish current mailing addresses, emails, web addresses and phone numbers.

Site visits from PTRC Program Office Staff to PTRCs

- The PTRC Program conducts a limited number of site visits and prioritizes grand openings of PTRCs, major anniversaries of PTRCs (20, 25, 30... years), and other occasions. All requests for site visits will be considered and it is preferable they be made several months in advance. PTRCs interested in a site visit should contact the PTRC Program Office. This [link](#) to an article about a PTRC’s preparation for a PTRCP site visit can offer pointers.

Patent and Trademark Resource Center Association (PTRCA)

- The [Patent and Trademark Resource Center Association](#) (PTRCA) is the non-profit professional organization for anyone "employed at a PTRC and whose responsibilities include the patent collection, retired PTRC staff, former PTRC representatives, librarians and staff at libraries who respond to questions from their clientele regarding patent and trademark information, and current and former USPTO staff" (Bylaws, Article II Membership, Section I). Membership is optional but encouraged. Its mission is to discover the interests, needs, opinions, and goals of the PTRCs, and advise the USPTO in these matters for the benefit of the PTRCs and their users, and to assist the USPTO in planning and implementing appropriate services for the PTRCs, their staffs and patrons.
- The Association has elected President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Academic and Public Library Division Representatives. There are six standing committees.
- The [Bylaws](#) include fourteen articles.
- The PTRCA website, ptrca.org, is the web presence of the Patent and Trademark Resource Center Association. The website and [PTRCA Journal](#) are managed by the Publications Committee and editorial board.
- Resources on the page include the PTRCA Mission, Bylaws, Officers, *PTRCA Journal*, Resolutions, Minutes, Esther Crawford Distinguished Service Award (DSA), online resources, and committees.
- The [PTRCA Journal](#) page lists Officers, the President's report, report from the PTRC Program Office, minutes from the past seminar (Business Meeting, Executive Committee meeting, Open Forum), and News from the PTRCs (summaries of activities at the PTRCs). The *PTRC Journal* is published before the yearly USPTO Training Seminar in the Spring.
- The *PTRCA Journal* publishes articles and reviews in the area of intellectual property of interest to librarians and information specialists in this field. It serves as a means to share related research, successful programs, and book reviews. Articles in the *Journal* are published in the TigerPrints at Clemson University. See the [Submission Guidelines](#) for more information.
- PTRCA-L listserv: Help with worldwide databases, training, unusual reference questions, other PTRC's experiences, etc., from other PTRC Reps and PTRC affiliates. To join email to Denise Wetzel at dawetzel@psu.edu.
- PTRCA membership is voluntary but strongly encouraged. Fees provide refreshments/coffee for annual Seminar events, enable discounted fees to retirees and provide scholarship money for conferences.
 - Originally started to help fund the Annual Training Seminar.
 - We hope to have at least one member from each PTRC.
 - \$65/per year membership (January-December) fee (payable to PTRCA Treasurer Jim Miller, College Park PTRC or via PayPal)

Reuse of Materials

Use of logo (in press releases, publications, marketing & promotions, etc.)

Signage, including decals and stickers, can be used to indicate that an institution provides PTRC services and for marketing and promotion.

- Decals and stickers may be obtained from the PTRC Program Office. The PTRC logo may also be scanned and used on PTRC web pages.
- Decals and stickers should not be distributed to the public or to groups or entities not affiliated with a PTRC.
- The design or colors of the logo may not be modified.

Use of PTRC Seminar training materials

- Can be used for patron training if kept up-to-date and with USPTO branding removed.
- PTRCP staff will provide shipping for seminar materials at the end of the Seminar. They will be available in the hospitality room.

Web presence

- The link to a PTRC's website should be visible and easy to find from the top/home page of an institution's website.
- The PTRC web page should list key resources and services, hours, contact information, how to get assistance, links to USPTO resources, IP attorney database at USPTO, legal assistance and resources, USPTO guides and manuals, and state resources and information for entrepreneurs and business assistance (Small Business Administration, etc.).
- Include information on steps for preliminary patent and trademark research including patent and trademark databases and any other guidance available.
- Include information on how a patron can make an appointment if required for one-on-one assistance and contact information for assistance by phone and email.
- PTRCs should keep their pages and information up-to-date for links to the USPTO web pages. Periodically check your library link [here](#) for accuracy.
- Use a web page or pathfinder (such as a LibGuide®) within your institution for your PTRC, easily accessible to the general public: organizing online, local and state IP resources. Include the representative or designated PTRC service representative's contact information.

Legal advice

PTRC representatives should not give legal advice. Black's Law Dictionary 10th ed. defines the unauthorized practice of law as "The practice of law by a person, typically a non-lawyer, who has not been licensed or admitted to practice law in a given jurisdiction."

- Representatives should not recommend classifications to use for preliminary patent research, whether or not a name may be used for a trademark, what forms to use for patents or trademarks, how a patron should proceed with their product or advice as to specific business decisions about their intellectual property.
 - If a patron would like a patent or trademark search instruction session pertaining to their product or intellectual property, use a generic example in showing the patron a search strategy rather than the patron's IP.
- PTRC representatives should encourage patrons to learn enough about intellectual property to prepare them for conversations with patent or trademark attorneys if they choose to seek legal help, and provide resources to find legal assistance. PTRC representatives cannot recommend individual attorneys or agents.
- PTRC representatives can refer patrons to the USPTO to find [resources](#) for legal practitioners (patent attorneys and agents must be registered with the USPTO), including the USPTO [Patent Pro Bono Program](#) or USPTO [Law School Clinic](#) resources.

