

Guide to Basic Searching of Esp@cenet Databases



BROWN

Esp@cenet (<http://ep.espacenet.com>) is the portal to a network of three databases:

1. **Worldwide** (published patents and patent applications from patent offices in over 80 countries including the US)
2. **EP** (European Patent - patent applications published over the last 24 months by the European Patent Office)
3. **WIPO** (applications published in the last 24 months by World Intellectual Properties Organization).

Use the basic and advanced search forms to search the databases one at a time.

Keyword search

Keyword searching can be done only in the title and abstract (if supplied) of the bibliographic records of patents and patent applications. Consequently, the results can totally miss relevant documents and/or pick up many irrelevant hits. Keyword searching is a starting point if the following is done:

BREAK IT DOWN Question → Concepts → Alternatives/variations to find search terms.

QUICK SEARCH [esp@cenet basic search form](#) to get an idea of what has been invented (prior art) and, especially, what EC (European Classification system) and IPC (International Patent Classification system) classifications have been assigned to each potentially relevant result.

Classification search

Technical content of patents are grouped by classifications. The symbols and left-to-right order determine how the patentable aspects are described within the EC or IPC system. Classifications are used by patent examiners and patent information professionals to determine whether prior art exists.

CONSTRUCT [EC](#) or [IPC](#) classification identified from keyword search of patent databases, relevant documents, or direct searching of classification sites by keyword (EC) or catchword (IPC).

VERIFY that classification definitions capture potential prior art.

TRANSFER classification to esp@cenet advanced search form; directly for EC and copy/paste for IPC.

EVALUATE the results list to determine the precision of the search; EC has approximately twice as many entries as IPC so the descriptors are more precise, goes back to 1836 for the patents of some countries, and are assigned by EP examiners but not for patents from some countries; IPC, assigned by examiners in the country of origin, covers the most patents but is generally not found earlier than 1968.



Review, Record, and Revise

The finding of relevant information in the esp@cenet occurs when you:

REVIEW claims, specifications, drawings, references, and EC and IPC classifications in selected documents.

RECORD your search strategy because there is no SAVE SEARCH function which many commercial databases have.

REVISE the search strategy.