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## Survey on Search Strategies in Patent Applications for IP Offices

### Survey Overview

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Objective: The objective of this survey is to determine how IP Offices, in various capacities, use search strategies as documented by a patent examiner, searcher or other official. The questions are directed to IP Offices in their role as an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and/or as a designated or elected Office under the PCT. The survey also seeks to identify what information from search strategies is most important to IP Offices in their various capacities.

Definition of search strategy: The documentation of the process or technique used to discover prior art related to the disclosed invention in a patent application. With respect to international applications under the PCT, the search strategy is typically conveyed to the applicant by means of either the second sheet of the International Search Report (section “B – Fields Searched”) or provided as an accompanying document to the International Search Report by the International Searching Authority (or Supplementary International Search Report) and thereafter made publically available on PATENTSCOPE. You can find examples of search strategies for different types of subject matter at the following links: [Example 1](#) [Example 2](#) [Example 3](#) [Example 4](#)

The search strategy may be provided in such detail that the complete extent of the search can be envisaged and recreated by a downstream user and may comprise, but is not limited to:

(1) keywords, terms, or phrases, as well as the databases (such as public, commercial, or proprietary patent or non-patent literature) or collections to which these terms were searched against.

(a) May include use of Boolean operators, truncation, plurals, etc.

(2) Patent classification (e.g., CPC, IPC, etc.) searches that may or may not have been limited by terms or dates.

(3) Inventor, applicant, and/or assignee, name search.

The search strategy may be produced by the person(s) or official(s) searching the patent application, which may include, but is not limited to, the examiner, searcher, Authorized Officer, etc.

Confidentiality: The completed surveys will be collected and results compiled by the International Bureau (IB) of WIPO. The IB will make public the results of the survey but without specifically identifying or attributing responses to any particular IP Office.

**Use of Search Strategies in the PCT:**

The survey requests responses on the use of search strategies in three main ways in the PCT. Two relate to their use by an Office in its capacity as an International Searching Authority, and one relates to their use by an Office in its capacity as a designated/elected Office. IP Offices may respond in the applicable perspectives.

1) As an International Searching Authority, the search examiner of an international application may use a search strategy from an earlier search as a basis for the international search. The earlier search may be for a previous international application, or for a national or regional patent application. The earlier search will often be performed by a different Office from the International Searching Authority.

2) As an International Searching Authority, a manager, supervisor or quality assurance official may use the search strategy produced by the search examiner of an international application as part of quality control, whether this is performed before issuing an international search report, or as part of general quality review at a later stage.

3) As a designated/elected Office, an examiner may use the search strategy provided with the international search report in the examination of an application. For example, the search strategy could help determine the extent of the international search and what further searching the examiner in the designated/elected Office may want to perform before issuing an examination report/office action to the applicant.

In order to accommodate responses from any single unique survey recipient in more than one of the above perspectives, the survey is dynamic so as to capture multiple responses to questions from such a survey recipient.

The survey should take between around 10 minutes to complete. **You may change the language** of the survey from the button located at the top right side.

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**Survey Questions for IP Offices: Regional or National**

Is your Office an International Searching Authority (ISA) under the PCT? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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As an International Searching Authority, respond to the following questions.

Do you review any previously established related search strategies during the international search? The related search strategy could be from a prior search referenced in Box No. VII of the PCT Request Form PCT/RO/101. \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Indicate the usefulness of the following search strategy elements from “extremely beneficial” to “not beneficial” during this review. \*

	Extremely Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Neither/nor	Rarely Beneficial	Not Beneficial
Keywords used in a text search without Boolean operators, proximity operators, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keywords used in a text search with Boolean operators, proximity operators, etc., that is, complete text search strings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classification areas searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patent Databases searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Patent Literature/commercial databases searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of resultant “hits” for each search string and/or classification area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indications of where documents cited in the search report were found in the specific search area/string	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indications of the level of search performed with each full search strings (i.e. “all hits reviewed”, “all hits with a publication date after 2009”, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you give full deference to the search performed by the previous searcher?