Examples of legal advice that could constitute unauthorized practice of law if answered by a PTRC Representative:

- Which form should I use?
- How do I fill out this patent or trademark form?
- Can I use these patent drawings in my brochures?
- Is this patent protected by copyright?
- Is my invention patentable?
- Do you think I can get a trademark on this?
- Is my work covered by copyright?
- What are the specific rules I need to know on changing assignee? While an application is pending can I change inventors?
- How should I respond to this office action?
 - (PowerPoint presentation by William LaMarca, USPTO, PTRCP Seminar 3.17.2015)

The key is that a PTRC provides access to resources (such as databases, the USPTO website, and books) and training in using those resources. Patrons must use those tools to determine what their next steps in getting their patent or trademark will be.

Commonly Used Resources in PTRCs

Useful books

- Adams, D. O. (2015). *Patents demystified: An insider's guide to protecting ideas and inventions*. American Bar Association.
- Blau, D. E. (2025). *Patent it yourself: Your step-by-step guide to filing at the U.S. Patent Office* (22nd edition). NOLO.
- Dobyns, K. W. (2016). *The Patent Office pony: A history of the early Patent Offices*. Docent Press.
- Fishman, S. (2022). *Trademark: Legal care for your business & product name* (13th edition). NOLO.
- Kanbar, M. (2015). *Secrets from an inventor's notebook*.
- Key, S. (2015). *One simple idea: Turn your dreams into a licensing goldmine while letting others do the work* (2nd edition). McGraw Hill.
- Lo, J., & Pressman, D. (2015). *How to make patent drawings: A patent it yourself companion* (7th edition). NOLO.
- Mostert, F. W., & Apolzon, L. E. (2007). *From Edison to iPod: Protect your ideas and make money*. DK.
- Schlipp, J. (2019). *Intellectual property and information rights for librarians*. Libraries Unlimited.
- Stim, R. (2023). *Profit from your idea: How to make smart licensing deals* (11th edition). NOLO.
- Stim, R. (2024). *Patent, copyright & trademark: An intellectual property desk reference* (18th edition). NOLO.
- Stim, R., & Pressman, D. (2024). *Patent pending in 24 hours* (10th edition). NOLO.
- United States Department of Commerce, Patent and Trademark Office. (1999). *Name and date patents, July 31, 1790—July 2, 1836*. United States Department of Commerce, Patent and Trademark Office.
- Yubas, M. (2010). *Patent to market success* (1st edition). Broadword Publishing.

Important Links to Official Manuals

- [TMEP](#) Trademark Manual of Examining Procedure for the U.S. The trademark examining authority for trademark examining attorneys.
- [MPEP](#) Manual of Patent Examining Procedure. The U.S. patent examining authority for patent examiners.
- [TMOG](#) Trademark Official Gazette. The Gazette is issued every Tuesday on the USPTO website with a depiction of the trademark, ID of goods and services and owner information for the Principal (for opposition & registered) & Supplemental Registers and updated registration certificates. Back to 2000 on USPTO website. Earlier versions are available on [HathiTrust](#).
- [Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices, Third Edition](#) This update is effective as of January 28, 2021. This is the governing administrative manual for registrations and recordings issued by the U.S. Copyright Office.

Database Searching

United States Patent and Trademark Office databases

- [Trademark Search](#), [ID manual](#), [Trademark Design Search Code Manual](#);
- [Search for Patents](#), [Patent Public Search](#).
- Historic note: PubEAST & PubWEST were superseded by Patent Public Search in February 2022.

PTRC representatives should become familiar with open access and specialized tools for patent and trademark research and should develop sufficient expertise in these tools to show others how to use them.

Other Patent Databases (Free on Web)

Major International Databases:

- [Espacenet](#) The oldest of the major international databases. Produced by the European Patent Office (EPO). 150+ million patent and application records as of March 2025. Espacenet's "Classification Search" looks for words in patents, and statistically ranks the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) codes most often assigned to those patents. (To search for words in the CPC Scheme itself, use <https://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/classification/>)
- [Google Patents](#) 120+ million patents and applications from 100+ countries. Links your search results to Espacenet CPC search when you "Group by" classification. Advanced search includes Boolean, proximity, field search, chemical codes and structures.
- [Lens.org](#) Free database from non-profit Australian organization Cambia. Combines EPO, US, WIPO PCT and Australian patent documents. Many search fields and visualization tools. 162. 5+ million records as of March 2025.
- [PatentScope](#) Free database from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), an agency of the United Nations. 121.7 million patent documents as of March 2025. Many display options. Advanced search features include chemical structure search and cross lingual expansion.
- [Global Design Database](#) Free WIPO database. 17+ million international industrial designs as of March 2025. It includes 1,065,000+ US design patents, which are NOT in PatentScope.

