

***Super Easy Guide to Step-By-Step
Patent Searching Online!***

By

Mary Russell Sarao

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Super Easy Guide to Step-By-Step Patent Searching Online
By Mary Russell Sarao

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This book is dedicated to the best partner in the world---my sister, Barbara. Our talents and abilities complement one another perfectly. She helps me to be the best I can be!

Super Easy Guide to Step-By-Step Patent Searching Online!

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Super Easy Guide to Step-By-Step Patent Searching!

Introduction

It is important to do an online patent search before you make a prototype or see a patent attorney or patent agent. Hard as it is to believe, 97% of the patents issued to independent inventors each year never make it to the marketplace. As a result of this, the patent books are full of great ideas that were never commercialized. Your great idea may already be patented but you will not know that until you do a search.

If you do the search and do not find your exact idea, then FULL SPEED AHEAD! If, however, you do find that your idea has already been patented, you have saved yourself the time, trouble and expense of “reinventing the wheel” and you can move on to your next great idea. There is no doubt that you *will* have another great idea. That's the way it is for creative folks. We have found that once someone starts thinking in an “inventive” way, the ideas come faster than they can be developed and it becomes a matter of choosing the best or easiest idea to pursue.

There are four basic ways to do an online patent search. In order to do a thorough online search you should do all of them. At a very minimum, you should do the Key Word Search, Classification Search and the Prior Art Search.

Search 1. Key Word Search

Search 2. Classification Search

Search 3. Prior Art Search

Search 4. Hybrid Search (using classification and key word)

Each of these searches begins at www.uspto.gov.

When this page opens up click on “Patents” (It is the third button down on the left.)



The screenshot shows the USPTO website homepage. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with buttons for "About USPTO", "How to ...", "Patents", "Trademarks", "Check Status", and "Emergencies-Alerts". The main content area features the USPTO logo at the top, followed by a "Select a Search Collection" dropdown menu. Below this is a search bar with a "GO" button and an "Advanced Search" link. A horizontal navigation bar contains links for "Activities & Education", "Addresses & Contacts", and "News & Notices". The central banner area includes "The 21st Century Strategic Plan", the USPTO seal, and a "Presidential Proclamation of the USPTO BICENTENNIAL". To the right, there is a "Special Pages for..." dropdown menu with "First Time Visitors" selected, and a graphic with the text "SEARCH patents trademarks" and a large registered trademark symbol (®).

When the next page opens up click on “SEARCH patents.” It is the first listing under “Services” on the left side of the page.

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The next page shows issued patents on the left and patent applications on the right. Click on “Quick Search” under “Issued Patents.” We’ll go back to “Patent Applications” later.

Patent Full-Text and Full-Page Image Databases

Issued Patents (full-text since 1976, full-page images since 1790)	Patent Applications (published since 15 March 2001)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quick SearchAdvanced SearchPatent Number SearchDatabase Notices and StatusDatabase ContentsHelp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quick SearchAdvanced SearchPublication Number SearchHelp
<p>Important Notices!</p> <p>How to Access Full-Page Images</p> <p>Problems Accessing the Databases?</p> <p>Report Data Content Problems</p> <p>Tools to Help in Searching by Patent Classification</p> <p>Downloadable Published Sequence Listings</p>	

The next page is headed "US Patent Full-Text and Image Database." This page offers many options for searching. Notice that you have blanks for Term 1 and Term 2 on the left. On the right you may choose "all fields" or specific fields. Pull down the menu on the arrow on the right. "All fields" appears as the first option.

If you choose this option it will search for the terms you selected in every area of the patents.

Data current through 09/24/2002

Query [\[Help\]](#)

Term 1: in Field 1:

Term 2: in Field 2:

Select years [\[Help\]](#)

Patents from 1790 through 1975 are searchable only by Patent Number and Current US Classification

The other options are:

Title

Abstract

Issue Date

Patent Number

Application Date

Application Serial Number

Application Type

Assignee Name

Assignee City

Assignee State

Assignee County

International Classification

Current US Classification

Primary Examiner

Assistant Examiner

Inventor Name

Inventor City

Inventor State

Inventor Country

Government Interest

Attorney or Agent

PCT Information

Foreign Priority

Reissue Data

Related US Appl. Data

Referenced By

Foreign References

Other References

Claim(s)

Description/Specification

You can see that you can search for and find a patent by having almost any of the pertinent data.

