

Guide to Basic Searching of the U.S. Patents Database



BROWN

Keyword search

While this is a database that can be searched by putting keywords in one or both boxes and choosing a logical connection, keywords can lead to a lot of irrelevant hits. However, let's see what is out there.

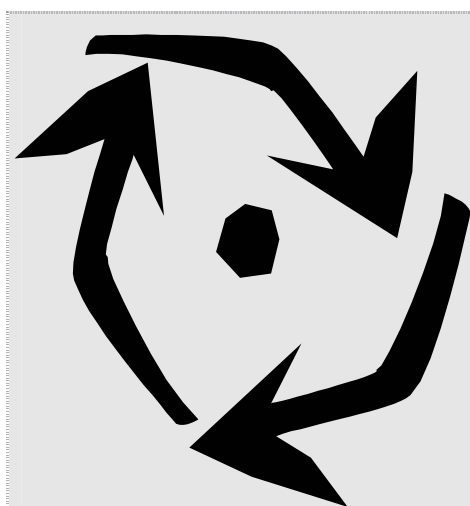
BRAINSTORM terms that answer the following about an invention: Purpose → Use → Composition

QUICK SEARCH the Patent [Full-text and Full-Page Image Databases](#) to get an idea of what has been invented and, especially, what Current U.S. Class and Field of Search have been assigned to each potentially relevant result.

Classification search

A savvy patent searcher really finds relevant information in this database by using class/subclass numbers that are assigned to a patented invention. Classification is used to find patents that are grouped together by definitions of class and subclass. In addition, at this time, it is not possible to find inventions older than 1976 without a Current U.S. Classification or a patent number.

- 1. IDENTIFY** potential classes/subclasses in the [Index to the U.S. Patent Classification](#). This is an alphabetical list of common and technical terms compiled from patents that are linked to class/subclass designations.
- 2. VERIFY** relevancy to the search of class/subclass number by clicking on the link to a key term in the Index. This takes you to the html version of the Class Schedule.
- 3. READ** the definition of class and subclasses which is accessed by clicking on the number in the Class Schedule. This takes you to the html version of Class Definitions. Whenever you are exploring classes, it is very important to know the definitions that patent examiners use to group the relevant patent art. Note "see also" references.
- 4. EVALUATE** the usefulness of a classification by clicking on the **red P** which creates a results set of all patents from 1790 with that class/subclass.



Review, Record, and Revise

The finding of relevant information in the USPTO occurs when you:

REVIEW claims, specifications, drawings, references, and other Current U.S. Class and Field of Search numbers in selected documents.

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

REVISE the search strategy. If you add keyword to class search, 1790-1975 patents will be lost. If you want to return to the Class Schedule or Definitions the shortcut is [Access Classification Info by Class/Subclass](#). Apply class numbers to Applications quick search in [Patent Application Full text and Image Database](#).

Adapted from "The 7-Step U.S. Patent Searching Strategy" <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/ptdl/step7.htm>

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/libweb/screenscasts/patentsearching.php>