

**UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**



Peer Search Collaboration Pilot

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Patent Public Advisory Committee quarterly meeting

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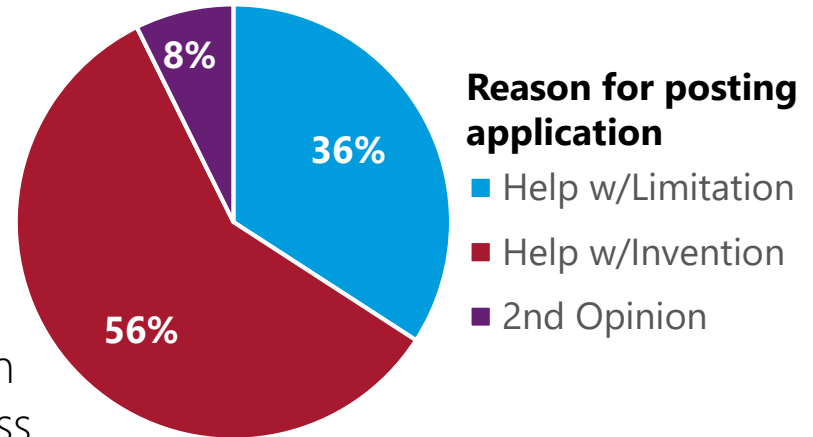


Background

- Paired examiners each independently searched an application to evaluate results and share alternative practices in performing searches, including search practices that were most useful in a specific technology or mix of technologies.
- The pilot was designed to share search expertise between examiners and survey participants to measure the process and outcomes.

Process

- Lead examiner selected an application from their docket along with reason for selecting
- Secondary examiner, matched on technology, selected application from pool of applications identified by lead examiners
- Both examiners:
 - independently searched application
 - reviewed search findings from peer
 - met to discuss strategies and results
 - completed surveys and participated in focus sessions to measure effectiveness



Participation demographics

Examiners: 160 examiners accepted*; 20 examiners per Technology Center (TC)

Signatory: 131 primary examiners; 29 non-primaries

Areas: utility patents (design and plant excluded)

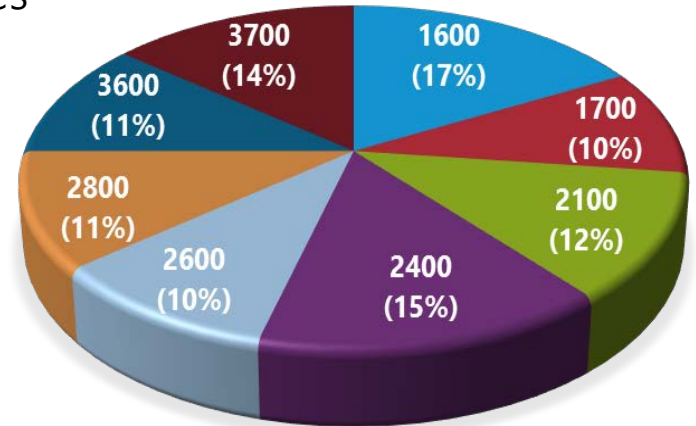
Finishers: 145 examiners finished the pilot

Actives: 111 (75%) actively participated

Cases Collaborated: 130 (65 inter-TC, 65 intra-TC)

Duration: 2 quarters

Surveys: 260

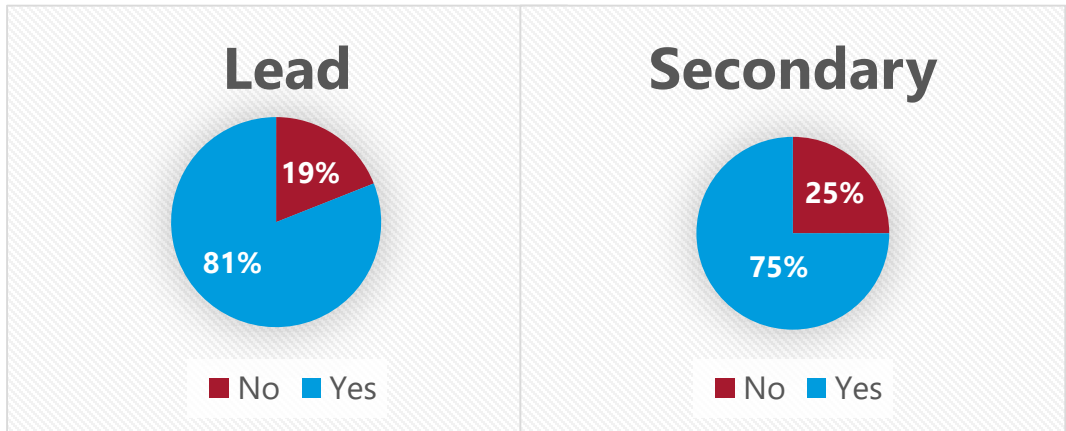
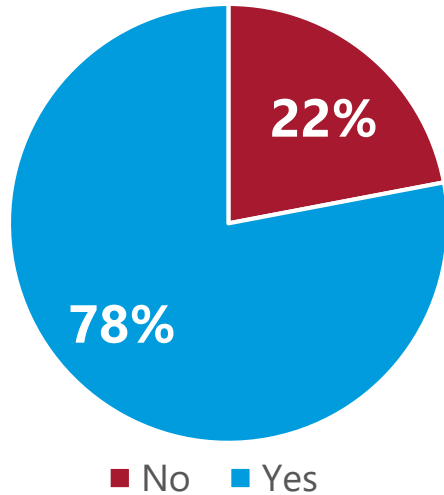