In the center, notice the “AND” with a pull down arrow. When you pull down the arrow you will see that you can search for patents that have Term 1 AND Term 2, or patents that have Term 1 OR Term 2, or patents that have Term 1 ANDNOT Term 2.

On this page you also have a field where you can “Select Years” that you are searching.

You may choose:

1996-2002

1991-1995

1986-1990

1981-1985

1976-1980

1790-1975

All Years

We recommend that you always choose “All Years” when doing a preliminary patent search. (Unless your invention is such cutting edge technology that you know it was NOT invented more than five years ago.) Otherwise, it is very important to search all possible years. When we were inventing Ghostline, we found a patent from 1877 (that was NOT a typo) that had to be listed as “prior art” for our second patent.

Ready? Roll up your sleeves and let’s begin!

Chapter 1- Key Word Search

For illustration purposes we will describe a patent search on a sample invention.

Apply these same techniques when you search for your invention.

Go to the page titled “US Patent Full-Text and Image Database.” It looks like this:

Data current through 09/24/2002

Query [\[Help\]](#)

Term 1: in Field 1:

Term 2: in Field 2:

Select years [\[Help\]](#)

Patents from 1790 through 1975 are searchable only by Patent Number and Current US Classification

Think of terms that would undoubtedly be listed in any patent describing your (or the sample) invention. For example, if it is a baseball cap with a battery-operated fan mounted on the bill of the cap you might use choose words like “hat” and “fan.” You could also use words like “cap,” “head covering,” “headgear,” “headwear,” “battery-operated,” “cool” or “cooling.” When you are doing a key word search it is important to *think of every possible key word* that might be used in describing your invention. If you need to, get out the dictionary and look up

synonyms. Keep in mind that a “term” may consist of more than one word. For example, Term 1 might be “battery-operated.” It could be hyphenated, or not.

The goal of search 1 is to use key words to find if your idea has already been patented or not. In our example, the primary invention is a cap or hat. The secondary or special feature is the fan mounted on the bill.

Look at the word we have chosen, “caps.” Is that the most descriptive word we could use? Probably not since there are “caps” on all sorts of things, bottles and containers of all sorts. Try to think of a word or term that would be more specific. We are going to use the word “headgear.” That should narrow it down to something that is worn on the human head. For our first key word search we will use two key words that are specific to our invention. Since our invention is a *baseball* cap with a fan in the bill we will use “headgear” and “baseball” for our first search. Use “AND.” Select “All Years” and hit “SEARCH.”

In the key word search using “headgear” and “baseball” we found 160 patents. The following patents looked like they are probably in the same category as our invention.

They are:

6,438,760	Novelty hat apparatus
6,381,754	Headgear system

6,237,156	Hat
6,088,837	Headgear with pivotable visor
6,044,495	Detachable visor cover
5,778,454	Visor cap
5,724,676	Size adjustable hat
5,655,225	Protective headgear attachment for baseball style caps
5,634,575	Apparatus and method of reforming visors of baseball caps
5,581,807	Visor cap
5,481,759	Expandable baseball hat and cover
5,327,585	Cool cap
5,272,772	Adjustable cap
5,107,548	Cooler cap

In the key word search using “hat” and “fan” there were 667 patents listed.

And, in the key word search using “headgear” and “fan” there were 59 patents listed. Obviously, some of the patents were on all three lists. Some of the patents appeared on only one list. This is why it is important to search using several different but descriptive key words.

Do additional key word searches using other terms that are likely to appear in any patent on your invention. For the sample patent search you should do a search for “headgear” and “fan.” And, “hat” or “cap” and “fan.” As you begin the

search you will see other words appearing repeatedly in similar patents. Add those words to your list to use in your key word search.

A key word search is tedious but essential. If you find your exact invention during this search you need go no further. A word of caution, however, be certain that *it is your exact invention* before you give up! When we were inventing Ghostline we found a patent that we thought, at first glance, was our invention. We were heartbroken. We were about to give up when we decided to *read* the troublesome patent in its entirety. We were thrilled to discover that it was *not* our invention. It solved the same problem, but our invention was a simpler and more economical way of achieving the same goal.

