

# IPC Reform Frequently Asked Questions

January 17, 2006

## ► General

### **What is the difference between IPC R and IPC 8?**

There is no difference. IPC R, or IPC Reform, is the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of the IPC.

### **Why is IPC Reform taking place?**

The EPO is leading the effort to change the IPC classification structure to:

- Allow for faster response times to the categorization of new technologies
- Present a single classification system to be searched across all patents/applications, for all time periods
- Provide granularity of classifications for more precise searching

### **Will I be able to search using old IPC (IPC 7) codes too, or will they go away with the advent of this Reform system?**

In *DWPI*, *Delphion*, *PatentWeb*, and *Aureka* all patent documents published after January 1, 2006 will be classified using the new IPC R codes. Documents published prior to this will retain their original classification (IPC 1-7) but will ultimately also be reclassified with IPC R. The time schedule for reclassification is dependent on receipt of information from the EPO, and on the process of reloading the information into our databases. The time frame for availability of reclassification data will be different for each product, but completion is expected in 2006. We will keep you informed of the status and schedule, but you should remain aware that searching using both systems is the recommended strategy during 2006.

### **Will both applications and granted patents have the new IPC R codes?**

Yes.

### **All I do is search US patents and the USPTO uses its own classification system. Will IPC reform affect me and how is the USPTO handling IPC 8?**

The US classification system is completely separate and there will be no effect on any searching that uses only the US classification system. There will, however, be a change in the way the US office manages IPC classification of its documents. Before the Reform, IPC classification was applied by the USPTO using a concordance, meaning that the US code was assigned first, and then the concordance was used to find the 'equivalent' IPC code. This process should be improved with the implementation of a better US-to-IPC concordance, due to be developed.

### **What does RCL stand for?**

Revision Concordance List. It shows the relationships between IPC 7 and IPC R codes. You can view it on the WIPO website (<http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/ipc8/>).

### **Is Thomson Scientific publishing a concordance table comparing IPC 7 and IPC R codes?**

No. The authoritative concordance is on the WIPO website (<http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/ipc8/>), and we recommend that you review the website regularly, especially as it is planned that revisions to the advanced codes will be made every three months.

### **What are the issues involved in searching old and new codes in the same query?**

It depends on the search interface or product that you are using. *Delphion*, *PatentWeb*, and *Aureka* offer fields that permit you to search the new codes alone, or new and old codes together. In the field that searches new codes only, it will be possible to specify whether you want to find core, advanced or both, or invention, additional or both. These narrowing options for the new codes will not be available in the field that searches for "any" IPC code. There should be no

issues with searching old and new codes in *DWPI* because of the multiple search and super-search fields that are available. There will only be an issue if an IPC R code is the same as an IPC 1-7 code, but has a different definition – this should be a very rare occurrence.

**How often will the new codes change?**

Core IPC R codes will be revised every 3 years. Advanced IPC R codes will be updated every three months, beginning July, 2006. The higher frequency of revisions to the advanced codes will help patent examiners keep up with evolving and rapidly changing technologies.

**Which documents will be reclassified every 3 months?**

Applications in the PCT Minimum Documentation group will effectively be subject to on-going IPC reclassification at the Advanced level every three months, but all documents will be reclassified every three years.

**Is there a way I can use a keyword to search for my new IPC code on the WIPO website?**

Yes. Use the Catchword index to find codes that deal with a specific keyword.

**There are four characters in the GROUP code element of IPC R and three characters in IPC 7. What problems will this pose for queries containing both?**

In *Delphion*, *PatentWeb*, and *Aureka*, Thomson Scientific will temporarily forego indexing the extra group character (currently always a zero), so that our users can search for old and new codes with the same number of characters in the group. This strategy will prevent errors that arise from offsetting characters by one place, and will make searching much more user-friendly. After the back-file has been completely reclassified and that data is uploaded, the 4th character will be introduced. This approach makes for more consistency in searching during a period of incremental change.

As with *Delphion*, *PatentWeb*, etc., *DWPI* will remove the leading zero until the enhanced *DWPI* file is available at the end of quarter 1, 2006. At which point, there will be no issues searching both three and four digit groups.

