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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Patent Classification

Patent classification is a system for organizing all U.S. patent documents and other technical documents into specific technology groupings based on common subject matter. On January 1, 2013, the USPTO moved from using the United States Patent Classification (USPC) system to the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system, a jointly developed system with the European Patent Office (EPO). CPC has now been adopted by many countries throughout the world.

The Office of International Patent Cooperation (OIPC) Classification Division consists of three support areas created to support CPC policies, practices, and maintenance. Those areas being:

Classification Standards and Development

Classification Standards and Development (CSD) is responsible for administrating the classification standards and development of the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC). CSD supports Technology Centers in developing and maintaining the patent classification systems searched by examiners and other stakeholders. CSD also contributes to the IP5 Working Group on Classification and International Patent Classification (IPC) system to enable searches of unified classification schemes that yield both US and foreign documents.

Classification Editorial Division

Classification Editorial Division (CED) is responsible for publishing revisions to the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) scheme. CED supports internal and external classification stakeholders in modification, organization, and maintenance of the CPC scheme. CED also updates numerous classification-related reference tools and documents accessible from USPTO's Internet and intranet sites.

Classification Quality and International Coordination

The Classification Quality and International Coordination (CQIC) division is responsible for ensuring classification quality, formulating classification policy, and developing objective quality assurance metrics. CQIC supports internal and external stakeholders by providing classification training. CQIC also oversees the administration of the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) project and works with international partners on classification harmonization.

Search Patent Classification Systems

SAMSUNG 1058
Samsung v. Headwater
IPR2025-00963

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Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system

The Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) effort is a joint partnership between the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and the European Patent Office (EPO) where the Offices have agreed to harmonize their existing classification systems (European Classification (ECLA) and United States Patent Classification (USPC) respectively) and migrate towards a common classification scheme.

CPC resources:

- CPC scheme (The 2025.08 version of the CPC is now in force.)
- USPTO and EPO bi-lateral CPC informational site
- CPC schemes and definitions bulk data page
- CPC concordance page

The CPC Notice of Changes and Editorial Corrections are the official record of change for the CPC system.

- CPC Notice of Changes
- CPC Notice of Editorial Corrections
- Consolidated Revision Concordance List (RCL)
- Active CPC revision projects
- CPC revision pre-releases

United States Classification (USPC) system

Classification resources

- International classification treaties and resources
- USPTO patent classification historical timeline

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