When you see a huge list of possible patents, don't panic! Most of them will not even be close to your invention. In the sample key word search that was the case. Most of the patents were not even remotely similar to the sample invention idea of a baseball cap with a fan in it. A few will be similar to your invention. You must pay close attention to those.

Searching All Years...

Results of Search in All Years db for:

hat AND fan: 668 patents.

Hits 1 through 50 out of 668

	PAT. NO.	Title
1	6,454,539	Personal fan system
2	6,452,661	Illumination system and exposure apparatus and method
3	6,452,572	Monocular head-mounted display system
4	6,451,977	Fused polypeptides

- 5 [6,440,657](#) **T** [Nucleic acids and peptides of human immunodeficiency virus type \(HIV-1\)](#)
- 6 [6,440,254](#) **T** [Method of bonding a layer of material to a substrate](#)
- 7 [6,437,285](#) **T** [Method and apparatus for treating interior cylindrical surfaces and ablating surface material thereon](#)
- 8 [6,437,284](#) **T** [Optical system and apparatus for laser heat treatment and method for producing semiconductor devices by using the same](#)
- 9 [6,436,685](#) **T** [CSAPTP protein molecules and uses therefor](#)
- 10 [6,435,419](#) **T** [Liquid air freshener dispensing device for a duct](#)
- 11 [6,426,072](#) **T** [Compositions and methods for the therapy and diagnosis of lung cancer](#)
- 12 [6,425,244](#) **T** [Pump unit](#)
- 13 [6,423,494](#) **T** [DR6 and uses thereof](#)
- 14 [6,421,754](#) **T** [System management mode circuits, systems and methods](#)
- 15 [6,421,031](#) **T** [Camera display system](#)
- 16 [6,416,043](#) **T** [Louver air freshener](#)
- 17 [6,413,780](#) **T** [Structure and method for performing a determination of an item of interest in a sample](#)
- 18 [6,410,709](#) **T** [Cornichon-like protein](#)
- 19 [6,410,232](#) **T** [Molecules of the follistatin-related protein family and uses thereof](#)
- 20 [6,409,602](#) **T** [Slim terminal gaming system](#)
- 21 [6,409,503](#) **T** [Heat treatment method and heat treatment apparatus](#)
- 22 [6,407,216](#) **T** [Vertebrate smoothened antibodies](#)
- 23 [6,406,811](#) **T** [Battery for headset assembly](#)
- 24 [6,403,985](#) **T** [Method of making light emitting diode displays](#)
- 25 [6,403,767](#) **T** [Polypeptide molecules of the G protein-coupled heptahelical receptor superfamily and uses therefor](#)
- 26 [6,400,996](#) **T** [Adaptive pattern recognition based control system and method](#)
- 27 [6,394,447](#) **T** [Sheet inversion device](#)
- 28 [6,391,547](#) **T** [Microbial .beta.-glucuronidase genes, gene products and uses thereof](#)
- 29 [6,386,881](#) **T** [Adaptive motivation for computer-assisted training system](#)
- 30 [6,386,843](#) **T** [Housing for fan units, and electrical apparatus using a fan unit](#)
- 31 [6,383,057](#) **T** [Environmental conditioning of workpieces](#)
- 32 [6,381,974](#) **T** [Coolant distributor of refrigerating cycle for heat pump](#)
- 33 [6,378,318](#) **T** [Heat pump type air conditioning apparatus](#)
- 34 [6,369,197](#) **T** [Potassium channel interactors and uses therefor](#)
- 35 [6,369,196](#) **T** [Molecules of the card-related protein family and uses thereof](#)
- 36 [6,361,971](#) **T** [Nucleic acid molecules encoding potassium channel interactors and uses therefor](#)

