

# Translation of Patent Documents at the United States Patent and Trademark Office



There are a variety of different resources available to staff at USPTO for translation services. The resources available include:

- Oral Translations
- Written Translations
- Machine Translations

# Translators on Staff

There is a small staff of five in-house translators that can provide oral translation services covering a wide range of languages including:

- Japanese, German, Russian, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Polish, Bulgarian, Croatian, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese, Czech, and Ukrainian.
- An oral translation entails a meeting between examiner and translator to review a non-English document. The translator provides an overview and specific details as needed by the examiner.
- The staff also complete some written translations.

# Written Translation Services

On average, the branch receives 8,000 requests/ year for written translations including patents and non-patent literature. Historical data show a continued increase in requests.

The bulk of written translation work is sent to contract vendors as the volume is too high to be covered by the small in-house staff. These vendors also enable a wider coverage of language specialties.

# Machine Translations

Examiners have access to machine translation tools available from JPO, KIPO and EPO. They use these 3 systems to obtain machine translations of patent documents.

Staff in the Scientific and Technical Information Center also obtain foreign patents and machine translations for examiners routinely.

# Machine Translations (cont)

Demonstrations on how to use these systems are frequently completed for examiners. They have show great interest due to the quick turnaround.

They find the documents useful in obtaining the gist of the information in the document. They can always contact an in-house translator for any clarifications needed.

# Internal Screening System

Machine translation is also used in a limited capacity during the pre-examination phase. It is used for basic review of applications, submitted in a foreign language.

Systran is used to perform this function.

# Passport Project

- Recently, there has been an outreach effort to enhance examiner awareness of tools available which enable them to take advantage of the benefits of work sharing.
- The Prosecution Passport effort involved showing examiners how to access publicly available application information at EPO, JPO and KIPO. This gives the examiner access to work that has already been done by an examiner in the other office. For JPO and KIPO, machine translations of the contents is available at the click of a button.
- For example, if applicant files in Japan, then files in the US, the examiner can go into the system and look at the work already completed and take this into consideration in their own review.



# Ongoing Challenges

- Encouraging staff to use the tools even when there is awkward sentence structure and syntax, as it does enable one to obtain the gist of the information covered.
- System needs to be sophisticated enough so that words - which can have multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used - are translated correctly, i.e. words such as array or collar will have different meanings in different technologies.

Thank You