

Report from the Patent and Trademark Resource Center Program (PTRCP) Manager Spring 2023

A Year of Continuity Punctuated by Important Changes

The past year was characterized by continuity punctuated by some major changes. USPTO programming—available online to members of the public—continues to be robust, with some key offerings now available in both Spanish and English. USPTO inaugurated a new patent search tool—Patent Public Search—in February of 2022. And the agency welcomed a new Under Secretary, Kathi Vidal, on April 19, 2022.

The replacement of patent searching legacy systems (PatFT, AppFT, PubEAST, PubWEST) was necessary and the PTRC Program played an important role in the release of Patent Public Search. For months prior to his retirement in December 2021, PTRCP Librarian Neil Massong had been ensuring PTRCP was prepared for the release of Patent Public Search. Neil made sure we had early access to the tool and methodically analyzed the differences between Patent Public Search and the legacy systems. He then developed training materials. Neil also ensured a small but highly experienced group of PTRC representatives had an opportunity to use a pre-release version of the tool and report their findings back to developers.

Thanks to Neil's foresight and diligence, as soon as it was released to the public PTRCP was able to immediately begin training on Patent Public Search. In addition to training offered to PTRC representatives, PTRCP worked with the Eastern Regional

Outreach Office to present monthly Patent Public Search webinars for the public. In conjunction with these webinars, PTRCP Librarians on the PTRCP team assisted in answering hundreds on inquiries sent from the public to USPTO about Patent Public Search.

Tom Turner did more than merely analyze and answer the questions, however. Tom worked with developers to create a set of Patent Public Search Quick Reference guides and updated web content. Tom and other PTRCP librarians have been meeting weekly with developers. One product of those meetings was the Patent Public Search Basic Search interface.

Lucy Park, who is currently on detail with PTRCP from the Scientific and Technical Information Centers (STIC), is PTRCP's lead on creating a series of "micro-tutorial" videos. Once released, these concise videos will greatly aid new users of Patent Public Search.

Tom Turner, Sara Butts, Spruce Fraser, Sarah Arnold and Lucy Park all worked tirelessly to ensure that our 44th Annual Training Seminar for PTRCs was a success. Sarah Arnold returned to the Trademark Law Library in March and Lucy Park will conclude her detail in May. Both have made important and lasting contributions to the program. Tom Turner, Sara Butts, and Spruce Fraser have been providing training to new representatives on an ongoing basis—and to experienced representatives upon request.

Our goal for the coming year is to provide additional webinars for PTRCs librarians, as well as webinars introducing librarians to USPTO resources that will target a wider audience. We anticipate that, as we expand the scope of the training we deliver, the opportunities for referrals between—and collaboration among—libraries will increase.

And, as we look toward the future, we see some other important changes on the horizon. Our goal is to expand the number of PTRCs, to continue to create a variety programming options for PTRCs, and to foster professional development opportunities for PTRC librarians.

We very much appreciate the many efforts you have made over the past year to assist customers seeking patent and trademark information. Please let us know how things are going and drop us a line when you have events planned. Finally, PTRC librarians are uniquely situated to connect people with valuable intellectual property resources, and, in so doing, to empower them to make better decisions. We very much appreciate the work our colleagues at the PTRCs do on a daily basis.

Robert Berry

April 18, 2023