AR LEGAL SOLUTIONS
Patent Perspectives Quarterly

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Welcome!

Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter, *Patent Perspectives Quarterly*. In this issue, we focus on law office technology tools. Enjoy!

In each issue, we include tips and tricks based on real-world inquiries from paralegals and patent attorneys. We would love for this section to be interactive—feel free to send us additional questions to address in the next newsletter to newsletter@arlegalsolutions.net.

Top 5 FAQs from Patent Professionals

1. **Why did I receive a charge from the USPTO for filing an appendix with my utility application?**
   As we all know, the patent office now requires all nonprovisional applications to be filed in the .docx format. There is an option to also file a preliminary amendment, appendix or other supplemental information as a PDF, but it has to be uploaded in the backup section at the bottom of the filing screen in Patent Center or the USPTO will charge a $400 fee. This fee will be labeled "Non-DOCX filing charge." If you wish to file an appendix or a backup application as a PDF, add these items in the backup section at the bottom of the screen.

   For questions or assistance regarding filing in DOCX, contact the Patent Electronic Business Center at ebc@uspto.gov or 866-217-9197, Monday – Friday, 6 am – midnight ET.

2. **Anything else I should know about filing an appendix?**
   If filing an appendix that is part of the application, label the filing as aux.pdf. Also, check out this Quick Reference Guide for filing an auxiliary PDF.

3. **I filed an application using the wrong country code for my applicant and that incorrect information is reflected on the filing receipt. How can I fix this?**
   File a corrected Application Data Sheet (ADS) to list the correct country code. The USPTO will send you a new filing receipt. The patent office notes: An ADS that is filed after the submission of the application, even where no ADS was filed previously, must identify the information being added or deleted, with underlining for additions, and a strike-through or brackets for deletions. See this Corrected Application Data Sheet Quick Start Guide for more information.

4. **I noticed that an inventor's name is misspelled on the assignment. Can we strike the misspelled name, correct it and have the inventor initial the change or do we have to recreate the entire assignment document?**
   This is a bit tricky because not having a clean assignment document could potentially cause future problems, such as when filing internationally. Generally, this has been accepted practice in our experience, but please check with your attorney before going this route.

5. **I'm filing a PCT based off a U.S. provisional application but want to change the applicant name. Can I file the PCT application under the new applicant name?**
   Best practice in this situation is to at least have an assignment in hand for the provisional – even if it's not recorded – BEFORE filing the PCT. Again, please confirm with your attorney/firm policies before filing.

Streamlining Legal Operations

Managing cases efficiently is paramount in an IP firm's fast-paced environment. With multiple clients, deadlines, and tasks to juggle simultaneously, the need for effective workflow management is critical. Project management tools offer a solution by providing a centralized platform for organizing, tracking and collaborating on legal matters. Here's how these tools can revolutionize workflow and be life-changing in firms that are still using spreadsheets and Outlook folders for organization.

Before we get into the details and benefits, let's define the basics. A docketing system is for managing hard deadlines, such as USPTO filing dates. A Project Management System is for workflow and managing internal deadlines, which help the team complete tasks on time in order to meet the hard deadlines. A Document Management System is where documents, important emails and even imagery can be stored.

Centralized Case Management
Project management tools serve as a central hub for all case-related information. Instead of sifting through emails, documents, and spreadsheets scattered across various platforms, attorneys and staff can consolidate everything within a single interface. This centralized repository enables easy access to case files, client communications, court documents, and research materials, fostering transparency and accountability within the team.

Task Prioritization and Deadline Management
Missing deadlines is expensive in the patent world – so, not an option. Project management tools make it easy to prioritize tasks and set clear deadlines for each stage of a case. Team members can assign responsibilities, track progress, and receive notifications for upcoming deadlines, ensuring that no crucial dates are overlooked. By maintaining a structured timeline, legal professionals can stay on top of their workload and deliver results on deadline. These tools can also cut down on the number emails going back and forth and the need for follow-up phone calls and status updates because deadlines are added to the software, meaning people can stay abreast of deadlines in real time.

Seamless Collaboration
Project management tools facilitate seamless collaboration by allowing team members to share documents, exchange feedback, and communicate in real-time. Whether it's drafting legal briefs, conducting research, or scheduling meetings, these tools streamline communication and ensure that everyone is on the same page throughout the case lifecycle. In our experience, using the collaboration and communication tools within a project management system also drastically cuts down on emails. Who doesn't like the sound of that?

