

Open Source Patent Searching & Analytics

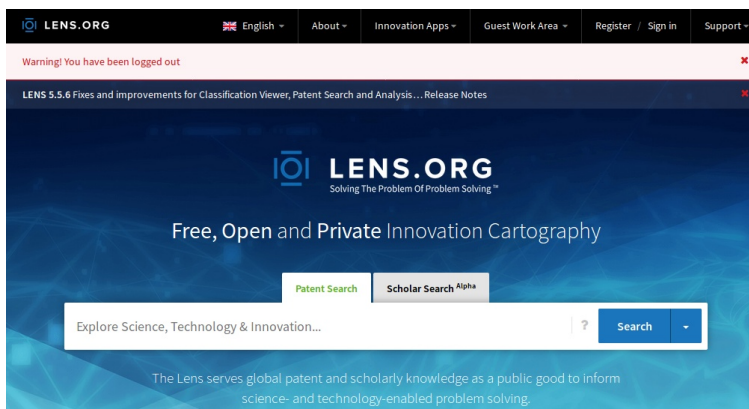
Review of Lens.com

By Hugh O'Donnell

As the economy moves to more independent contractors and small startup companies, there is a need for affordable tools. A growing trend is to use open source tools that are created by dedicated individuals and/or non-profits. These tools span many capabilities including art, design, modeling and patents. For instance, this article is being written on a free operating system (Linux using Ubuntu Mate 16.04) and using a free desktop publishing program (Scribus). For this article, we will discuss use of one tool for finding, organizing and analyzing patents. This article will focus on Lens.org.

Reasons for Searching

Creating new products and successfully launching products requires significant resources that need to be recovered through sales. The new product should be protected and shared with the world via patents and trademarks. Utility patents are a primary mechanism for disclosing the invention to the world in return for marketplace protection for a fixed period of time. Criteria for obtaining utility patents include that the ideas are new and not merely additive combination of existing patents. This requirement is a primary reason for conducting a patent search that proves the new and non-combinatorial requirements.



Lens.org is a service of Cambia, an independent non-profit institute. The Lens is a joint initiative of Cambia and Queensland University of Technology.

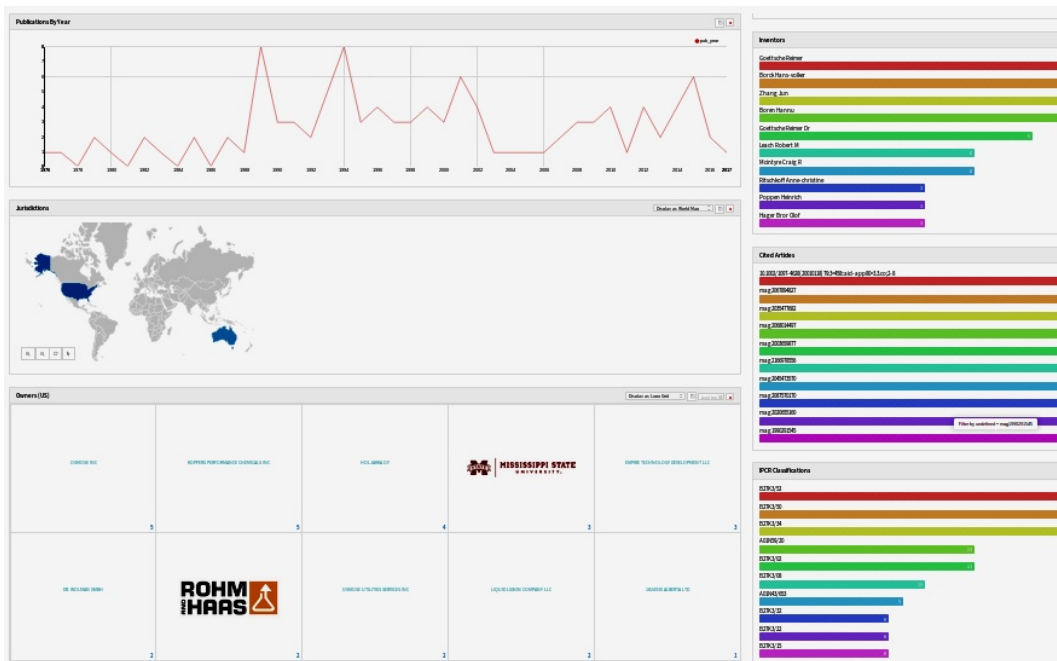
Another reason for conducting a patent search is to understand the landscape in a area. Creation of a patent landscape establishes the scope of knowledge in a field, the trend of inventions and identification of key players. This landscaping provides detail information that can be used for multiple purposes such as to identify best commercial partners, future commercially important developments or opportunity areas where invention is missing ('white space').

Open Source Patent Searching

Lens.org is an easy to use searching system that uses three search methods: i) simple keywords; ii) advanced field search; or iii) patent classification search. These search methods provide a good range of search techniques. When a concept is being investigated, the ability to search on key words in titles and abstracts is very helpful. When a search in a specific field, the use of a classification system in the search is most helpful. These searches can be complimentary.

Example

A search and analysis example illustrates the use of Lens. The particular example is a search for methods to preserve wood. Enough records were included in the search to demonstrate the analysis portion of Lens. The search was conducted using keywords of “wood preservative”. Ten graphics are produced in the analysis that include chronological trends, IPCR classification groups, assignees, inventors, top cited patents and literature cited. These graphical analysis are comparable to those of expensive fee-based packages.



One feature that is missing from Lens is a textual analysis of concepts or key words. This is an important component of analytics to quickly see the major concepts that are repeatedly stated. While using Len.org, the investigator will have to categorized and list the concepts manually. While time consuming, this manual investigation does provide more familiarity with the subject.

A nice additional analytic in Lens is a citation listing (PatCite). This feature provides links to journal articles and patents cited by or citing the patent of interest. A missing premium feature would be the graphical mapping of these citations to quickly uncover potential relationship among assignees. An example is provided by WIPOi that illustrates the speed of quickly finding key assignees through the high volume of citations. This is likely a simple feature for Lens to add in the future.

Open Source Patent Search Tool Websites

- <https://patentscope.wipo.int/search/en/search.jsf>
- <https://app.patentinspiration.com/>
- <http://www.patentsview.org/web/#viz/comparisons>
- <https://www.lens.org/>
- <https://worldwide.espacenet.com/>
- <https://www.octimine.com/>

Arris Innovations, LLC is a consulting company that creates value through use of science and engineering applied to consumer products.

<https://wiki.piug.org/display/PIUG/Patent+Analysis%2C+Mapping%2C+and+Visualization+Tools>

The key learning is that open source enterprises provide good features at an incredible price. The open source business model typically includes a professional level to provide an income source for future developments and expert knowledge for the user. Lens is one of those great open source examples. For the individual inventor or consultant, this advancement of open source tools at an affordable ladder of prices is very welcomed.