- 37 [6,358,508](#) **T** [Antibodies to human tumor necrosis factor receptor TR9](#)
 - 38 [6,357,052](#) **T** [Fan novelty head gear](#)
 - 39 [6,353,789](#) **T** [Predicting broadband noise from a stator vane of a gas turbine engine](#)
 - 40 [6,353,295](#) **T** [Lamp electronic ballast with a piezoelectric cooling fan](#)
 - 41 [6,352,664](#) **T** [Process of making a bundle of synthetic fibers](#)
 - 42 [6,350,275](#) **T** [Devices for treating circadian rhythm disorders using LED's](#)
 - 43 [6,349,556](#) **T** [Water tank for ice making machine](#)
 - 44 [6,348,575](#) **T** [Patched-2](#)
 - 45 [6,346,214](#) **T** [Top hat furnace](#)
 - 46 [6,345,734](#) **T** [Dispenser for viscous liquid and flexible viscous liquid containing bag](#)
 - 47 [6,344,549](#) **T** [ATR-2 cell cycle checkpoint](#)
 - 48 [6,343,267](#) **T** [Dimensionality reduction for speaker normalization and speaker and environment adaptation using eigenvoice techniques](#)
 - 49 [6,340,868](#) **T** [Illumination components](#)
 - 50 [6,340,576](#) **T** [Nucleic acid molecules related to card-4L and CARD-4S](#)
-

	Next List	Top	View Cart	
Home	Quick	Advanced	Pat Num	Help

In the first list of 50 patents in the sample search (of the nearly 700), patent number 6,357,052 is described as “Fan novelty headgear.” That sounds like it could be close to the sample invention.

If you were to click on patent number 6,357,052 you would see that it was issued March 19, 2002. When you read through the description and claims it doesn’t *sound* too close, but it *is* a hat with a fan.

This is what it looks like:

United States Patent
Fleming

6,357,052
March 19, 2002

Fan novelty head gear

Abstract

A *fan* novelty device having a removable *fan*-like structure formed of a strip of pliable material having an accordion folding and a head gear. The *fan*-like structure is removably

attached to a flexible base that conforms to a wearer's head. The base is removably attached to a head gear such as a head band, hair clips, barrettes, hair combs, etc.

Inventors: **Fleming; Ward** (Greene County, NY)

Assignee: **Fan Hats LLC** (Wolfeboro, NH)

Appl. No.: **887755**

Filed: **June 20, 2001**

Current U.S. Class: **2/209.13**; 2/244; 446/27; 446/488

Intern'l Class: A42B 001/24

Field of Search: 2/209.13,244,200.3 446/27,487,488

References Cited [Referenced By]

U.S. Patent Documents

<u>3026525</u>	Mar., 1962	Gyorfy	2/424.
<u>5903926</u>	May., 1999	Fleming	2/209.
<u>D442746</u>	May., 2001	Belcher	D29/122.
<u>6256796</u>	Jul., 2001	Fleming.	

Primary Examiner: Calvert; John J.

Assistant Examiner: Moran; Katherine

Attorney, Agent or Firm: Miskin; Howard C., Tsui-Yip; Gloria

Parent Case Text

This is a continuation in part of application Ser. No. 09/693,089, filed Oct. 20, 2000, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,256,796.

Claims

What I claim is:

1. A **fan** novelty device for a wearer's head, comprising:

(a) a strip of pliable material being accordion folded and openable to a **fan**-like structure having a plurality of fin-like members, including a front most fin-like member;

(b) a flexible base substantially the same size and shape as said front most fin-

- like member that conforms to the wearer's head and having opposite ends;
- (c) a head gear for the wearer's head;
- (d) means for attaching said front most fin-like member of said strip of material to said base; and
- (e) means for attaching said opposite ends of said base to said head gear.
2. The device according to claim 1, wherein said head gear is a head band.
3. The device according to claim 1, wherein said head gear comprises two hair combs.
4. The device according to claim 1, wherein said head gear comprises two barrettes.
5. The device according to claim 1 wherein said head gear comprises two hair clips.
6. The device according to claim 1 wherein said strip of pliable material is made of paper.
7. The device according to claim 1 wherein said strip of pliable material is made of fabric.
8. The device according to claim 1 wherein said strip of pliable material is made of spun bonded polyolefin.
9. The device according to claim 1 wherein said strip of pliable material having designs display thereon.
10. The device according to claim 2 wherein said head band having designs display thereon.
11. The device according to claim 1 wherein said accordion folding of said strip of material forms a plurality of fold lines between adjacent fin-like members and further comprising a plurality of openings along at least one fold line.
12. The device according to claim 11 further comprising a plurality of bridges along said at least one fold line, alternating with said plurality of openings.
13. The device according to claim 12 wherein said bridges and said openings are at a one to three ratio.

Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates generally to a novelty device and is particularly related to a novelty headwear having a removable **fan**-like structure, which can be readily opened and closed as desired. The **fan** novelty device not only attracts attention but also has entertaining, promotional and marketing values.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Various novelty hats are available and have been used for the purpose of attracting attention or for promotional and marketing purposes in the fields of sports and social or political activities. One such novelty **hat** is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,903,626 issued May 18, 1999 to Ward Fleming, the inventor named in the present application. The **hat** described in said patent has a dome-shaped body, e.g. a cap, that fits over the head of the wearer, and a **fan**-like structure pivotally attached to at least three points, i.e., the front end, the rear end and the center of the dome-shaped body as shown therein in FIGS. 2 and 3. The **fan**-like structure itself is formed of a strip of fabric having an accordion folding. In its closed position, the accordion folding rests on the dome-shaped body and is attached to the surface of the dome-shaped body by various methods or means, such as by adhesive, sewing or stapling, taping, Velcro.RTM., and the like. The

disclosure of said patent is fully incorporated herein by reference.

An improvement to the **hat** disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,903,626 is described in the parent U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/693,089, filed Oct. 20, 2000.

Additional features of the **hat** of said patent application includes a weighted fin-like member for maintaining the **fan**-like structure in a fully open position and an enclosure for the **fan**-like structure. The disclosure of said patent application is fully incorporated herein by reference.

The present invention provides a novelty head gear with a **fan**-like structure which varies in its construction from the novelty devices described in said patent and patent application, and which may also be used for the purpose of attracting attention, or for promotional and marketing purposes.

The novelty head gear of the present invention constitutes a variation and/or improvement over the heretofore discussed novelty devices, including the novelty hats described in the aforementioned patent and patent application.

Before you spend any more time with this patent go to the top of the page and click on "Images."



US006357052B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Fleming

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 6,357,052 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Mar. 19, 2002**

(54) **FAN NOVELTY HEAD GEAR**

(75) **Inventor:** **Ward Fleming, Greens County, NY**
(US)

(73) **Assignee:** **Fan Hats LLC, Wolfboro, NH (US)**

(*) **Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days

(21) **Appl. No.:** **09/887,755**

(22) **Filed:** **Jun. 20, 2001**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) **Continuation-in-part of application No. 09/693,089, filed on Oct. 23, 2000, now Pat. No. 6,256,796.**

(51) **Int. Cl.** **A42B 1/24**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **2/209.13, 2/244: 246/27, 446/88**

(58) **Field of Search** **2/209.13, 244, 2/200.3; 446/27, 487, 488**

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,006,525 A * 3/ 96 Giorly 1/2/94
5,315,926 A * 5/ 96 Fleming 2/2/99,13
D442,746 S * 2/2001 Bekker D2/122
5,256,796 B1 * 7/2001 Fleming

* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner: John J. Calvert

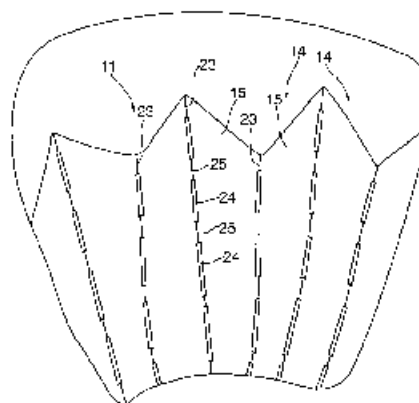
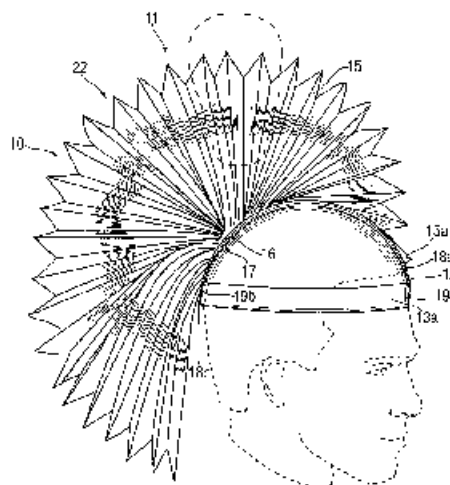
Assistant Examiner: Katherine Moran

(71) **Attorney, Agent, or Firm:** Howard C. Misant, Gloria
Yip

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A fan novelty device having a removable fan-like structure formed of a strip of pliable material having an accordion folding and a head gear. The fan-like structure is removably attached to a flexible base that conforms to a wearer's head. The base is removably attached to a head gear such as a head band, hair clips, barrettes, hair combs, etc.