*Limited to GS 12-15 examiners



Key findings

Did the paired pilot examiner's search results contain any relevant references not contained in your search?



Key findings, cont.

- Could your results be used in a: 102, 103, neither a 102 or 103 rejection, or other rejection?
 - 61% of time the examiners agreed on use of results
 - 95% of time at least one of the examiners found art for a 102 and/or 103
- Compared with pre-pilot cases of participants, there was no significant increase in the % of FAOMs receiving a prior art rejection.
 - 44% with 35 USC §102 rejection
 - 83% with 35 USC §103 rejection

Key findings, cont.

Valuable networking

- Examiners reported that they benefited from the networking via the collaborations.
 - Participants reported that new examiner connections were made which aided in their ability to find peer resources for case assistance.
 - Networking between examiners led to knowledge transfer among them.

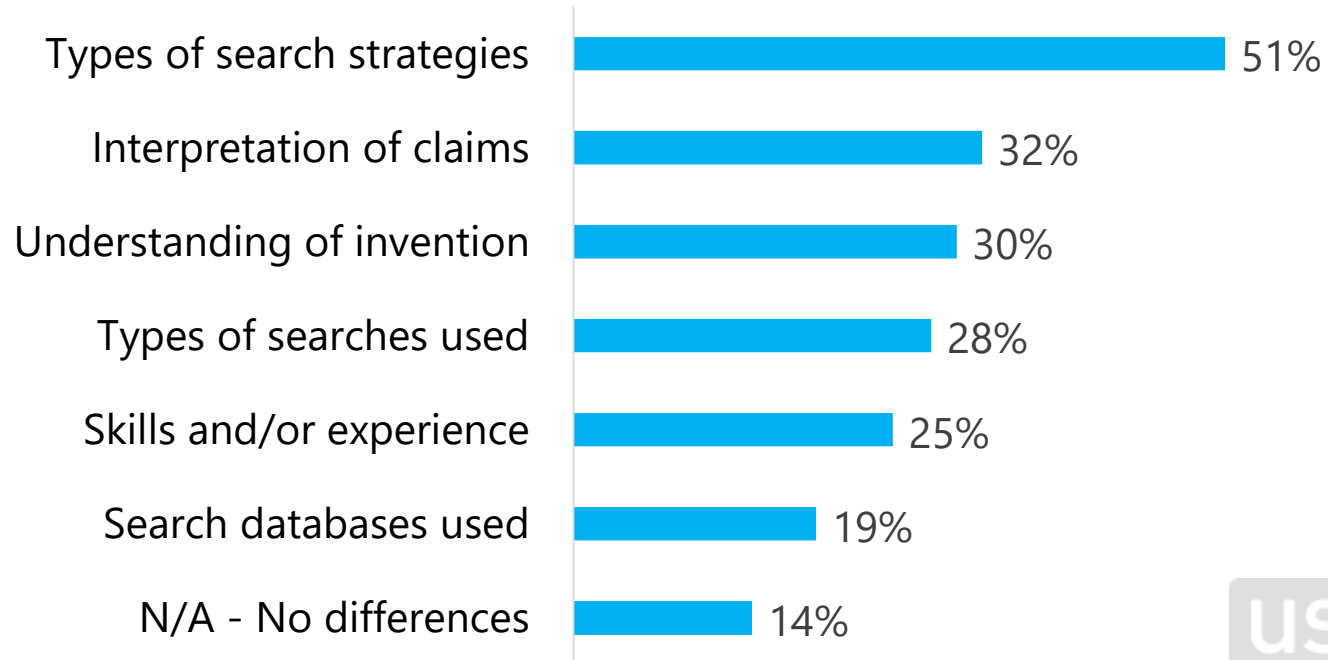
Key findings, cont.

Did you learn new search techniques or tips utilized by your paired examiner's search strategy?

- 68% of paired searches resulted in at least one of the examiners learning new techniques
- 26% of the time, both examiners claimed learning

Key findings, cont.

Reasons for differences between two sets of search results



Next steps

- Feedback from the union
- Monitor collaborated cases through final disposition in order to identify trends in prosecution outcomes
- Quality review of pilot applications
- Exploring intersections with other initiatives

Questions and comments

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