**How can I tell whether my new alert strategy is a good one?**

Your new alert strategy cannot be checked in advance by a back-file search (pre-January 1, 2006 published documents), because newly added codes will not be present in the back-file. To check new alert strategies, you will have to wait until after January 1, 2006, and depending on your query, it may take a few weeks for sufficient data to appear. Once data is available, you can compare the results of your old strategy and the new one to check for the quality of your revision. If you no longer need the old query, please delete it from the system.

**What are the implications for my alert if the code is revised?**

Alerts and other queries need to be reviewed in order to keep them up to date with changes in terminology, including new keywords and new IPCs. If they are not kept up to date, you may miss valuable documents.

**Which patent offices are core level and which are advanced?**

The election of core or advanced level is voluntary. There is no definitive list yet, but countries that handle small numbers of documents will probably elect to be Core level offices. It is safe to say that the largest offices will all be applying codes at the advanced level.

**What is the difference between an ‘invention’ code and an ‘additional’ code?**

Invention code(s) describe the novel aspect or “inventive step” of the invention, and can be compared to the main IPC codes from IPC 1-7, although they will probably become more precise in identifying the key technical advance(s). Additional codes categorize the patent by other technology aspects so it can be easily found, but are not what make the invention patentable.

**Can a patent have more than one invention code?**

Yes, if it has more than one novel aspect.

**When there is more than one invention code, can I search for both?**

Yes. All our products will allow this, and furthermore, they can be searched together, connected by "OR" or "AND," allowing you to adjust for comprehensiveness or precision.

**Why are the patent offices reclassifying all the patents?**

To improve everyone's ability to search retrospectively, using codes that separate inventions according to the present-day understanding of technologies.

**What is the schedule for reclassifying the back-file?**

The EPO aims to reclassify electronically available patent documents by mid-2006. Most of the 54 million documents will be reclassified by machine using concordances. Many patent offices are cooperating in this effort. Once the reclassification data is available, it will be given to Thomson Scientific for upload into our databases. This is a large project requiring a complete reload of all of our databases, and will be approached incrementally in order to cause the least disruption for our customers as possible. Until this is completed, you will need to search using a combination of old and new codes.

**► Derwent World Patents Index (DWPI)****If my old alert fails in DWPI, what command should I use to rerun once the alert strategy has been amended?**

*Dialog Example for first 3 weeks of 2006:*

S enzyme? and IC=C12P-007/06 and UB=(200601:200603)

STN Example for first 31 days of 06:

S enzyme? and C12P-007-06/IC and (20060101-20060131)/ed

**How will IPC R impact assignment to the patent family records in DWPI?**

The family record will contain a family IPC R code, and each individual family member will also retain its own IPC R code. You will be able to search for these specifically.

**Will it be possible to search across all IPC fields in DWPI records?**

Yes, there will be an IPC "super index" that will allow this.

**Will it be possible to search for codes with specific attributes on DWPI?**

Yes, this information will be indexed along with the codes, both for family IPC and individual document IPC.

**When and why would I search for a core IPC code rather than an advanced IPC code?**

In DWPI, we take the information published by an individual patent office and apply it to the whole patent family. If a patent family only contains documents that have core IPCs applied, then there will be no advanced IPCs in that record. Searching for an advanced IPC would *not* retrieve these records. For those documents for which advanced IPCs have been applied, we are automatically including the corresponding core IPC to assist you in your searching. In essence, by searching for an advanced IPC, you are automatically narrowing your search to records which contain documents from those offices currently applying advanced IPCs.

## ► Delphion, PatentWeb, and Aureka

### **I perform searches of original patent data using IPC codes regularly on *Delphion/PatentWeb/Aureka*, what do I need to know/do now?**

Thomson Scientific is committed to making the transition to the new reformed classification system as easy for you as possible. We recommend taking the following steps to get comfortable with the changes:

1. Verify whether the IPC codes you normally use when searching are impacted by the Reform by checking the WIPO website (<http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/ipc8/>). Make a note of any changed codes.
2. Attend our seminars on IPC Reform. For a schedule of sessions, go to: [micropat.webex.com](http://micropat.webex.com), and enter 'IPC' in the search box.
3. Restructure any saved searches or alerts that contain old IPC codes.