Document Management and Version Control
Managing vast amounts of documentation is a common challenge in any law office. Modern document management systems offer robust capabilities, enabling users to upload, organize, and version control documents with ease. From patent applications to client meeting notes, legal documents can be securely stored and accessed whenever needed. Version control features ensure that everyone is working with the most up-to-date information, eliminating the risk of errors or inconsistencies. These systems often have add-ons for Word, Excel and Outlook that make it easy to save right from your Microsoft Office applications.

Client Portals
Clients expect transparency and responsiveness. Many current project management tools enhance client communication by providing a platform for sharing updates, progress reports, and billing information. Clients can access case-related documents, track milestones, and communicate with their legal team directly through the tool's portal. This level of transparency fosters trust and strengthens the client-lawyer relationship, ultimately leading to greater satisfaction and loyalty. Certain docketing software solutions offer this feature, so be sure to see if that could be an add-on to a platform you already use.

Streamlining Legal Operations (cont.)

Performance Analytics and Continuous Improvement
Finally, let's talk about ROI. Many project management tools offer valuable insights into the performance and efficiency of legal operations. By analyzing key metrics such as task completion rates, turnaround times and resource allocation, law practices can identify areas for improvement and implement strategic changes to optimize workflow. Whether it's reallocating resources, adjusting timelines, or refining processes, data-driven decision-making enables continuous improvement and ensures that the firm operates at its full potential.

Our Favorites
AR Legal Solutions is not paid to endorse any software providers, but we do have our favorites based on experience and anecdotes from clients and others in the industry. Here are a few:

- Docketing Software for firms: CPI
    - Easy to navigate
    - Sends automated emails to the attorney/paralegal once actions are docketed with customizable routing features
    - Includes updates on laws and rules in various countries

- Document Management System (DMS): NetDocs
    - Easier to navigate than many older DMS platforms
    - When an email is saved, an icon is displayed so that other internal users can see if they were copied on the email, reducing duplicate documents

- Docketing/Document Management System for In-House: Anaqua
    - Combines docketing and DMS system
    - Includes inventor portal for submitting invention disclosure/capture forms

- Project Management Software: ClickUP
    - Deadlines can be reviewed in one spot with a view customizable by preference (calendar, Kaizen board, etc.)
    - Reminder emails of what's coming due (optional)
    - Tasks can be filtered a number of ways, such as due date, to help with prioritization
    - Workload for individuals can be visualized and monitored so people managers can adjust work assignments
    - Guest users can be invited at no extra cost
    - Connects with a number of other apps for easy integration of systems

Sure, We Can Help!
AR Legal Solutions has worked with a number of project management systems because we are committed to adapting to our clients' systems. We have also helped clients implement project management, document management, docketing, and other systems as they often need that expertise and extra resources to tackle implementation.

Webinar: Marketing Your Practice on a Budget

AR Legal Solutions CEO Aubré Rabe will be presenting this live webinar on **Tuesday, September 17** at **12:00 – 1:00 p.m. CT**.

Keeping a steady flow of work is often on the minds of solo practitioners and leaders of small law firms and their biggest hinderances are time and money. Aubré and legal marketing consultant, Tracy Dann, will present a case study on how they collaborated to cost-effectively expand AR Legal Services and provide practical advice for implementing a practice growth strategy. Attendees will gain insight into:

- Business development strategies that are time and cost-efficient
- Client service best practices
- Creating space in your day/week to focus on business growth
- Tools for focusing your marketing efforts and your brand

Registration information will be available soon on the [Minnesota CLE website](#).

Patent Center Known Issues and Work-Arounds

We found plenty of content for our Patent Center issues section this quarter. To be fair, the Patent Center team has worked diligently to move reported issues to the RESOLVED category. Technology, right?

Third-Party Submission: Users report problems with uploading an evidence of publication document in the "Non-Patent Publications" section.
- Users must upload a copy of each non-patent publication by clicking "select existing document or upload" under the "evidence of publication" drop-down menu. Only one document per section can be uploaded.
- To upload translations and evidentiary items, such as affidavits, declarations, etc., users should combine these documents into one PDF and upload by clicking "select existing document or upload" under the "English translation" drop-down menu.
- Users should explain that they are including other evidentiary items either in the concise description or relevance text field or upload concise description of relevance document.

Workbench Saved Submission Filtering Error: Users have reported an error when changing the default settings in the Saved Submissions section of Workbench. The USPTO is currently investigating the issue.

Guest User 401 Error: The Patent Center Team is investigating an intermittent issue where guest users receive a 401 error when a submission option is selected.