Other Useful Free Sites:

- [Pre-1920 Patentee Search](#) at Russ Allen's Historicip.com. Searches by inventor last name for U.S patents prior to 1920, including X Patents.
- [PatentsView](#) "database that longitudinally links inventors, their organizations, locations, and overall patenting activity."
- [Global Dossier](#) File histories and legal status from IP5 Offices.
- Historical Patent Searching [HathiTrust](#)
Collections by Leena Lalwani :
 - "Patent Indexes" of Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents (1842-1919, 1924-1925, 1962-74) and Index of Patents Issued from the United States Patent Office (1921-23, 1927-1961, 1963-1973)
 - "Official Gazettes" (1872-2002)
 - "Trademark Indexes (1927-1991, 1994)

Collections by Sharyl Overhiser:

- “British Alpha Indexes (to Patents),” “British Patents,” “French Catalogue des brevets d’invention (Patents),” “List of patents for inventions and designs, issued by the United States, from 1790 to 1847,” “Official Gazette”[1872-1920], “Patent Subject-Matter Index” [1790-1873] and others.
- Spreadsheets of US inventors, assignees, titles, patent numbers and dates 1790-1874 (only inventor, PN, and date for X patents). From a database compiled from print indexes in the late 1900s by Dr. Jim Shaw of Hutchinson, Kansas
 - [Design patents 1-7082](#)
 - [Utility Patents 1-64999](#)
 - [Utility Patents 65000-100000](#)
 - [Utility Patents 100001-146119](#)
 - [X-Patents \(names, dates, PNs only\)](#)
 - [X Patents \(with added fields\)](#)
- [Directory of American Tool and Machinery Patents \(DATAMP\)](#) “[E]xpanded to include all of the early (pre-July 1836) U.S. patents that weren't originally numbered and were lost in a fire in December 1836.” 82,399 patents as of March 2025.
- **Note regarding commercial patent and professional journal databases:** Academic libraries may offer other subscription databases such as NexisUni (Lexis Total Patent), Derwent Innovation, PatSnap, Dimensions, and SciFinder (usually for chemistry classes only). A few public libraries have InnovationQplus.

Other Trademark Databases (Free on Web)

- [Global Brand Database](#) (WIPO). 68+ million trademark and brand documents from over 80 jurisdictions; 11.8+ million US trademarks as of March 2025. GBD includes old TSDR records NOT in Trademark Search. Allows uploading a gif image file to its image search.
- [TMView](#) (European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)). 128+ million records as of March 2025. Includes trademarks from 66 participating trademark offices, the EUIPO, and WIPO. Updated daily. Like Global Brand Database, it allows uploading of images and looks for similar ones.
- [State trademark databases](#)

Copyright

- [Copyright.gov](#) has a panoply of useful resources including circulars ([copyright.gov/circs](#)) and the current [Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices \(3rd edition\)](#).

Intellectual Property Videos

- Basic Facts: Trademarks, Patents & Copyrights
<https://youtu.be/P6t5XPXd52k?si=W6M3iCIAQ9Mxb3RK>
- Trade Secrets <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/uspto-videos/trade-secrets>
- Madrid Protocol <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/uspto-videos/madrid-protocol-applications-originating-united-states>
- Trademark Videos <https://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/videos>
- PatentScope webinars <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/patentscope/webinar/index>

Education of Patrons (tiered)

One-on-One Consultations

Most Important

- Assess the patron's level of knowledge and digital literacy with a reference interview.
- Explain basic differences between trade secret, trademark, copyright and patent concepts and basic requirements for each major type of intellectual property protection.
- Point to most appropriate resources depending on customer needs.
- Offer basic materials for patrons such as booklets, handouts, and access to online videos from the USPTO. Other PTRCs may have developed pathfinders that one can use.
- Have a working knowledge of USPTO databases and other databases listed above
- Provide sample searches on Patent Public Search, Espacenet, Google Patents, Trademark Search, Goods & Services ID Manual and Trademark Design Code Search Manual.
- Remind the customer not to disclose details of the invention publicly, including to yourself (1 year rule in U.S.), and respect any confidential information imparted to you.
- Representatives should clear up common misconceptions and set limits early. Despite notices to the contrary, customers frequently assume the PTRC rep will sit with them as they fill out forms, write their application, etc. Have a written policy that you can point to regarding legal advice.
- To avoid giving legal advice, representatives should not perform customers' patent prior art or trademark searches for them or suggest the search terms they use. However, if the customer wants to find a patent or trademark for purely historical or genealogical research, the representative can make an exception as time permits.
- The representative should become familiar with local pro bono legal assistance, Certified Law School Clinics, Pro Se Assistance Center at USPTO, TAC (Trademark Assistance Center), IAC (Inventors Assistance Center), etc. and make appropriate referrals.
- Representatives should be able to explain the difference between patent agents and patent attorneys. Patent agents are permitted to prepare an application for a patent and conduct the prosecution in the USPTO, but are not licensed to practice other kinds of law. If a customer anticipates the need for other legal assistance, for example, drawing

up business contracts, the customer may want to choose a patent attorney. A patent agent may be cheaper, but customers should call for a price quote. USPTO maintains a searchable Register of Patent Practitioners at

<https://oedci.uspto.gov/OEDCI/practitionerSearchEntry>.

