

## Big in Japan? Tactics for monitoring Japanese patent documentation

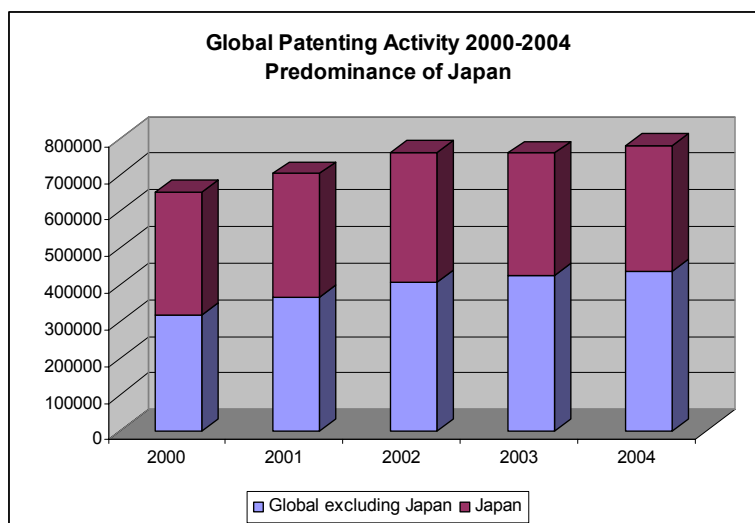
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*If your patent searches don't cover Japan, you could be missing out on 50% or more of the patent information available for your technology. Here we take a look at the scale of Japanese patenting activity, and examine options for breaking through the language barrier to find business-critical information.*

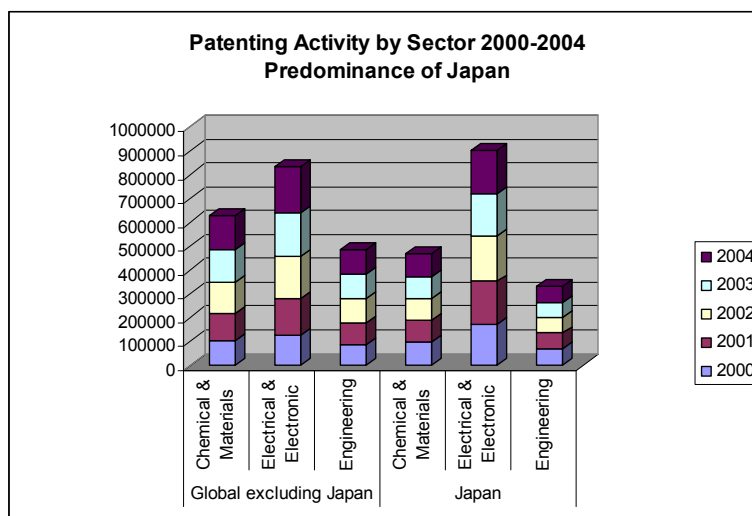
### The predominance of Japan in global patenting activity

Statistics derived from the *Derwent World Patents Index*<sup>®</sup> (*DWPI*<sup>SM</sup>) database show that Japanese patent applications represented almost 50% of the global total from 2000 to 2004 (figure 1).



**Figure 1: Global patenting activity 2000-2004**  
From a total of 3,648,748 basic patents<sup>1</sup>, 1,703,764 had a Japanese priority

Taking a closer look, the statistics reveal a particular Japanese predominance in three major industry sectors: Chemicals & Materials, Electrical & Electronic, and Engineering (figure 2):



**Figure 2: Global patenting activity in 3 key sectors 2000-2004**

- Chemical & Materials: 43% of patents\* had a Japanese priority
- Electrical & Electronic: 52% of patents\* had a Japanese priority
- Engineering: 40% of patents\* had a Japanese priority

In the first six months of 2005 alone, approximately 16,000 US patents with a Japanese priority have been granted. In a sample update to *DWPI* (update 200560) almost one third (8,491 out of 29,889) of new records are for Japanese patents.

### Keeping up with Japanese patenting activity

The sheer volume of patents being issued in kanji (Japanese) is quite daunting. If you are based outside Japan and do not have direct access to Japanese speaking specialists, attempting to keep on top of this can seem a Herculean task.

This language barrier can result in large quantities of vital information from Japan being inaccessible to technical staff employed to review technological developments. Therefore English translations of Japanese patents are of great importance to organizations which need to track IP developments both within and outside Japan.

### Tackling the patent mountain

The first key step in identifying potentially relevant material is to use a database which offers search options other than kanji text searching. One such database is *DWPI*—this provides renowned coding and classification systems that enable precise, non-text searches for specific technologies. Patent abstracts in *DWPI* also include intellectually enhanced titles and abstracts, written in English by Thomson Scientific editorial staff to summarise the key aspects of the patent,

and to highlight the invention's use and advantages. These enable patent searchers to see at-a-glance if a patent may be relevant to them.

The use of *DWPI* alone for patent searches is probably sufficient if your aim is to maintain awareness of relevant patents. If, however, you are involved in infringement or technology research you will need to see the full text of the original Japanese patent.