\*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you use the previous search to identify a further search strategy to discover relevant prior art? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

As an ISA, is the search strategy produced during international search provided as a separate/additional document and/or as part of the ISR? \*

- ☐ Only in a separate / stand-alone document provided with or attached to the ISR (no search information provided in the Fields Searched of the PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet))
- ☐ Only as part of the ISR in the Fields Searched of the PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet)
- ☐ Both as part of the ISR and as a separate / stand-alone document provided with or attached to the ISR

As an ISA, which of the following contents are present in the search strategy produced during international search, as recorded in the Fields Searched of the PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) and/or a separate / stand-alone document provided with or attached to the ISR? *Check all that apply.* \*

- ☐ Classification
- ☐ Patent databases
- ☐ Non-Patent Literature/commercial databases
- ☐ Keywords
- ☐ Search strings (i.e. Boolean operators, proximity operators, truncated terms, etc.)
- ☐ Indications of where documents cited in the ISR were found in the specific search area/string
- ☐ Indication of the level of search performed with each full search strings (i.e. “all hits reviewed”, “all hits with a publication date after 2009”, etc.)

Do you review the search strategy of the search examiner during the international search, either as part of reviewing the application before issuing the international search report, or as part of quality control at a later stage? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Indicate the usefulness of the following search strategy elements from “extremely beneficial” to “not beneficial” during this review. \*

	Extremely Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Neither/nor	Rarely Beneficial	Not Beneficial
Keywords used in a text search without Boolean operators, proximity operators, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keywords used in a text search with Boolean operators, proximity operators, etc., that is, complete text search strings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classification areas searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patent Databases searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Patent Literature/commercial databases searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of resultant “hits” for each search string and/or classification area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indications of where documents cited in the search report were found in the specific search area/string	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indications of the level of search performed with each full search strings (i.e. “all hits reviewed”, “all hits with a publication date after 2009”, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As a designated/elected Office under the PCT, does your Office review search strategies provided with the international search report? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No



Indicate the usefulness of the following search strategy elements from “extremely beneficial” to “not beneficial” during this review. \*

	Extremely Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Neither/nor	Rarely Beneficial	Not Beneficial
Keywords used in a text search without Boolean operators, proximity operators, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keywords used in a text search with Boolean operators, proximity operators, etc., that is, complete text search strings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classification areas searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patent Databases searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Patent Literature/commercial databases searched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of resultant “hits” for each search string and/or classification area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indications of where documents cited in the search report were found in the specific search area/string	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indications of the level of search performed with each full search strings (i.e. “all hits reviewed”, “all hits with a publication date after 2009”, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As a designated/elected Office under the PCT, does your Office provide a search strategy document at the time of initial Office action issuance? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which of the following contents are present in this document? *Check all that apply* \*

- ☐ Classification
- ☐ Patent Databases
- ☐ Non-Patent Literature/commercial databases
- ☐ Keywords
- ☐ Search strings (i.e. Boolean operators, proximity operators, truncated terms, etc.)
- ☐ Indications of where documents cited in the Office action were found in the specific search area/string
- ☐ Indications of the level of search performed with each full search strings, i.e. "all hits reviewed", "all hits with a publication date after 2009", etc.

Is the search strategy document provided as a: \*

- ☐ Stand alone document
- ☐ Part of issued action

Please provide any additional comments with regard to search strategy documents:

Please note that all replies will be treated confidentially. Any personal information provided by those responding to this questionnaire will only be used for the purpose of the survey.

