

New Patent Classification System Officially Off the Ground

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The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and the European Patent Office (EPO) recently announced the formal launch of the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system. The new [global classification system for patent documents](#) is said to incorporate the best practices of both the EPO and USPTO systems.

“Today’s formal launch of CPC is a tremendous accomplishment, representing the collaborative efforts of both offices to create a bilateral classification system that will result in significant benefits to the global innovation community” said Director of the USPTO David Kappos. “CPC will foster patent harmonization efforts by enhancing our ability to leverage and use work through an integrated network of intellectual property offices.”

The CPC system has been in the works since October 2010. It includes approximately 250,000 classification symbols based on the International Patent Classification (IPC) system, and will allow examiners and patent users worldwide to conduct searches by accessing the same classified patent document collections. As highlighted by the [USPTO](#), the aim is to enable more efficient prior art searches and enhance efficiency through work-sharing initiatives designed to reduce unnecessary duplication of work.

CPC definitions containing a thorough description of the technical subject matter covered will be provided for every CPC subclass and regularly updated. [Distance learning](#) will be made available to users in early 2013. Downloadable CPC schemes, CPC definitions and concordances (e.g. ECLA to CPC and CPC to IPC) are now available on the official CPC [website](#).

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