- Demonstrate USPTO database for registered patent agents and attorneys; and compile a list of resources including local bar associations, inventor groups, law school clinics & pro bono attorneys including the [USPTO Patent Pro Bono Program](#).
- Become familiar with your state's resources for state trademarks, business name databases, corporation databases, trade secrets (Call state offices to get more information).
- Regarding international protection of intellectual property, become familiar with Madrid Protocol (Trademarks), PCT (Patent Cooperation Treaty), applying in individual countries (some require translation or attorney from that country), Berne Convention (Copyright).
- Advise patrons about scams and their prevention. See [Scam Prevention](#) and [Protect Against Trademark Scams](#).
- PTRC Reps do not sign Non-disclosure Agreements (NDAs).

Of Secondary Importance

- If you speak to a customer on phone or email, send customer foundational information on their topic before instructing on databases (It's useful to have a template for responding to patent and trademark inquiries).
- Representatives should develop an "elevator speech." Depending on the patron's interest, be able to explain briefly why a consultation with you or why learning database search techniques will be beneficial.
- Representatives should be aware customers familiar with old USPTO procedures may need updates (for instance paper trademark applications are no longer accepted, CASSIS disks no longer used, no comprehensive collection of printed utility, design patents, trademarks).
- Prepare for copyright questions ([copyright.gov](#)) and become familiar with the topics covered by circulars ([copyright.gov/circs](#)).
- Accommodate different learning styles. Some customers may not have the patience for a lengthy orientation. They may want to jump in, search, and come back with questions.
- For licensing questions, representatives may refer customers to local Small Business Administration ([SBA](#)), [SBDC](#) (Small Business Development Center) or [SCORE](#).
- If the patron is not proficient in English or lacks internet proficiency, perhaps suggest the patron bring a trusted friend to the session.
- Spanish-language resources:
 - <https://sites.google.com/upr.edu/propiedad-intelectual/página-principal>
 - [Conociendo sobre la propiedad intelectual](#)
- PTRCs in Puerto Rico:
 - Bayamón, Puerto Rico PTRC
Library: Learning Resource Center Bayamón Campus, University of Puerto Rico
Phone: 787-993-0000, Ext. 3222 raul.pagan@upr.edu
 - Mayagüez, Puerto Rico PTRC
General Library, Mayagüez Campus, University of Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-832-4040, Ext. 5775

<https://www.upr.edu/biblioteca-rum/contactanos/>

- USPTO forms in Spanish <https://www.uspto.gov/patent/forms/translated-forms-patent-applications-filed-or-after-september-16-2012>
- Occasional USPTO Events in Spanish <https://www.uspto.gov/about-us/events>

Classes, Workshops, and Other Programs

- In-person/online/hybrid classes/workshops: companies, SBDCs, entrepreneur centers, law schools, STEM classes, K-12, academic classes, student associations, maker fairs, [WIPO/PatentScope webinars](#), [Global Brand Database webinars](#), [Inventor InfoChat Program](#) series with USPTO speaker questions period.
- Speakers list - attorneys, maker spaces, inventors, inventors associations, local business librarian, SBDC directors, Jason Lott on Trademarks, USPTO speakers require a [Speaker Request Form](#) in addition to your correspondence with the speaker.
- If PTRC Program Office staff or other staff from the USPTO come to do a program at your library, the PTRC Program staff can recommend ways to market your program. PTRC program staff are limited to promoting programs at PTRCs through event pages on the USPTO website. You will need to book a space with AV capabilities and ideally internet access. Coordinate with the nearest satellite office. ([Link to article about PTRCP Office Visit process.](#))
- Lawyers-in-libraries programs: Offer office Hours (in-person or virtual) with IP professionals for legal questions and instruction on how to access legal help (pro bono & regular).
- The USPTO has [virtual events](#) on its website useful to PTRC representatives and patrons.

Marketing & Outreach (tiered)

Public Library recommended community partners (most important near top)

- Inventor Groups
- [Small Business Development Centers/SCORE](#)
- Schools, Colleges
- Community Centers
- Pro Bono Groups and Law Schools
- Business/Entrepreneur Incubators
- High school STEM programs
- Boy/Girl Scouts
- State Science Fair Directors

Academic Library campus partners (most important near top)

- College/University Office of Technology Commercialization/Transfer
 - Faculty/Staff MUST work with OTC on any IP development
 - Technology Extension often has public programs
- Science, applied technology, and engineering departments
- Business and Marketing Departments
- Entrepreneurship Programs
 - Student groups
 - Campus competitions
 - [National Inventors Hall of Fame/USPTO Collegiate Inventors Competition](#)
- Law School student groups
- Medical Schools
- Honors Programs/Teams

For All PTRCs

- Notify PTRC Office about local events with USPTO staff for publishing on USPTO sites.
- Send reports of activities for News from the PTRCAs journal for yearly update. If possible take photos of speakers at classes and events and keep an ongoing log of programs.

USPTO/PTRC Program Office Organization Chart

- Robert "Rob" Berry, Manager of the Patent and Trademark Resource Center Program Office
 - Sara Butts, Librarian, PTRC Program Office
 - Johnna Childs, PTRC Program Office

Collections (Mandatory and recommended)

Plant Patents

Plant patents are no longer sent by mail weekly to PTRCs from USPTO. The hard/print copies are now static collections and newer plant patents can be found in Patent Center. Due to color photos of plants, color can be an important aspect of plant patent claims. Please consult the PTRC Program Office before discarding plant patents. The print collections are maintained in a variety of ways including binding and in file cabinets.