First Action Prediction Letter disabled: The First Action Prediction notification has been disabled in Patent Center because the system that provides information for this function is being updated. Contact the Examiner for the most accurate estimate.

PDF filename including "spec" auto-assigned a Specification document description: Files are being auto-assigned the Specification document code if the PDF file name contains "spec." Users can change the document code manually.

Patent Center Help

Still getting the hang of Patent Center? Below are some FAQs submitted to the USPTO.

Q: **Can the inactivity time-out be extended?**

A: To comply with [NIST Special Publication 800-63B: Digital Identity Guidelines](#) for all federal information systems, Patent Center must terminate user sessions after 30 minutes of inactivity. However, users will receive an alert after 25 minutes of inactivity and will be prompted with option to extend their session for an additional 30 minutes.

Q: **How many documents can be uploaded into a Patent Center submission?**

A: Up to 60 documents can be uploaded in a single submission.

Q: **I am a support staff member who supports multiple practitioners. Must I be sponsored by each practitioner to work on their behalf?**

A: Yes, you must be sponsored by each practitioner for whom you will be conducting business on USPTO.gov.

Q: **How many support staff members can a registered practitioner sponsor at one time?**

A: 50 support staff members can be sponsored in a single account. Once a support staff member is sponsored by a practitioner, they can request that additional users be sponsored by the same practitioner. The practitioner will need to approve these requests.

The Patent Center team is constantly adding new information and resources to the website. You can also contact the Patent Electronic Business Center for assistance at 1-866-217-9197.

In Other News…

USPTO Fee Changes Coming in 2025

The USPTO has submitted proposals to increase certain patent and trademark fees in 2025.

Attorneys, as well as paralegals and support staff, should be aware, alert clients as the rate effective date nears and watch for a new fee schedule to be published. Fee adjustments would go into effect in January 2025.

More information can be found on the [USPTO's Fee Setting and Adjusting](#) website.

Filing Plant Applications on Patent Center in Full Bloom

The USPTO added a new application submission type in Patent Center for Nonprovisional Plant Applications.

Techy Tips & Tricks

To round out our law office tech edition of *Patent Perspectives Quarterly*, we decided to share some of our favorite tricks and shortcuts for using the most common software tools.

Acrobat

- Compare two versions of a PDF document to see the differences (Tools > Compare Files).
- Bookmarking: Create bookmarks to navigate through your PDF easily (Tools > Organize Pages > Add Bookmark).
- Optimize scanned documents: Acrobat can recognize text in scanned documents to make a scan searchable and editable (Tools > Enhance Scans > Recognize Text).
- Combine or Split: Merge multiple PDFs into one or split one into multiple (Tools > Combine Files/Tools > Organize Pages > Split).
- PDFs can be exported to other document types, including Word, Excel or PowerPoint (Tools > Export PDF).
- Password Protection: Secure your PDFs by adding passwords and permissions (Tools > Protection > Encrypt > Encrypt with Password).

Excel

- AutoSum: Quickly sum a range of cells by using the AutoSum (Σ) button on the Home tab. Excel will automatically suggest a range for you to sum based on nearby data.
- Filtering: Use the filter feature to display only the rows that meet certain criteria, making it easier to find specific information in your spreadsheet (Data > Filter).
- Text to Columns: Use this feature to split text in a single cell into multiple columns based on a delimiter (e.g., comma, space). This is helpful for cleaning up data sets, such as name and address lists for Mail Merge (Data > Text to Columns).
- Comments: Add comments to cells to provide additional information or context. Comments are useful for collaboration and documenting decisions or explanations within your spreadsheet (Review > New Comment).

Word

- Format Painter: Use the Format Painter to quickly apply the same formatting (like font, size, color) to different parts of your document. This feature is also available in Excel.
- Use the ⧉ Share ⌄ button to collaborate on documents in real-time via OneDrive or SharePoint.
- Helpful if collaborating on documents goes wrong is Version History (File > Info > Version History) where you can view and restore previous versions of your document.
- Quick Parts: Save and reuse your commonly used content, such as phrases in patent filings or attorney signature blocks (Insert > Quick Parts).
- Keyboard shortcuts for Word, but also Excel: Ctrl + C (copy), Ctrl + V (paste), Ctrl + Z (undo), Ctrl + Y (redo), Ctrl + N (new document), Ctrl + B (bold), Ctrl + I (italics), Ctrl + U (underline), Ctrl + F (find), and Ctrl + K (insert hyperlink).