

Media Release

A new record – more than one thousand inventions under the microscope

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Even in this challenging year, the spirit of innovation in Switzerland has remained intact. The thousandth invention this year was examined for its patenting potential in November at the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI).

The IPI had already carried out one thousand assisted patent searches by November this year. This service supports inventors in finding out where they stand with their idea or invention and whether it is worth applying to patent it. Customers also learn about the different application procedures and what they should bear in mind when patenting an invention.

“A positive sign for Switzerland”

There have never been so many patent searches carried out within the space of a year since the service was first launched 15 years ago. For comparison, 824 inventions were put under the microscope in 2019. This figure has now been surpassed already in November this year with the one thousandth assisted patent search. “This is a positive sign for Switzerland,” says Theodor Nyfeler, Deputy Head of the Patent Division at the IPI. It shows that innovators didn’t bury their heads in the sand during the crisis.

During the lockdown, the IPI supported inventors, start-ups and SMEs with free assisted patent searches, which invariably contributed to the high demand. Within eight weeks, the IPI had received 830 requests for a search. During this time, patent experts carried out almost 70 assisted patent searches per week, together with customers, which is three times more than in quieter periods. The number of innovators who have become aware of this service has increased significantly, says Nyfeler.

Online searches

The assisted patent searches have mainly been conducted online since the lockdown in March. “It does work well,” says Nyfeler. Nevertheless, a search together with a patent expert at the IPI offers advantages over one carried out online. Direct dialogue is easier and more spontaneous, for example, and there are no technical hurdles to overcome.

The IPI is extending its offer for innovators

Innovative SMEs and start-ups continue to be seriously challenged by the coronavirus crisis. The IPI wants to continue to support them in this arduous marathon, which is why it is extending its offer of assisted patent searches and assisted patent landscape analyses for 100 Swiss francs instead of CHF 300 until 30 June 2021.

About the IPI

The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) is the federal centre of competence for patents, trade marks, geographical indications, design and copyright.

Individuals and companies can register their inventions and creations with the IPI to protect them from being copied. In addition to this, the IPI informs the public about the IP rights system of protection.

It also fulfils a political mandate in all areas of intellectual property in that it prepares legislation, advises the federal authorities, and represents Switzerland within international organisations and vis-à-vis other countries.

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In an Assisted Patent Search, inventions are put under the microscope. Photo: IPI

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