

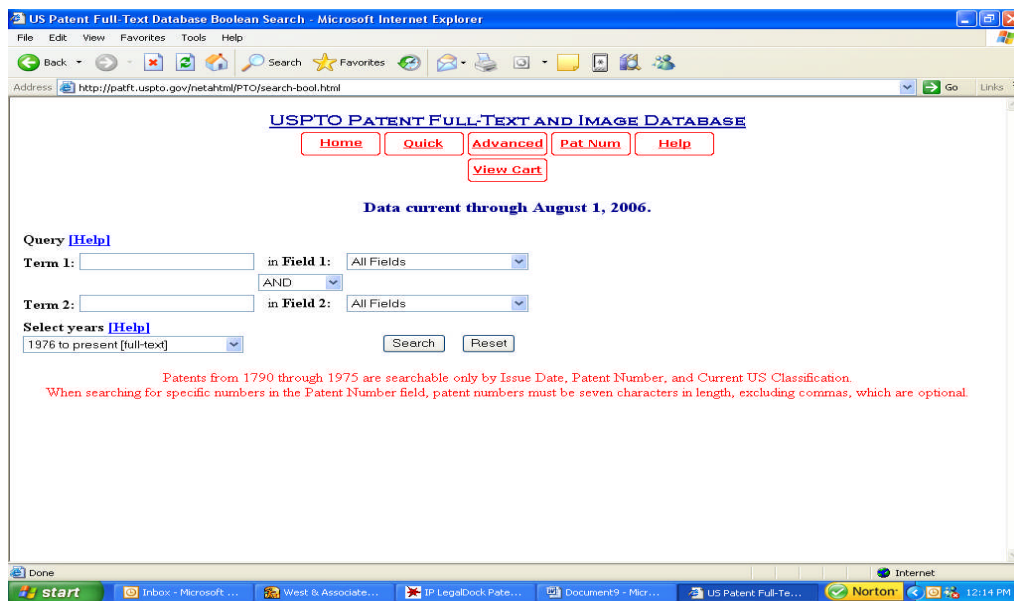
PATENT SEARCHING

STEP-BY-STEP

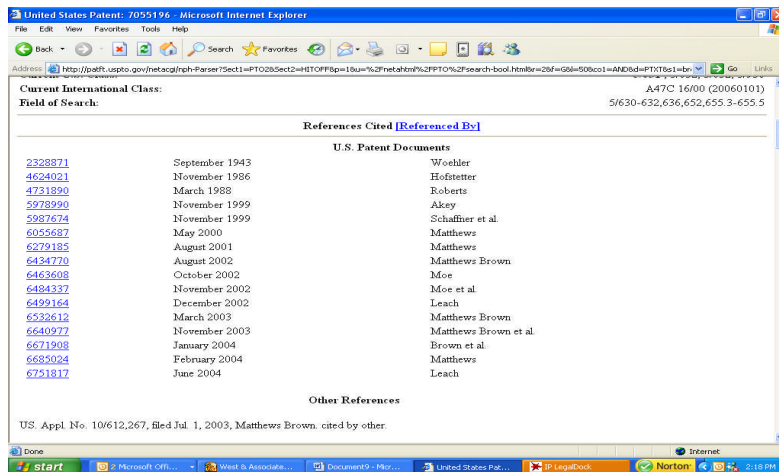
1. Research and figure out who makes similar products and learn the “buzz words” for the industry.
2. Create a list of key words that define your invention. Be creative and think about the scientific terms and buzz words.
For example: To a patent attorney, a rubber band is an elastomeric member or element.
3. Go to USPTO (www.uspto.gov) website. Under the PATENTS heading there is a link marked SEARCH.
There are two sides to the search feature:
Issued Patents (on the left, in green) &
Published Patent Applications (on the right, in yellow)

“Reverse Search”

4. Use the quick search feature and input one or two search terms. This should be done in both the Issued Patents and Published Patent Applications.



5. Review the search results and pick the top 10 (or so) closest patents or patent applications. **KEEP TRACK OF THE PATENT NUMBERS.**
6. Open the top 10 (or so) closest patents one at a time and look for the section marked “**References Cited**” This is a listing of all the patents related to the one that you are looking at. **KEEP TRACK OF THESE PATENT NUMBERS.**



7. Review each of these patents and see if anything looks closer than the patents that are currently in you top 10 (or so) list. If you find a closer patent, repeat steps 6 and 7 on this newly discovered patent. **KEEP TRACK OF THESE PATENT NUMBERS.**
8. **EVENTUALLY**, you will find that all the numbers you have been tracking will start to repeat and that you are not finding anything new. At that point, your basic **REVERSE** patent search is complete.
9. **NOW**, you have to do a **FORWARD** patent search. Take your top 10 (or so) references and go back to the basic search and enter the patent numbers one at a time. For each patent number you will get a list of all the patents that came after it that are related to the same idea that refer to this patent. **KEEP TRACK OF THESE NUMBERS.**
10. Review each of the newly discovered patents and see if there any of them are closer to your idea than your current Top 10 (or so) list. If you find something new then go back and repeat steps 5 – 9.
11. **EVENTUALLY**, you will find that the numbers you have been tracking will start to repeat and that you are not finding anything new. At that point, your **FORWARD** and **REVERSE SEARCHES ARE COMPLETE**. However, you're are not done yet.
12. **REPEAT STEPS 4 – 11** on the Published Patent Applications database (Yellow side).
13. Collect your top 10 (or so) related patents and published patent applications and read them carefully.
14. When and if you're satisfied that your invention doesn't exist, contact a patent attorney and show him/her your idea and research (with all the patent numbers that you have kept track of) and you'll be ready to start the patent application drafting and filing process.