

# VICTOR GREEN & COMPANY

## PATENT & TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**VICTOR GREEN & COMPANY** was founded in 1986 with the aim of providing skilful, resourceful and cost-effective information retrieval and analysis in all fields of science and technology.

Many situations arise in which it is legally advisable or commercially useful to carry out a search through existing patents and patent applications, trade mark registrations, registered designs or technical literature.

Are you a *legal professional* wanting to ensure you have all the information you need to advise your clients in due diligence and other IP issues? Do you need to be sure that the results of any searches you instruct will be comprehensive and stand up to scrutiny during any court proceedings?

Are you a *business professional* wishing to raise the value of your company by the protection and defence of your IP assets? Are you keen to present barriers to competitors considering entering the market? Do you need to value your own IP assets to attract and retain future investment? Or do you wish to value the assets of other companies, to assist you in assessing whether to invest in or buy a business?

Are you a *university, a research institute or a public sector organisation* awarding or applying for grants to develop and build on new ideas? Do you have to consider whether a project is innovative or patentable or may encounter issues of patent infringement? Or are you a venture capital company deciding whether to fund a project with new technology content?

The documentation provided by our services can aid in all aspects of the identification, exploitation and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

### CONTACT US

To request a free estimate or to discuss how we may be able to help you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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## **OUR SERVICES**

We search through patents and patent applications, trade mark registrations, registered designs and technical literature. The most frequent services are described below. Our searches generally cover worldwide publications, but can be limited to the documentation relevant to specific territories.

### **Infringement / Freedom-to-Use / Freedom-to-Operate Search**

Establishes whether elements of your product, design, trade mark, or the process that you want to use, aren't already protected by someone else. This type of search helps to avoid costly legal challenges and misguided product launches. Our report will list publications which you may risk infringing. This list could also help you identify patents or designs to licence, or perhaps change how you develop your product or influence where you manufacture and market. Patents within the infringement period that are not in force, but which may clear your right-to-use by virtue of being in the public domain, are also reported. When this type of search is followed up with a validity search against any highly relevant patents identified, it is sometimes referred to in the USA as a 'clearance search'.

### **Patentability / Design or Trade Mark Registrability Search**

Assesses the patentability of your new product or process, the validity of a particular design or the registrability of a proposed trade mark. Our search will look to find documents relevant to its novelty, or its obviousness in the light of the discovered prior art. This type of search is performed before filing or registration, or before seeking commercialisation. It can help to decide how you should draft your patent claims or whether to file an application at all, reducing unnecessary costs and delays in the filing process.

### **Validity / Prior Art Search**

Confirms whether a patent, design or trade mark at issue (whether it belongs to you or not) is valid with respect to the prior art. For patent validity this may cover both patent and nonpatent literature. If relevant prior documentation is found that was not located by the examiner, the patent can be invalidated on the basis that it was incorrectly granted. Validity searches are therefore useful if a competitor is considering infringement proceedings. Alternatively, if you want to take legal action for infringement of your own patent, or are approaching a company to arrange a licensing deal, a validity search may be required to decide if the patent in question is vulnerable to legal challenge. We can also pursue verification of the date of public availability of documents located by ourselves or other parties should this be required for court proceedings.

### **Chemical Structure / Biosequence Search**

There may be a role in any of the above for structure searching to retrieve chemical substances, and peptide or nucleotide sequence searching for biotechnology subjects.

### **Inventor / Assignee / Proprietor Name Search**

Discovers what your competitors are patenting or reveals their registered design or trade mark profiles. Both standard and non-standard terms are searched (i.e. variations arising from misspellings, transliterations, translations and abbreviations) and subsidiary and parent companies are investigated if required. Our report can list all documents in an inventor or assignee name, or can be limited by subject matter.

### **State of the Art / Collection Search**

Establishes what has been done or what solutions are available in a technology area. With so many innovative products and processes under research or development it may be useful for any research or funding organisations to know the state of the art.

### **Data Mining**

Identifies corporations or law firms as suitable targets for marketing and assesses their patenting activity.

### **Patent Landscape / Mapping**

Reviews the state of technology in a particular field and identifies potential gaps that could be exploited. Exact definition of a patent map or landscape varies from client to client but we believe the high level of intellectual input we give our maps and landscapes greatly facilitates the assessment of intellectual property risks, technology trends, competitors' activities and new business opportunities when compared to automated patent mapping systems.

### **Legal Status**

Establishes the legal status of patents or designs, including for example, determining if a patent is in force, if opposition proceedings have occurred, and if maintenance fees have been paid. Online status can be determined from the registers of the USPTO, UKIPO, EPO and numerous other patent offices, whilst for other countries we can obtain the INPADOC status or use associates to determine official status. UK, EPO and US File Wrappers/Histories can also be supplied.

### **Equivalents Checking / Patent Family Search**

Identifies related patents by investigation of patent families (a collection of published patent documents relating to the same invention, or to several inventions sharing a common aspect, that are published at different times in the same country or published in different countries or regions). This type of search can establish the territorial coverage and technical scope of a particular patent family. Simple (exact priority match), extended, and non-conventional (also called intellectual, technical or artificial) families are investigated so that we can identify additions, continuations, continuations-in-part, divisional applications, filings outside of the Priority Convention, and national publications of first filings of PCT (international) applications, where the priority links are often missing.

### **Watching Search**

Keeps a regular watch on what your competitors are doing. The publication and grant of patents, designs or trade marks in a particular inventor/proprietor name and/or technical subject area can be regularly or continuously monitored so that you can be alerted as soon as a new development takes place.