Name \*

Job Title \*

Organization Represented \*

Please indicate your Office Code: \*

AE - United Arab Emirates  
AG - Antigua and Barbuda  
AL - Albania  
AM - Armenia  
AO - Angola  
AT - Austria  
AU - Australia  
AZ - Azerbaijan



BA - Bosnia and Herzegovina  
BB - Barbados  
BE - Belgium  
BF - Burkina Faso  
BG - Bulgaria  
BH - Bahrain  
BJ - Benin  
BN - Brunei Darussalam  
BR - Brazil  
BW - Botswana  
BY - Belarus  
BZ - Belize  
CA - Canada  
CF - Central African Republic  
CG - Congo  
CH - Switzerland  
CI - Côte d'Ivoire  
CL - Chile  
CM - Cameroon  
CN - China  
CO - Colombia  
CR - Costa Rica  
CU - Cuba  
CV - Cabo Verde  
CY - Cyprus  
CZ - Czechia  
DE - Germany  
DJ - Djibouti  
DK - Denmark  
DM - Dominica  
DO - Dominican Republic  
DZ - Algeria  
EC - Ecuador  
EE - Estonia  
EG - Egypt  
ES - Spain  
FI - Finland  
FR - France  
GA - Gabon  
GB - United Kingdom  
GD - Grenada  
GE - Georgia  
GH - Ghana  
GM - Gambia  
GN - Guinea  
GQ - Equatorial Guinea  
GR - Greece  
GT - Guatemala  
GW - Guinea-Bissau  
HN - Honduras  
HR - Croatia  
HU - Hungary  
ID - Indonesia

IE - Ireland  
IL - Israel  
IN - India  
IQ - Iraq  
IR - Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
IS - Iceland  
IT - Italy  
JM - Jamaica  
JO - Jordan  
JP - Japan  
KE - Kenya  
KG - Kyrgyzstan  
KH - Cambodia  
KM - Comoros  
KN - Saint Kitts and Nevis  
KP - Democratic People's Republic of Korea  
KR - Republic of Korea  
KW - Kuwait  
KZ - Kazakhstan  
LA - Lao People's Democratic Republic  
LC - Saint Lucia  
LI - Liechtenstein  
LK - Sri Lanka  
LR - Liberia  
LS - Lesotho  
LT - Lithuania  
LU - Luxembourg  
LV - Latvia  
LY - Libya  
MA - Morocco  
MC - Monaco  
MD - Republic of Moldova  
ME - Montenegro  
MG - Madagascar  
MU - Mauritius  
MK - North Macedonia  
ML - Mali  
MN - Mongolia  
MR - Mauritania  
MT - Malta  
MW - Malawi  
MX - Mexico  
MY - Malaysia  
MZ - Mozambique  
NA - Namibia  
NE - Niger  
NG - Nigeria  
NI - Nicaragua  
NL - Netherlands  
NO - Norway  
NZ - New Zealand  
OM - Oman  
PA - Panama

PE - Peru  
PG - Papua New Guinea  
PH - Philippines  
PL - Poland  
PT - Portugal  
QA - Qatar  
RO - Romania  
RS - Serbia  
RU - Russian Federation  
RW - Rwanda  
SA - Saudi Arabia  
SC - Seychelles  
SD - Sudan  
SE - Sweden  
SG - Singapore  
SI - Slovenia  
SK - Slovakia  
SL - Sierra Leone  
SM - San Marino  
SN - Senegal  
ST - Sao Tome and Principe  
SV - El Salvador  
SY - Syrian Arab Republic  
SZ - Eswatini  
TD - Chad  
TG - Togo  
TH - Thailand  
TJ - Tajikistan  
TM - Turkmenistan  
TN - Tunisia  
TR - Turkey  
TT - Trinidad and Tobago  
TZ - United Republic of Tanzania  
UA - Ukraine  
UG - Uganda  
US - United States of America  
UZ - Uzbekistan  
VC - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
VN - Viet Nam  
WS - Samoa  
ZA - South Africa  
ZM - Zambia  
ZW - Zimbabwe  
AP - African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO)  
EA - Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO)  
EP - European Patent Office (EPO)  
OA - African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI)  
XN - Nordic Patent Institute (NPI)  
XV - Visegrad Patent Institute (VPI)

Email Address \*

**Thank You!**

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Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.