- Loose or bindery options; pros and cons:
 - Binding plant patents makes them easier to handle and shelve. An alternative would be using filing cabinets.
 - Binding plant patents makes it difficult for copying or scanning.
 - Binding plant patents may be cost prohibitive.
 - For cabinets, patrons should be made aware when pulling plant patents to place them in a box/container for re-shelving.
- Requests for replacement plant patents contact PTRCOffice@uspto.gov Indicate the problem (missing, damaged) and the range of plant patents needing replaced.

College Park PTRC has PP images online up to PP34350 (2022-06-14) at <https://digital.lib.umd.edu/plantpatents>. Search inventor, title, number, date. Filter column for major categories, dates, countries, US states. Plant Patents Portal (by GIS and Data Librarian Milan Budhathoki). Data visualization project - in process.

Storing and Discarding other PTRC Materials (ALLPTRC emails, print & microfilm materials)

Create an email folder to retain ALLPTRC emails on a network accessible drive. It is also recommended to keep PTRCA emails for search strategies and institutional knowledge.

- PTRC print and other materials provided by the USPTO may only be discarded with permission from the PTRC Program Office. Document permissions to discard PTRC provided material as they are federal property. Send requests with an inventory of materials to PTRCOffice@uspto.gov.
- Check with the PTRC Program Office for recommended procedures to discard or return older materials (FOB, CD/DVDs, Microfilm, & Print).

Permission to dispose:

- CD/DVDs
- CASSIS Discs: USAPat (2000-2011), USAApp (2001-2011), and USAMark (2000-2011). These require software that is seldom compatible with current operating systems.
- Electronic Official Gazette discs, available at <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/official-gazette>. See link for coverage information.
- Index of Patents on CD 1920 and later (see below)

Microfilm

- Utility and design patents; Statutory Invention Registrations; and Corrections, Disclaimers and Reexaminations (1983-1999)

Note: For PTRCs with microfilm collections this format acts as the best archival source and a resource for patent images where the electronic version is poorly scanned

Print

- Utility patents were deposited to some PTRCs in paper (1870-1983)
- Print brochures and handouts that have been superseded with a newer version
- Official Gazettes
- Annual Indexes (after 1920)

Keep/Retain:

Print

- The Annual Index of Patents in print or on CD prior to 1920 should be retained as online databases may not be able to search inventor fields prior to 1920.
- Plant Patents - the color cannot be adequately duplicated online **[no longer deposited, please check with the program office before withdrawing]**
- WIPO Magazines - retain the last year of magazines as long as previous issues are available online at https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/list.jsp
- If materials are listed as "permission to dispose" but are still serving your PTRC's needs, please feel free to keep them. If they are no longer serving a purpose and you would like to create some space in your collections, please dispose of them according to your institution's recycling and disposal guidelines.

Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Statistics (programs, one-on-ones, emails, phone calls, letters)

- In 2011 the USPTO developed an electronic worksheet to gather the metrics required under 35 U.S.C. 2(a)(2). (As stated in the Federal Register notice 77 FR 2275-76 (January 17, 2012): [77 FR 2275-76 \(January 17, 2012\)](#).)
- Required Quarterly Statistics for PTRCs are due the 10th of the month or sooner as directed by the PTRC Program Office, every January, April, July and October.
 - The PTRC Program Office emails a survey link quarterly through ALLPTRCS@uspto.gov so that representatives can submit this data (FY = October - September, so “1st quarter” is October-December).
 - Consider logging quarterly statistics in your own spreadsheet to report to your own institution
 - PTRCs use this electronic worksheet to provide quarterly metrics to the USPTO concerning the public's use of the member library's patent and trademark services and the member library's public outreach efforts. The USPTO uses the information in this collection to determine how to more effectively train the PTRC staff and to determine what types of new and different services the PTRCs should provide to the public in the future.
 - Statistics required include: number of walk-in, electronic, letter, and phone customers, number of training classes/programs and number of people attending, number of customers using PTRC web pages and number of special outreach programs.
 - Fields for quarterly statistics include:

	FIELD	DESCRIPTION
1	Demographics	
1a	First & Last Name of approving submitter (not the institution)	The name of the person submitting the metrics to the USPTO; this is not the name of the PTRC or library.
1b	City/Town	The city or town where the PTRC is located.
1c	State	The state where the PTRC is located.
1d	Email address of approving submitter	The email address of the person in item 1a, above.
2	Library Description	Best description of your PTRC library. Select from Academic, State Government, Public, or Special.

3	PTRC one-on-one customer assistance	
3a	Number of walk-in customers	Total number of walk-in customers that are provided individual patent & trademark assistance.
3b	Number of electronic (email, fax, Twitter, etc.) customers	Total number of customers that are provided individual patent and trademark assistance via electronic services. This includes email, fax, Twitter, Zoom, etc.
3c	Number of letter customers	Total number of hardcopy customers that are provided individual patent and trademark assistance.
3d	Number of phone customers	Total number of telephone customers that are provided individual patent & trademark assistance.
3e	Number of training classes/programs	Total number of training sessions that were made available to customers.
3f	Number of people attending training classes/programs	Number of people that attended training classes/programs of item 3e, above.
4	Number of customers assisted using PTRC web pages	Total number of times customers were assisted by accessing web pages at the PTRC. Includes on-line tutorials; may be derived from the number of hits to the PTRC webpages.
5	PTRC FTE	Total number of PTRC staff providing assistance to the public. Includes volunteers. Note: this is a weighted number; Example: 5 staff providing PTRC information 3 hours each per 40 hour work week is 0.375 FTE or Second Example: 12 staff providing PTRC information 4 hours per day each within a 40-hour workweek is 6 FTE (12 hours times 4 hours = 48 times by 5 days a week = 240 hours / 40 hours a week = 6 FTE).
6	Number of special outreach	Total number of special community events held or participated in by the PTRCs. Examples: high school inventive judging, marketing to businesses, state fairs, independent inventor exhibits, including USPTO sponsored programs such as road shows, symposiums or conferences, etc.
7	Special outreach and estimated attendance	Titles of items in 6 above and estimated attendance at each event.