13 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



When you look at the picture, you can quickly see that this patent is *not even close* to the sample invention idea of a cap with a battery-operated fan in it. You would write down this patent number for reference later in case you do not find anything any closer. Then, it's time to move on. Go back to the list of 50 patents and continue looking. If you don't find anything on that list, go to either the bottom or top of the page and click on "Next List" and the next 50 patents in which both those words appear will pop up. Look through that list for anything that sounds, even remotely, like your idea. Repeat this process until you have gone all the way through the list.

As you go through the list, write down the patent numbers of any that look like they might be close. Continue working your way through the list. If you find patents that look very close, then print them out in their entirety, including the images. (When printing the images you must click on the little printer at the top of the patent page, not on your toolbar at the top of the screen.)

In the sample key word search using "hat" and "fan" we found one patent that looks like it **is** the sample invention idea. It is patent number 5,425,620. This patent will be a key to searching further. We will use the classification numbers listed on it and the patents listed as prior art to trigger the other searches.

Chapter 2 – Classification Number Search

Go back to the Quick Search screen (US Patent Full Text and Image Database).

This time you will look up the four or five patents (or more) listed above that seems *closest* to your invention (the sample invention idea) and write down on one list all of the classification numbers listed on each patent. On a second list you should write down all the patent numbers listed as ‘prior art.’ The patents for any inventions that seem particularly close to your invention and their images should be printed out in their entirety. These must be taken to your patent attorney or agent when you are ready to move on to that step in the inventive process.

You can pull up the patents quickly by typing in the patent number in the space for Term 1, using the pull down menu to select “Patent Number,” selecting “All Years” and then hitting “SEARCH.” (You do not have to list a term under both Term 1 and Term 2, only one will suffice.) That particular patent will pop up.

We would recommend that you put the list of classification numbers into either Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel. In Word you can enter them in numerical order. In Excel you can enter them all and then sort them according to number. This will help you to avoid searching the same classification twice.

When we pull up the patent that seems closest to the sample invention (#5,425,620) it lists nine different classifications and five patents that were cited as prior art. (You will repeat this process with each of the closest patents to your invention.)

Now, you have a starting point for your classification search. Go back to the Quick Search screen and this time enter the first classification number (they consist of one number followed by a forward slash and another number) under Term 1. On the pull down screen for Term 1 page down to “Current US Classification.” Again, choose “All years” and hit “SEARCH.”

Most of the patents that appear on the list will probably not be similar to your invention. Look closely and pull up any that look even slightly similar. Anything that looks similar should be printed out (along with the images). These will be important to take to your patent attorney or patent agent if you are able to pursue your idea further.

Follow the above steps with each and every classification number that you have listed.

It is very **common** to find patents that are close to or identical to your invention when doing a classification search that were completely missed when doing the

key word search. This is why a classification search is *essential* when doing an online patent search.

Chapter 3 – Prior Art Search

Using the closest patents to your invention, click on each and every one of the patents listed as prior art. Look them over closely. You may find other patents that will have to be cited if you file a patent application on your invention. Print out any patents for inventions that are similar to yours.

Also, when looking at the patents listed as prior art it is important to pay close attention to the classification numbers listed on those patents. If you come across a classification number that you have not previously searched, then add it to your list of numbers to be searched.

We know that this sounds like you are going around in circles. You are! That's the way it is with a patent search. It can't be avoided.

Chapter 4 – Hybrid Search

Once you have determined the appropriate classification numbers for your invention you can do a hybrid search. On the Quick Search screen enter one of the classification numbers under Term 1 and in the pull down menu for Field 1 select “Current US Classification.” Choose “AND.” For Term 2, enter the most descriptive and unique key word that you can think of for your invention. Leave it set for “All Fields” in Field 2. Choose “All Years” and hit “SEARCH.”

In our sample search we might choose classification number 416/63 and key word “fan.” That brought up only 30 patents in that classification that had the word “fan” somewhere in the patent.

