



Europäisches
Patentamt
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des brevets

DocX/OOXML Filing – The easy way to file XML



Context

- On-line filing has been operational since 2000
- Operationally it is working well
 - Over 95% of new applications at the EPO are now filed online, excluding the Subsequently Filed Documents (SFDs)
- This has brought new opportunities
 - Newer technology
 - PDF is no longer the only option
 - Publishing houses are now promoting online processing with word processor based XML
 - EPO's IT Roadmap has created new possibilities (e.g. eDossier)
- Additional possibilities for XML filing can be envisaged.

Current Situation - Applicants

- Drafting
 - 98% of EPO patent filers prepare application documents in MS Word
 - Current word processors not able to generate WIPO ST 36 XML directly
 - 14 mio. pages per year in total
- Conversion
 - 50% convert to PDF using AmyUni
 - 40% convert using Adobe products
 - 5% scan a printed copy
 - 5% other software

What applicants send us

PDF-Text	PDF-Image	Paper	PatXML
82%	9%	8%	1%

Current Situation – The EPO

- The volume of OCR
 - 10 mio. pages per year for incoming application documents
- The volume of re-OCR
 - Search Quality XML (99,5%) to Publication Quality XML (99,95%) for publication
- EPO Board of Appeal Decision G1/10
 - No more correction of some obvious OCR errors after publication
 - Reinforced responsibility on the applicant to check the final specification

DocX Filing – What you draft is what you send

- Based on “Office Open XML” (ISO Standard 29500:2008)
- Simple rules for preparing the application or subsequently filed document
 - Standard document templates available, but not mandatory
 - Set of recommended Unicode fonts (European and Asian)
 - Complex Tables, chemical and mathematical formulae as images or OLE
 - Standard headings for claims, description, etc
 - Drawings in PDF still allowed
- Already in use as the internal format by 98% of European Applicants

Preparations

- Technical
 - Two pilot phases July-Oct. 2017 and Dec.-May 2018
 - Updated convertor based on lessons learned during Pilot Phase I
 - No mandatory template
 - Amendments based on replacement pages
 - Updated EPO tools: eOLF, CMS Filing and WebForm Filing
 - All able to attach, view, validate and correct DocX
- Legal
 - PCT A.I. Annex F – Second round of proposed changes underway
 - Rules and Fee changes submitted to Dec. 2017 EPO AC (CA/102/17)
 - Entry into force 01 July 2018

Impact on Applicants (1)

- A simpler process
 - Takes advantage of technology improvements in the last 15 years
 - Widely used in the publishing industry
 - No more need for conversion to PDF
 - Attach and send document using familiar EPO tools (eOLF, CML, WFF)
 - New fee policy: €0 Transmittal Fee for PCT (was €130), €90 European filing fee in DocX (was €120), €250 on paper, €120 PDF
 - Also changes in the fee for grant for subsequently filed documents:
 - 100 EUR reduction as from 30.06.2018
 - 100 EUR increase as from 30.06.2019 for non-DOCX filings

Impact on Applicants (2)

- Secure process
 - Existing digital signature used to guarantee no changes after submission
 - Applicant has the digital "hash" to prove it (printed on the receipt)
- Provides a solid basis for the future
 - Could in future support filings in colour
 - An existing, well understood model for “tracked changes” in amendments
 - Will also allow improved communications (e.g. hyperlinks for citations)

Impact on the EPO

- No more OCR for valid XML filings
- “Ready to publish” document always available
- Content of DocX filing directly loaded into EPO systems
 - Automatic extraction and Quality Control
- End-to-end electronic process inside the EPO using this XML
 - Filing, Search, Examination, A and B Publication
- One validation engine for use:
 - By applicants before filing
 - By the EPO after filing

Making DocX the preferred way to file at the EPO

- Technical preparations for EP and PCT filings on track
- Legal framework prepared for approval in Dec. 2017 (CA/102/17)
- Fee policy published
 - €0 Transmittal Fee for PCT (was €130)
 - €90 European filing fee in DocX (was €120)
 - €250 on paper, €120 PDF
 - Changes in the fee for grant
- First pilot with 68 volunteers complete (July – Oct 2017)
- Phase II pilot with 350 volunteers starting in December 2017
 - Additional volunteers welcome (*email:* jbambridge@epo.org)
- Entry into force 01 July 2018

Thank you for your attention!

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