- Other occasional surveys may be received as deemed necessary by USPTO or PTRC Program Office.

Where to Go for Questions

- PTRCOffice@uspto.gov (official USPTO email - best NOT to CC PTRCA-L)
 - Any questions about policy, PTRC official responsibilities, “is this too close to legal advice,” unusual reference questions, etc.
 - Training on the USPTO databases, website, etc.
- PTRCA-L listserv (also goes to affiliate members - best NOT to CC PTRCOffice)
 - To join list email Denise Wetzel, University Park PTRC (Denise Wetzel dawetzel@psu.edu)
 - Advice on worldwide databases, training, etc. Assistance with reference questions, other PTRC's experience, etc.

Definitions

- **ALLPTRCS**—(ALLPTRCS@uspto.gov)—the USPTO group email distribution list for PTRCs. Moderated by the PTRC Program Office. Used by the PTRC Program Office to send out official notices but also to share and invite comments and feedback on topics of interest to PTRC representatives and their colleagues. All designated PTRC representatives are on the ALLPTRCS list and may submit emails of interest. The official ALLPTRCS emails originating from the PTRC Program Office are numbered each year, e.g. “ALLPTRCS, Email 2016-17.” Older official emails are archived on the PTRC Commons. Prior to the program’s name change on October 1, 2011, the email list was named ALLPTDLS.
- **AppFT—Applications Full-Text and Image database**—the U.S. published patent applications database on the USPTO website which began in March 2001. Available to the public. [SUPERSEDED BY PATENT PUBLIC SEARCH]
- **Carlyle campus**—USPTO headquarters previously had two locations in northern Virginia. The larger of the two is the Alexandria, VA Carlyle campus, the main campus which includes the Madison Building, the Knox Building, the Jefferson Building, the Remsen Building and the Randolph Building. The Madison Building is the site of the PTRC Annual Training Seminar as well as the Public Search Facility and the Inventors Hall of Fame. The Carlyle campus is named for an area of Alexandria named for John Carlyle, a founding trustee and the first overseer of Alexandria in the 1700’s. The other, smaller location was the Arlington, VA Randolph Square building in the Shirlington Village subdivision.
- **CEO (Community Engagement Office)** - the section of USPTO, under the Office of Public Engagement, that includes the Public Search rooms and PTRC Program
- **CPC—Cooperative Patent Classification**—a classification system developed in cooperation between the European Patent Office and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, based on the International Patent Classification (IPC). It was initiated as an important step towards advancing harmonization efforts with the goal of leading to greater efficiencies in patent examination. Prior to the adoption of CPC, U.S. utility patents had been classified using USPC (U.S. Patent Classification) for over 100 years. From 1/2013 to 1/2015, U.S. utility patents were jointly classified in both USPC and CPC, while the USPTO was involved in training and reclassification efforts. Since January 2015, U.S. utility patents have been solely classified using CPC. U.S. design patents and U.S. plant patents remain classified in USPC.
- **Crystal City**—subdivision of Arlington, Virginia where the USPTO had its headquarters from the 1970s until 2006 in 18 office buildings, adjacent to Reagan National Airport.
- **Dead**—status of a trademark indicating that the mark has been denied federal registration, abandoned, or cancelled. An entry of “Live” or “Dead” appears in the “Live/Dead Indicator” field in records in the Trademark Search. Marks that were dead or inactive prior to 1984 are not available Trademark Search. These can be searched on microfilm in the Public Search Facility at the USPTO. Dead marks prior to 1984 can also be searched using the Official Gazette and Commissioners’ lists of Trademarks. For assistance in historical trademark searching, contact the PTRC Program Office. Dead marks since 1984 are available on Trademark Search. Trademark Search is updated daily between Tuesday and Saturday.