### **Document Location and Supply**

Useful if you have already identified a patent or technical literature document that may be of interest to you, but are unable to source a full copy. We can supply patent and technical literature documents quickly and at low cost by e-mail, fax, post, and courier.

**Services not listed above may be provided on request.**

## **OUR APPROACH**

### **Flexible**

We tailor each of our searches, via the development of innovative strategies, to meet the precise budgets and deadlines of our clients, providing results that will be relevant to every specific need and circumstance. We work collaboratively with our clients throughout the searching process, keeping you updated with our findings should you wish. Our flexible and iterative searching approach means that we can adjust our strategies according to early findings. Alternatively, we are happy to take full control of the searching process from instruction through to reporting. Our experience and capability mean that you can be confident that the results will exactly meet your needs. We are also willing to work alongside in-house expertise for those who do not need or want a more proactive service.

### **Confidential**

You can be assured that all information supplied to us will be kept strictly confidential. We do however advise a Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement when sensitive information has to be imparted before a patent application is filed.

### **Resourceful**

We have comprehensive access to the fast growing corpus of disclosures worldwide, utilising public databases and resources, but also the enormous range of commercial patent, scientific, technical and techno-commercial databases, in addition to the wealth of information available through internet searches and libraries. We are also happy to take enquiries beyond the confines of the library or the workstation. The timeliness, coverage, cost and technical suitability of each database and resource available is assessed according to each circumstance.

### **Skilful**

Searching is a highly skilled art requiring a high degree of experience and knowledge. The untrained or occasional searcher often fails to locate important documentation since the complexities involved in searching are not fully appreciated. For example, a thorough understanding is required not just of the subject to be searched, but also of the various database languages, potential search methodologies, classification systems and patent jargon (e.g. "energy storing means" to mean "spring"). An untrained searcher cannot be sure of the scope and reliability of their search, or the possibilities for further searching that may exist. Our approach of using a carefully selected spectrum of overlapping databases, classifications and search strategies, enables us to achieve a very high standard of reliability. We manually inspect each individual document retrieved by our search strategies and assess its relevance to your request. This can involve visiting numerous intellectual property websites to access documents in many countries and languages.

We continually review and update our practices, taking advantage of the most recent developments in database technology and searching techniques. For a more detailed account of the resources we employ and examples of the skills involved in searching, please refer to our downloadable document "Our Approach to Searching".

## OUR CLIENTS

Our customers come to us because of our experience in the field, our credibility within the industry and our proven results. We strive to build long-term partnerships with our clients and find that our clients usually remain with us after their first instruction. We are proud of the relationships we have built with our professional colleagues not just in Europe, but worldwide.

We specialise in providing search services to patent and trade mark attorneys, both as sole providers or supplementing their own in-house search teams. As well as being chosen to work for companies by their legal advisers, we also act directly for individual inventors, researchers and traders, owner-managed businesses, start-up companies, large multinational corporations, universities and technology transfer organisations. We can operate as an outsourced service allowing clients who don't wish to retain in-house resources to monitor our work as a cost-centre. We are also happy to work alongside in-house expertise.

Working with such a diverse range of clients has given us a good insight into the varying needs of different sectors.

## OUR EXPERTISE

All our analysts are educated to at least graduate level (over half to postgraduate level) in a science or engineering discipline, and have been trained to have a thorough understanding of searching techniques and patent language. Many of our searchers are capable in non-English languages including French, German and Spanish.

Their technical expertise covers every major subject area and technology, such as:

Biotechnology	Life sciences
Chemical engineering	Materials science
Chemistry	Mechanical engineering
Computer software	Medical technologies
Electrical & electronic engineering	Optics and photonics
Environmental technology	Pharmaceuticals
Information technology	Semiconductors & telecommunications

Each inquiry receives the personal attention and supervision of the directors, Victor Green and David Clarke, or the Principal Patent Analysts, Milan Bhattacharyya and Davinia Collyer, as regards choice of strategy, execution of the search, quality control, and the presentation of results.

We have a reputation for being able to tackle the most difficult of requests. We thrive on challenges, whether to test the strongest of patents or to uncover the most deeply buried prior art.

## **OUR REPORTS**

Uniquely, our reports are compiled by the searchers themselves. This ensures that you receive accurate reports and allows us to tailor them according to the character of each search and the needs of individual clients. By having the searcher compile the report, value is added in the form of comments and notes. We can also provide the report in various file and presentation formats. Interim reports can be provided upon request so that you can assess the results in a progressive fashion.

Our detailed and easy to understand reports usually cover a minimum of:

- the subject being searched for
- the area of the search
- full details of the search strategy used
- a full list of all the relevant documents
- PDF specification copies of all reported documents (optional)

You will have a named contact for each project so that you can directly discuss the search and its results should you wish.

## **COST AND TIMING**

The cost and turn-round time of a search depends largely on technical scope and difficulty. We therefore cannot quote fixed prices and times that will cover all circumstances. However, we are happy to provide free estimates of cost and completion time upon receiving basic information of your requirements. We can also work to specified budgets and deadlines by devising strategies that allow for the maximum knowledge to be obtained within your funds and timeframe.

An adaptation of our approach called Convergence Searching enables us to offer budget novelty searches at a cost currently set at £400. Convergence Searching comprises carrying out highly focussed class, keyword, or combination searches through selected sources, and using promising results as the springboard for extending the search within the allotted time.

We are usually able to turn around requests quickly and every effort is made to meet even the strictest of deadlines. We can provide you with the exact date on which you can expect to receive your results.

Most requests for the supply of patents and recent technical literature can be dispatched the same or next day and older technical literature documents within two days.

You are assured that the cost and timescale will be discussed with you and agreed before any work commences.