### **Getting the full picture**

Getting hold of a copy of the Japanese patent is relatively straight forward: you can login to the Japanese Patent Office website ([www.jpo.go.jp](http://www.jpo.go.jp)) to download a copy, or you can use one of the various document delivery services embedded within Thomson Scientific products and services:

- *Delphion*<sup>®</sup> ([www.delphion.com](http://www.delphion.com)) – access to the world's important patent databases, with fast PDF download capabilities
- *PatentWeb*<sup>®</sup> ([www.micropatent.com](http://www.micropatent.com)) – houses the world's largest commercial collection of patent data, with over 50 million full-text and front-page records
- *Thomson Patent Store* ([www.thomsonpatentstore.com](http://www.thomsonpatentstore.com)) – access instant copies of US, EP, WO, DE and other patents from across the world

### **Increasing your understanding**

Before you have any Japanese text translated, you should first consider why you need the translation: is the text going to be used to make business critical or legal decisions, or are you just looking for a little more detail to see whether the particular patents are truly relevant to you ?

There are many translation companies available worldwide which specialise in providing Japanese-to-English translations. Thomson, for example, provides such a service ([www.scientific.thomson.com/products/patenttranslations/](http://www.scientific.thomson.com/products/patenttranslations/)). We employ language and subject specialists to provide high quality certified translations. The particular expertise of our translators is in combining language and subject knowledge with an understanding of the peculiarities of patent language, the so-called "patentese". Obtaining a certified translation from one of our specialists may be crucial if you are involved with patent litigation or assessing validity, patentability and infringement.

### **Cost-effective alternatives**

The manual approach to translation can be time-consuming and expensive. There are occasions where a more cost-effective approach is required, for example:

- when you need to sift through a range of documents to establish their relevance

- when you wish to scan Japanese patents prior to (or instead of) investing in a certified translation.

Machine-assisted translation (MAT) services have been developed to satisfy these requirements.

### **Machine translations with the human touch**

Thomson was an early adopter of MAT technology. To facilitate the role of the *DWPI* editorial staff, and to ensure that the Japanese content of *DWPI* could be created in a timely and quality assured fashion, Thomson invested heavily to create a MAT system using dictionaries and syntax rules which are subject to constant revision and improvement.

The output from the Thomson MAT system is of sufficient quality to satisfy the needs of the in-house *DWPI* editorial staff. For customers, however, Thomson added a second level of service. Before being supplied to clients, the MAT output is editorially reviewed by specialist staff to enhance the syntax and vocabulary. This is known as human-assisted MAT (HUMAT).

Thomson has also developed a range of service options so that the translation output can be supplied to you in the format most convenient for your workflow. For example:

- we can send you the original text alongside the translated text in dual-column format, or just the English translation
- you can choose to receive translations of the full text, or of just selected parts such as the claims
- we can format the text in a Word or PDF document, and supply it via email or FTP

Thomson can supply human-edited MAT for any form of Japanese document, whether an unexamined patent or utility (kokai "A"), or an examined patent or utility (kokoku or toroku "B") published before or after 1993. Our service also covers Japanese-language PCT (WO) patents and we can translate the text embedded within drawings and graphical captions with the patents.

Translation requests are individually processed in our Japanese office using our own dedicated in-house translation systems. The results are then post-processed by our technical bi-lingual staff in Japan and the UK, prior to supply via email or ftp generally within 5 working days from receipt of the request in Japan.

### Comparison of translation options

	<b>Raw MAT services</b>	<b>Thomson Enhanced MAT</b>	<b>Manual Translation such as Thomson Translation Services</b>
<b>Product Quality</b>	Poor - Average	Good -Very Good	Excellent
<b>Enhanced</b>	No	Yes - Edited by specialists	Yes - Fully Certified translations
<b>Turnaround</b>	1-10 days	5-10 days	10 days (5 day Rush service available)
<b>Supply Method</b>	Text file, often created on-the-fly	Word or PDF	Word or PDF
<b>Source Data</b>	JP-A's post-1993 only	All JP-A/B's & JP-WO's & Text in Drawings if required	Any Japanese language document
<b>Uniqueness</b>	Near instant access	Fast, quality checked access to wide range of documents	Excellent Quality
<b>Limitations</b>	Recent data only  Hidden costs in staff time collecting and collating the data.  Limited output options.	More expensive than unchecked MAT	Slower & more expensive than MAT
<b>Costs</b>	Free or Low	Moderate-High	High

Figure 3: comparison of translation options

## **Making the right choice**

Translation services can be crucial to your organization's success. When selecting a service, be sure to select one that can provide the range of services you need to suit your translation requirements, your budget and your timeframe.

By using Thomson's expertise you can be confident that the English translation you receive is a true and accurate representation of the original. Our staff regularly prepare high-quality certified translations of patents in Japanese, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. And by using Thomson HUMAT, clients worldwide can reduce the delays and costs inherent in obtaining English copies of Japanese patents.

These translation services are provided by the Global Document Services team, one of the Expert Services within Thomson Scientific. If you would like to know more, please contact the team via telephone on +44 (0)20 7344 2859 or via email: [ts.globaldocservices@thomson.com](mailto:ts.globaldocservices@thomson.com) Alternatively visit [www.scientific.thomson.com/patenttranslations](http://www.scientific.thomson.com/patenttranslations)

1. basic patents are the first publication of an invention processed by Thomson Scientific