- **EFS—Electronic Filing System**—former platform for filing U.S. design or utility patent applications and related documents that is optional but recommended. There are financial incentives in place for applicants to use EFS for filing and not paper. [SUPERSEDED BY PATENT CENTER]
- **EPO—the European Patent Office.**
- **Espacenet**— worldwide.espacenet.com, the European Patent Office’s public patent search database which has over 150+ million patents and published patent applications in the Worldwide Espacenet database at worldwide.espacenet.com. It includes patent documents from the EPO and its member countries but also other patent offices, such as the USPTO. Espacenet has well developed search tools for Cooperative Patent Classification or CPC.
- **File Wrapper**—the virtual or literal folder into which papers (forms, correspondence) for a patent application are collected and maintained. The file may be available for online PatentCenter.uspto.gov, excluding copyrighted materials. Depending on restrictions, certified copies of file wrappers of issued patents may be available for a fee from the USPTO’s Office of Public Records.
- **FOBs** – small devices which generated unique random numbers every minute. They were used at PTRC’s before 2022 to login to PubEAST and PubWEST.
- **ID Manual**—abbreviated name of the *U.S. Acceptable Identification of Goods and Services Manual*. Trademark applicants are required to provide the goods and/or services for which their proposed mark will be used. The Manual provides the wording and the numbered classifications for goods and services. It is best for applicants to use the wording from the USPTO’s approved list in the *ID Manual* to save money and application processing time. A new version—the [Trademark Next Generation ID Manual \(TMNG-IDM\)](#)—is available online.
- **IFW—Image File Wrapper.** See *File Wrapper*.
- **Inventors Assistance Center (IAC)**—this call center provides patent assistance and information to the public and is staffed by former supervisory patent examiners and primary examiners who are available to answer questions and to help applicant with their patent filings. Information is available at www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/support-centers/inventors-assistance-center-iac. Phone: 800-786-9199.
- **JPO—the Japan Patent Office.**
- **Live**—status of a mark indicating that the mark *has not been* denied registration, abandoned, or cancelled. An entry of “Live” or “Dead” appears in the “Live/Dead Indicator” field in records in the Trademark Search.
- **MPEP—Manual of Patent Examining Procedure**—guidance provided by the USPTO to its patent examiners, often cited by examiners in correspondence to applicants, available online in a searchable format (called the “Searchable MPEP”).
- **NARA—The National Archives and Records Administration**—an independent agency responsible for preserving federal records. Record Group 241, the records of the Patent and Trademark Office records are in Kansas City, MO.
- **Non-Provisional Patent Application**—required U.S. patent application for plant, design and utility patent applications; may be filed electronically via EFS or by paper.
- **OCIO—Office of the Chief Information Officer**—the current CIO at USPTO is Henry (“Jamie”) Holcombe. The OCIO provides technical support for USPTO, including Patents, Trademarks, and the other business units. The Patent and Trademark Resource Center Program was formerly located within the OCIO in the Public Search

Services Division (PSSD). Effective march 10, 2023, the PTRC Program moved to a new business unit, the Office of Public Engagement (OPE).

- **OPE—Office of Public Engagement.** Business unit location of the PTRC Program, the regional offices, and other divisions or branches.
- **OG—Official Gazette**—publication of the USPTO issued from January 1872 to present.

The print publication split into separate patent and trademark versions in 1971. *OG: Patents* became web only in 2002, now with the name *Electronic Official Gazette for Patents (eOG:P)*. The Trademarks OG has had a web version since 2003 and is called *Official Gazette for Trademarks (TMOG)*. Published weekly on Tuesday, the *eOG:P* includes bibliographic information, CPC classification and a representative drawing and claim for each patent granted on that issue date. *TMOG* has a mark image (illustration drawing or standard characters), International Classification and ownership information for applicants' marks which are published for opposition if the USPTO trademark examining attorney does not raise objections to registration or if the applicant overcomes all objections. Newly registered trademarks are also listed.

- **Old Patent Office Building**—the current home of the combined National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian Museum of American Art located at 8th and F Streets NW in downtown District of Columbia. The large building was constructed from 1836 to 1868 to display patent models and historical artifacts to the public as well as function as a working government agency. Due to its size, it was used as a military barracks and hospital during the Civil War and even served as the site for President Lincoln's second inaugural ball.
- **PAIR—Patent Application Information Retrieval**—a database containing the application files of almost all patent applications filed since 2003 with some exceptions. It has two versions, Private PAIR and Public PAIR. Generally upon filing a non-provisional patent application, the applicant or the attorney representing the applicant only has online access to the application file via Private PAIR. However, patent applications are usually (with exceptions) published 18 months after filing, at which time the patent application file is made available for viewing by the public in Public PAIR on the USPTO website. [SUPERSEDED BY PATENT CENTER]
- **PatFT—Patents Full-Text and Image database**—the issued patents database of U.S. patents from 1790 to present available for the public to search on the USPTO website. [SUPERSEDED BY PATENT PUBLIC SEARCH]
- **PDLs—Patent Depository Libraries**—the former name of Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries (PTDLs) from 1977 to 1990. See *PTDLs* and *PTRCs*.
- **PG Pub—Pre-Grant Publications of a Patent Application**, sometimes referred to as "**Published Patent Applications**." With the passage of the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999, the USPTO was required to publish patent applications 18 months following the filing of a patent application with the option for applicants to "opt out" of 18 month publication if they established upfront that they would not also file in another country that requires 18 month publication. For a fee, applicants can elect to publish earlier than 18 months as well. Pre-Grant Pubs started in March of 2001 and may be searched on Patent Public Search on the USPTO website.
- **"Poor Man's Patent"**—an urban legend; a myth that an inventor can mail a patent application describing their invention to themselves and thus establish some form of patent protection or priority date. The courts have never allowed this. Equally erroneous is a version of the myth involving copyright protection.