If we were to enter 416/63 and “hat” only *three* patents are listed, and one of them is the one that may be the sample invention!

You can see how a hybrid search can drastically reduce the number of patents that you would have to wade through. When doing this type of search, however, it is *extremely* important that you use every possible classification number and a variety of different key words.

Once you have finished these searches on “Issued Patents” you must go back to <http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html> and this time choose “Patent Applications”

and start the entire process over. “Patent Applications” have been published but not yet granted. You don’t want to go to the time and expense of filing for a patent if someone has beaten you to the idea. This is not a complete list of patents that have been applied for but not granted. There are those that have not yet been published and those that will not be published until the patent is granted (the inventor must specifically request this *and* be applying for a U.S. patent only.)

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This should get you started. Please remember that this is a preliminary search and does not take the place of a professional search. We are not patent attorneys or patent agents but we believe it is complete and thorough enough to allow you to move forward with making a prototype and seeing a patent attorney or patent agent with some level of comfort that your invention has not previously been patented.

Good luck! Happy searching!

- Print this report out and have it handy when you are ready to start your search at the computer.

NOTE: The USPTO site can sometimes be cantankerous. If you have trouble from time to time, pulling up a page or even getting onto the site, it is probably NOT your computer. The huge volume of visitors to the site seems to overwhelm the system at times. Be patient. Keep trying or set it aside for a few minutes and try again. You *will* get on and be able to do your search.

SUMMARY

Steps to patent searching online

1. Go to www.uspto.gov.
2. Make a list of key words to use in your search. Make it as specific as possible. (Find synonyms.)
3. For the first search we suggest you use “AND” between terms rather than “OR” or “ANDNOT.”
4. Select “All Years” (unless your invention is so high-tech that you *know* that is not possible for it to have been invented more than five years ago.)
5. Hit “SEARCH.”
6. When the list comes up, go through it carefully.
7. When you find a patent that looks like a possibility, click on it.
8. Read the description.
9. If it *still* sounds similar, click on the “IMAGES” button at the top of the page.
10. If it *still* looks similar, print the entire patent and images. When you are printing images, you may page through them by clicking on the forward and backward arrows on the left side of the screen. In order to print the images you must click on the little

printer at the top of the patent page, not the printer on your toolbar at the top of the screen.

11. Set it aside for further examination later. We'll call this the "close patent" stack.
12. Repeat the above steps with *each* patent that looks close to your idea as you go through the entire list.
13. Start the whole key word search over using other possible key words. Do this with *all* your possible key words.
14. Choose the four or five (or more) patents that you found in the key word searches that are closest to your idea.
15. Pull up the first patent (enter the patent number under Term 1 and "Patent Number" under Field 1.
16. Write down *all* the classification numbers listed on this patent. (It helps to list them in numerical order to avoid duplication.)
17. Repeat this with all the patents you found in the key word search that are closest to your idea.
18. Begin the classification search by entering the classification number on the Quick Search screen under Term 1. Under Field 1 choose "Current US Classification." (Leave Term 2 blank)
19. Choose "All Years" and hit "SEARCH."
20. Just as you did when you were doing the key word search, look through the entire list for patents that may be similar to your idea.

21. If you find a patent close to your idea, print it out in its entirety, including images.
22. Add any patents that are found in the course of this portion of the search to your “close patent” stack.
23. Taking the stack of “close patents,” look at the patents listed as prior art in each of them, one by one.
24. Pull up *every patent* listed as prior art on the “close patents.”
25. Look at them closely. If one of them appears to be close to your patent. print it out.
26. Pay particular attention to the classification numbers on the patents in the “close patents” stack. If any classification numbers appear that you do not have on your previous list, they should be added to the classification number list. (Go back and add that classification number to your classification number search.)
27. As the final search in the process, do a hybrid search. On the “Quick Search” page, match each classification number (in the Term 1 space) with a key word in the Term 2 space.
28. Use “AND” to connect the two fields.
29. Select “All Years” and hit “SEARCH.” Do this for *each* classification number.

30. Again, if you find any additional patents that are close to your invention (and you have not previously found them), print them out in their entirety.

31. Start the entire process over searching “Patent Applications” this time.

If you have reached this point without finding any patent that looks too close to your idea, congratulations are in order! It’s time to make a prototype and visit a patent attorney or patent agent.

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