

After you have made a UK patent application and filed Patents Form 9A you will receive a search report. An example of what a search report looks like is attached overleaf. This fact sheet has been produced to help you understand the report.

Search Report

What is the search report?

A patent examiner performs a search of your invention (as set out in your claims) to determine whether it is new and inventive. The results of the search are communicated to you as a Search Report. Any documents listed in the right hand column of the report will be considered at the substantive examination stage if you request examination of your application by filing Patents Form 10, with fee.

What documents are searched by the examiner?

The search examiner considers documents published anywhere in the world. Any form of published disclosure can be cited against your application, for example, patent specifications, internet articles and technical journals. Where possible English language documents will be provided, however, in some circumstances it may only be possible to provide foreign language documents.

How is the search carried out?

All published patent specifications are classified according to the subject matter of the invention. To carry out a search, the examiner extracts the key technical features of your claimed invention and then searches through classified material relating to your invention looking for evidence that the technical features of your invention might be known. The examiner will typically perform the search by referring to online computer databases. The databases contain records of published patent specifications from around the world and can be searched using classification terms and/or keywords. The examiner may also carry out a search of the Internet, product catalogues and technical journals.

What do the document categories X, Y & A mean?

The relevance of each document listed in the Search Report is indicated in the "Category" column.

A document identified as category 'X' will, in general, have the main technical features of your invention (as set out in those claims identified in the middle column).

Sometimes an invention can be considered non-inventive by combining the technical information provided by a number of documents. Such documents are identified in the left hand column as category 'Y'.

A document identified as category 'A' indicates what has been done previously in the technical area of your invention. An 'A' category document does not disclose your claimed invention.

Have all of the claims been searched?

Normally all of the claims are searched. However, if the claims define two or more inventions, the search will be limited to the first claimed invention. The search may also be restricted if the claims are not clear or because your claims are anticipated by a large number of documents. An explanation of why any claims have not been searched will be given in the covering letter to the Search Report.

What do I do next?

Study the documents supplied with the Search Report carefully. You must then decide, in the light of these documents, whether you wish to proceed with your application. If what you have invented is sufficiently different from what has been shown in these documents, you may decide to request substantive examination of your application (if you have not done so already). If it is not, then you may decide to go no further with the application. However, unless you make a clear request to withdraw the application before the preparations for publication are complete, your application will be published with a copy of the Search Report. This is called "A publication" and takes place approximately 18 months from your filing date, or your priority date if you have one (see the Publication factsheet).

Search Report - Typical Example



Application No: GB0469927.8
Claims searched: 1-13
Examiner: Anne Others
Date of search: 5 January 2005

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X, Y	X: 1-5, 10; Y: 7, 8, 9	GB 2145929 A (PLASTIFORM) See whole document, especially figs 1 & 2.
X	1-3	FR 2813174 A1 (BUCHINGER) See especially WPI Abstract Accession No. 2002-230213 [29], and figs. 1-4.
X	1	JP 2000014519 (HORIE) See especially WPI Abstract Accession No. 2000-154460 [14], and Patent Abstract of Japan (PAJ), and figs. 1-3.
Y	7	US 2499538 (STANTON) See especially figs. 1-3.
Y	8	EP 0095353 A1 (BATTS) See especially figs. 1-19.
Y	9	A. Plank, 1976, "Garment hanger constructions". Available from URL: http://www.hangerworld.co.uk/construction . See paragraph 5 and figure 1a [Accessed 4 January 2005].

- Categories:**
- X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
 - Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.
 - & Member of the same patent family
 - A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
 - P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
 - E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:
 Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^X:
 A4L; A6M

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁰⁷:
 A41D; A47B; A63G

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report
 EPDOC, WPI; Internet

The UK Intellectual Property Office Incorporating the Patent Office

KEY REFERENCES

- 1 The number(s) of your claim(s) that have been searched
- 2 The section of the Patents Act which relates to search
- 3 Field of search - This provides an indication of the classified collections searched.
- 4 Publication number of patent cited. This includes a Country code of patent cited - for example US is United States.
- 5 Applicant/inventor of cited document
- 6 Part of cited document of particular relevance to claims indicated
- 7 Non-patent citation, e.g. internet citation
- 8 Relevance of citation to indicated claims
- 9 Number(s) of claims which are not new or not inventive in light of the information contained in the cited document(s)
- 10 Explanation of what each category means

Enquiries: You can contact the UK Intellectual Property Office on: 08459 500505 (local call rate) or Minicom for the hard of hearing: 08459 222250. Alternatively visit our website at www.ipo.gov.uk

We are keen to help all our customers as much as possible, but regret that we cannot assist with the commercial exploitation of your invention. This factsheet is not intended to be a comprehensive guide and necessarily omits details which may be relevant in particular circumstances.