- **Prior Art**—any printed or online publication, including U.S. and foreign patents and published patent applications, or other disclosure that contains a discussion or description relevant to an invention in its patent application. Patent examiners review art available publicly prior to a priority date, usually the patent application filing date, and may reject one or more claims in the patent application on the grounds that they are anticipated by or are obvious over the prior art. See the *Manual of Patent Examining Procedure* Chapter 900.
- **PPA—Provisional Patent Application**—optional utility or plant patent application that applicants can choose to file; must be followed up with the required non-provisional patent application claiming its benefit with one year of filing date to get priority date benefit. It is not a patent, despite common misuse of the term “provisional patent.”
- **PPUBS—Patent Public Search**. The new patent search tool launched in February of 2022.
- **PSF—Public Search Facility**—located on the first floor of the Madison Building, east wing, providing public access to patent and trademark information in a variety of formats including digital, microfilm, and print. Assistance is free to the public. Trained staff are available to assist, provide registration and teach search classes monthly.
- **PTAB—Patent Trial and Appeal Board**—the administrative court established by Congress to hear appeals from USPTO decisions on patent applications.
- **PTDLs—Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries**—the former name of PTRCs (Patent and Trademark Resource Centers) from 1990 to September 30, 2011. See *PDLs* and *PTRCs*.
- **PTO—Patent and Trademark Office**—newer employees tend to say USPTO (U.S. Patent and Trademark Office) instead. Some simply use the term “Patent Office.”
- **PTRCA-L**—listserv for the Patent and Trademark Resource Center Association offered to PTRCA members; not managed by the USPTO or the PTRC Program Office. Contact Denise Wetzel at the University Park PTRC (Denise Wetzel dawetzel@psu.edu) to be added to the listserv.
- **PTRCOFFICE**—(PTRCOFFICE@uspto.gov) —email account of the Patent and Trademark Resource Center to be used by PTRC reps to address individual questions specific to one’s library or customers that is not needed to be shared with other PTRC reps (in contrast to ALLPTRCS@uspto.gov which is shared with all other PTRC reps).
- **PTRCs—Patent and Trademark Resource Centers**—libraries which have entered into a formal relationship with the USPTO to assist the agency with the dissemination of patent and trademark information to public users. The statutory authority for the program rests in Title 35, United States Code, Section 12. The new name was established on October 1, 2011. See *PDLs* and *PTDLs*.
- **PubEAST—Former public version of the Examiners Assisted Search Tool**. (see “PubWEST” definition) [SUPERSEDED BY PATENT PUBLIC SEARCH]
- **PubWEST— Former public version of the Web-based Examiners Search Tool**. WEST was originally designed for use by USPTO patent examiners and modified into a public version (PubWEST) for searchers in the Public Search Facility at USPTO headquarters and PTRC users. [SUPERSEDED BY PATENT PUBLIC SEARCH]
- **Regional Offices of the USPTO**—originally these offices were coined “satellite offices”

but “regional offices” is the term used now. They were established under the Leahy-Smith AIA (America Invents Act) in 2011. In order of their opening they are: the Midwest Regional U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (also known as the Elijah J. McCoy Midwest Regional USPTO) located in Detroit MI, the Rocky Mountain Regional U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Denver CO, the Silicon Valley Regional U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (sometimes referred to as the West Coast Regional Office) in San José, CA and the Texas Regional U.S. Patent and Trademark Office located in Dallas TX. Most recently an office for the East Coast has opened, which is located at headquarters.

- **SEAS**—product name (not an acronym) for a network server used by the USPTO to allow access to PubWEST and PubEAST.
- **Shirlington campus**—Formerly USPTO headquarters has two locations in northern Virginia. The smaller of the two was the Arlington VA Shirlington campus which consists of one building, Randolph Square. Shirlington Village is a small subdivision of Arlington County, adjacent to Alexandria VA.
- **TDR**—**Trademark Document Retrieval online database**. See *TSDR*.
- **TEAS**—**Trademark Electronic Application System**—the former USPTO electronic filing system for trademark applications and related forms. [SUPERSEDED BY TRADEMARK CENTER]
- **TESS**—**Trademark Electronic Search System**—the former USPTO’s online database for searching pending, registered and dead trademarks. [SUPERSEDED BY TRADEMARK CENTER]
- **TMEP**—**Trademark Manual of Examining Procedure**—manual providing guidance from the USPTO to its trademark examining attorneys, often cited by them in correspondence to applicants and available to search online.
- **Trademark Assistance Center (TAC)**—Trademark’s main support center for all customers. Information is available at [Trademark Assistance Center | USPTO](#). Phone: 1-800-786-9199 (press 1).
- **Trademark Center**—USPTO’s electronic filing system for trademark applications and related forms.
- **TSDR**—**Trademark Status and Document Retrieval online database** (formerly TDR database), contains the virtual files of all live trademarks and many abandoned, cancelled or expired trademark applications.
- **TTAB**—**Trademark Trial and Appeal Board**—the administrative court established by Congress to hear appeals from USPTO decisions on federal trademark registrations.
- **USPC**—**U.S. Patent Classification**. Classification system developed and applied to classify U.S. patents for over 100 years at the USPTO. Replaced by CPC for classification of U.S. utility patents in 1/2015. Remains in use to classify U.S. plant patents and U.S. design patents. The entire backlog of pre-2015 U.S. patents remains searchable in USPC, but has also been machine reclassified in CPC.
- **USPTO Contact Center (UCC)**—Call center for USPTO. Information is available at www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/support-centers/uspto-contact-center-ucc . Phone: 800-786-9199.
- **WIPO**—**World Intellectual Property Organization**—the United Nations agency responsible for intellectual property policy.