



Brief and important information for our users

Newsflash 2006/09

28-02-2006 Status of the implementation of IPC8 data in the EPO bibliographic databases

1. Backfile handling

During the second half of 2005 the EPO was extremely busy in creating IPC8 symbols for its complete bibliographic database DOCDB.

All systems handled by the EPO use the WIPO ST8 standard (i.e. 50 character txt strings) for internal storage and for exchange to third parties.

About 53.5 million documents, i.e. 90% of all documents have been reclassified according to IPC8. The classifications were generated from the European classification and from earlier versions of the IPC, where possible. For this backlog production, all documents belonging to the same patent family got the same classification symbols, i.e. classifications have been allocated on patent family level. Both classification levels, the advanced and the core classification have been allocated to the documents

At the end of 2005 the EPO extracted the IPC8 tables from the database to DVD for distribution to the commercial providers and the end-users of the EPO's bibliographic data, as well as to all patent offices of the member states of the EPO and all other offices interested in the data. In total 70 copies have been sent out free of charge.

For the remaining 10% of documents the following measures are planned:

- Some offices have offered deliveries of their own reclassified data to the EPO, as the owner of the worldwide master classification database (MCD). These are in particular the Japanese office (around 18 million documents), the German office and the Eurasian office (each about 1 million documents). These classifications are planned to be loaded into the MCD in the course of 2006, either by adding them to the classes for documents already having got IPC8 in the first run, or for filling part of the 10% gap.

- For the documents still remaining, a huge intellectual effort will be necessary. Therefore no target date is for the completion of the task.

The EPO plans to perform a second extraction of the IPC8 tables in the course of 2006 for distribution to external users.

2. Frontfile handling

Starting with 1.1.2006 the usage of IPC8 has become obligatory. However, not all offices have yet succeeded with the migration to IPC8.

The countries from which the EPO has already received valid IPC8 frontfile data are: AU, CA, CH, DE, EP, ES, FR, GB, JP, SI, SK, US, WO.

Some countries still deliver IPC7. In this case the EPO stores the IPC7 in the bibliographic database, and, if there is already an IPC8 on family level, propagates that IPC8 to the document.

If IPC8 is provided by the national office, it is taken as it is. In addition, advanced level symbols are translated into the appropriate core level classification, preserving all other attributes, and are stored separately. If there is a family member, the classes of the patent family are added to the document. This often leads to the effect that one document has the same classification allocated by the national office and by the EPO. They only differ in the code of the authorising office. Of course such duplicates are suppressed in the screen issued by esp@cenet.

Example: CH 695255 A has got:

G01R	19/22	20060101A	N20051008RMEP
H02M	7/217	20060101A	I20060215BHCH
H02M	7/217	20060101A	I20051008RMEP

ie H02M 7/217 was allocated by CH and by EP.

For countries that deliver IPC7 and IPC8 both data elements are taken over to the bibliographic database.

3. Tricky cases

Classification of documents with publication levels before and after 1.1.2006

Here an example of how the reclassification works in the context of an IPC correction in a later publication level

Example: EP1609944

The A2 document has got IPC7 classifications E21B7/04, E21B7/06 allocated in week 2005/52.

In week 2006/03 the search report was published and the IPC was corrected to IPC8 E21B7/06; since the correction was made in IPC8 there was no need to change the IPC7 symbols. The corrected class was stored in IPC8.

IPC8 symbol E21B7/06 is advanced level only. E21B7/04 is the corresponding core level symbol. Therefore the core level classification calculated by the EPO contains E21B7/04. Nevertheless code H (for human) is preserved and not changed to M (machine) when doing the level conversion.

PCT documents classified in IPC7 and having entered into the national phase in 2006

Example CA 2150242 derived from WO1994/017673

Below, a typical example from the Canadian register where a classification is using IPC8 format for a IPC7 symbol. This is due to the fact that the PCT publication is deemed to be the national CA publication, but not all of the IPC7 symbols do fit into the IPC8 schema.

(12) Patent: (11) CA 2150242

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(45) Issued: Jan. 10, 2006

(86) PCT Filing Date: Jan. 31, 1994

(87) PCT Publication Date: Aug. 18, 1994

Examination requested: Oct. 20, 2000

(51) International Class (IPC): A23G 4/08 (2006.01)

A23G 3/30 (2000.01)

Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT): Yes

(85) National Entry: May 25, 1995

(86) PCT Filing number: PCT/US1994/001175

(87) International publication number: WO1994/017673

DOCDB replaces this class by a valid IPC8 symbol, namely

A23G 4/00 20060101A I20051008RMEP

These PCT cases are very frequent and you can find many examples, eg for EP where the WO publication is deemed to stand for the European one, thus creating a version date conflict for the IPC.

F (first) and L (later) indicators

Most of the offices use the first/later indicator for IPC8. Up to now we have encountered only two offices consistently not using F/L namely EP and FR.

Example: US 2006001468 A1 published on 20060105

AA2006001468

advanced:	H03B	1/00	20060101AFI20060105BHUS
core:	H03B	1/00	20060101CLI20060105BHUS

It would have been expected that advanced and core level classification would use "F", foreseen for defining the sole or first "invention information". However, the interpretation of the USPTO was, that if there is a code "F" given for the advanced level, there cannot be a second "F" within the same documentation unit.

4. Repository of IPC8 validation files and IPC7 to IPC8 conversion tables

The management of the IPC8 scheme falls completely under the responsibility of WIPO.

The IPC8 core level schemes, and conversion tables IPC7 to IPC8 are available, mostly in XML format, from the WIPO download site

http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/en/download_area/

For looking up individual IPC8 symbols you can consult the WIPO website

<http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/ipc8/?lang=en>

which gives the text of individual IPC8 symbols, advanced and core level, in English and French language.

The complete IPC8 validity file is available on

<http://www.wipo.int/ibis/IPC8/>

but this has restricted access and needs user-id and password.

Should you require further information on the International Patent Classification (IPC), please contact WIPO by e-mail at ipc.mail@wipo.int.