



10 REASONS WHY RESEARCH SCIENTISTS SHOULD PATENT SEARCH

It's no secret that molecular biologists that work in pharma research have to search through and read a lot of scientific literature. What may be surprising though is how many scientists forget or simply skip patents as a source in their research. However, the speed at which life science discoveries are being made, and the financial incentives organizations have to patent them, means that patent information can provide some of the most valuable information available. Scientists that include patents in their research have an incredible advantage over those that don't. If the patent world seems daunting and confusing, if you are not even sure where to start, GQ Life Sciences can help.

Our products, LifeQuest and GenomeQuest make adding patents to your research arsenal incredibly simple, and the results can be stunning. For example, did you know that if you omit patents in your research, you might miss out on 80% of the current technical knowledge on a specific topic? [That's #2 on our list!] The following are ten important reasons why you should include patents in your competitive landscape research or when evaluating your organization's freedom to operate to develop a new discovery.

1. Stop Wasting Your Budget

It has been estimated that up to 30% of all R&D expenditure is wasted on redeveloping existing inventions [1]. Most of these unnecessary costs can be avoided by searching existing knowledge on a topic first. While many researchers diligently go through scientific literature and books, they often forget about patents. Patents are a large, up-to-date source of information on applied science and technology, and should be included in all state-of-the-art searches.



2. Find Relevant Information Not Found Anywhere Else

Patents contain a lot of information that is not published in scientific journals. The European Patent Office (EPO) claims that up to 80% of current technological knowledge can only be found in patent documents [1]. This is because overall it is easier to file a patent than to publish a



peer-reviewed paper, and with patents there are no restrictions on the number of pages used to describe the experiments and results. Also, as a matter of policy, many companies do not disclose their R&D results in any other way than through patents.

3. Find Information Sooner

Being the first to patent something, the right of priority, gives people a strong incentive to file early and disclose all information in a great amount of detail. Soon after a patent application is filed it becomes available to the public after which it should be included in state-of-the-art patent searches.



4. Find High-Value Information

Filing a patent costs time and money, and companies generally do not do it unless they think their invention has value to their business. If it has value to them, then you should probably know about it as well.

5. Get Free Inventions

Many patents are no longer valid. Not only do they expire after 20 years, at which point anyone can use the invention, many are also abandoned much earlier in the patent life cycle because fees are not paid on time or because they simply do not get granted. Around 85% of all patents are no longer in force or have never been in force [2]. These are free inventions for anyone's use.



6. Use Granted Inventions As Well

Even when a patent is in force it can still be useful to know about it. In some situations the invention may be used for experimental purposes. Also, a researcher might decide to consult an IP specialist in the company and change research direction, or license the invention from the patent owner. Of course, anything that is not explicitly mentioned in the patent claims is always free information.

7. See What the Competition is Doing

Patent searches are the perfect way to gather business intelligence and monitor innovation strategies of other players in the field very early on. Use this information to your advantage and adjust your own R&D strategy or find potential collaborators this way.

8. Prepare for Filing Your Own Patent

The only way to prove that an innovation is really new is to search all existing knowledge, including the patents. In fact, examiners at the patent office will always search existing patents before they try anything else.



9. Search the Full Text, Not Just the Abstracts

For commercial reasons, the full text of scientific articles is often locked behind a paywall. As a result, popular literature search tools will only let you search the abstracts, causing you to miss a lot of important information in the rest of the article. Patents are always available as full text, giving you the choice of searching only the abstracts or searching all text.



10. Searching Patents Doesn't Have to Be Hard

Gone are the days when patent searching required extensive training or the assistance of an IP specialist. With a web-based patent search tool like LifeQuest it is very easy to search an always up-to-date database of life science patents filed anywhere in the world. LifeQuest helps you construct better queries using suggestions of synonyms for your search terms that are pulled from life sciences ontologies like MeSH and Gene Ontology (GO). It also helps you manage your search results, so you can find the most relevant things quickly. There are no more excuses for not searching patents.



Conclusion

GQ Life Sciences is dedicated to our customers' mission of developing life science products that improve quality of life around the world by helping them identify and understand emerging inventions and their competitive landscape. Let us show you how LifeQuest and GenomeQuest can help you make better, faster, and more informed decisions about your research strategy and maintain a competitive advantage in your market.

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Footnotes

1. As estimated by the EPO here: http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/patents_for_researchers.pdf

2. WIPO IP Statistics Data Center <http://ipstats.wipo.int/ipstatv2/keyindex.htm>

CONTACT

To contact us or for more information on how GQ Life Sciences can help you with patent searches, visit our website at: <http://www.gqlifesciences.com>.

711 Atlantic Ave
Boston, MA 02111
+1 844 841 3059