### **How are the new IPC R codes going to affect original patent data alerts in *Delphion, PatentWeb, and Aureka*?**

Since alerts search the most recently published documents, any IPC-reliant alerts may be affected after January 1, 2006. Alerts that run at the earliest available date in January are looking at data from the last week of December 2005 for weekly alerts, or the month of December 2005 for monthly alerts. These December documents will contain IPC 7 codes. The next time the alert runs (weekly alerts - end of first week of January - or monthly alerts), IPC 8 (Reform) codes will be on the documents. At that time, whether your results (if any) are usable will depend on the specifics of the codes you are using.

### **I have a lot of IPC-reliant alerts set up in *Delphion/PatentWeb/Aureka* and no time to fix them all. Can Thomson Scientific help?**

We suggest that you try to prioritize the alerts you have set up and fix the most critical ones first. If you have weekly alerts set up that return less than 100 documents per week, it may be better to convert them to monthly alerts. This will give you more time to make the amendments, without results continuing to come in.

Do not suspend alerts with the expectation that they will not run while suspended. As our documentation states, suspended alerts run on schedule—it is only the delivery that is suspended. If your alerts do run and you are able to edit them before the February 2006 monthly rerun (Feb 6th-7th US time-zone), run the edited versions as monthlies so you get clean results for the month of January, and then switch them back to weekly thereafter, if you wish.

### **I'm a *Delphion/Aureka/PatentWeb* user and have a large number of IPC-reliant alerts set up. What should I do so I don't miss any new patents/applications in my technology area?**

Here are 5 easy steps you can follow to care for your alerts:

1. Identify your alerts that contain IPC codes.
2. Decide whether you are aiming for precision or comprehensiveness.
3. Check the WIPO website (<http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/ipc8/>) for IPC R descriptions of codes you are using. Start by looking-up your codes on the RCL tab to see if they have been eliminated or otherwise changed. If they are core codes, see if there are useful advanced codes available. If the code previously used is advanced, consider adding the core equivalent to searches, if your aim is a comprehensive search.
4. Develop a revision strategy for your most critical alerts before January 1, 2006.
5. Take advantage of the 'search any IPC' option on your search interface to temporize making selections between core versus advanced, or invention versus additional.

**When and why would I use a core IPC code over an advanced IPC code?**

On *Delphion*, *PatentWeb*, and *Aureka* all original patent documents will have the fields for advanced and core codes filled. This is because the patent offices supplying the content (DE, EP, FR, GB, JP, US, and PCT) are all advanced code-applying offices. However, you can still search core, advanced, or both (recommended as a starter) using the field for searching 'all' IPC codes. The key difference between a search that uses just core codes and a search that uses advanced, or core and advanced, is that using just core codes will be less precise.

**I am now using a report in *Delphion/PatentWeb/Aureka* that is based on a single "main" IPC. What will happen if there is more than one invention code on a record?**

The system will choose the first-listed Invention code for the report.

**Can you tell by looking at a front page whether the IPC codes are core, advanced, invention, or additional?**

Yes, it is indicated by the typeface. This typeface display will carry over to the *Delphion*, *PatentWeb*, and *Aureka* text display systems.

Key:

italic = Advanced

non-italic = Core

bold = Invention

non-bold = Additional (non-Invention)

**If I look at a PDF or any document image, will I see codes that have been added by reclassification?**

No. The image can only show you the document as it was published and will not include codes added as a result of reclassification. The reclassification codes will be in the electronic record once it is made available, so you will be able to search for the document using the reclassification codes.

**► Tailor-Made Patent Profiles (TMPs), Industry and Technology Patents Profiles (ITPs), and Patent Profiles**

**How will these changes affect TMPs, ITPs, and Patent Profiles provided by Thomson Scientific?**

These products/services use Thomson Scientific staff expertise to design the search criteria. In the case of ITPs, we will make the necessary changes on your behalf, and we expect this to be done as soon as possible. You will need to contact us if you have TMPs or Profiles that need to be amended. Please contact the Customized Services team at: [ts.customized@thomson.com](mailto:ts.customized@thomson.com).