How to Cite Patents and Trademarks*

**Patents**

Patents are cited by including the name(s) of the inventor(s), the year of issuing the patent, and the title of the patent. The name of the issuing institution at the time of issuing the patent, the patent number and the exact dates of the patent being filed, issued and eventually expired (optional) conclude the citation.

**Some Notable Patents**

A patent of a claimed invention is a license which is issued by a governmental institution which confers exclusive rights to the inventor(s) to the published claims of said invention for a limited period. Although millions of patents have been officially issued for the past two centuries, there are some notable patents of fundamental inventions which greatly improved the living conditions of mankind. Sample citations of such patents are given below.

**Sewing Machine**

The patent for the invention of the sewing machine by Elias Howe Jr. based on “putting a groove in the needle running away from the point, starting from the eye” is among the best patented inventions. This invention, combined with the improvements made by Singer, Wheeler and Wilson, and Grover and Baker modernized the shoe and garment industries. The inventor patented his lockstitch sewing machine on 10 September 1846 in New Hartford, CT, USA, and the patent can be cited, as follows:


**Radio**

The invention of the radio is considered as one of the most important inventions. Several inventors contributed to the initial development of the radio and there is an ongoing debate about the very first patent defining the radio. In relation to this, it is worth citing two of the patents of Nikola Tesla:


**Penicillin**

It is possible to file several consecutive patent applications having the same title but containing different claims as it was the case with the method for mass production of penicillin introduced by Andrew Jackson Moyer:


**Integrated Circuit (IC)**

The examination period after the date of filing may vary significantly from one patent to another, the following example shows two patents related to the invention of the integrated circuit:


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(Continued on the inside back cover)
Invalid Patents

Sometimes, patents are fully or partially invalidated in court and the date of invalidation should be included in the citation.

An example of the infringement of a certain claim of a patent is the court case “Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America vs. United States” and the patent in question can be cited, as follows:


Another example is the court case concerning the invention of the first automatic electronic digital computer, which was legally resolved on 19 October 1973 when United States District Judge Earl Richard Larson of the District Court for the District of Minnesota held the Electronic Numerical Integrator And Computer (ENIAC) patent invalid, ruling that the ENIAC derived many basic ideas from the Atanasoff-Berry Computer (ABC). ENIAC was created by John Adam Presper Eckert Jr. and John William Mauchly who used the design of ABC invented earlier by John Vincent Atanasoff, an American physicist from Bulgarian origin on his father’s side, and his graduate student Clifford Edward Berry. ABC was never patented. Federal Judge Larson declared the ENIAC patent null and void and explicitly stated, “Eckert and Mauchly did not themselves first invent the automatic electronic digital computer, but instead derived that subject matter from one Dr. John Vincent Atanasoff”. Therefore, the invalidated ENIAC patent can be cited, as follows:


Trademarks

The unregistered trademark symbol ™ and the unregistered service mark symbol ®SM are used for marks that have a pending trademark application or for marks that are claiming the rights to the mark. The registered trademark symbol ® is used once a trademark registration is received. Registered and unregistered marks of hardware and software products/services used for research and development are cited by including the product/service mark (followed by ™, ®, or ®SM), year, version (optional), company, city, state, and country. The following examples are provided as an illustration of citing registered trademarks, unregistered trademarks and service marks.

Hardware Products

Blue Gene®/P. 2007. IBM Corporation, Somers, NY, USA.

Intel® Core™. 2010. Core i5-6xx series. Intel Corporation, Santa Clara, CA, USA.


NVIDIA® Tesla™. 2011. M2090 GPU computing module. NVIDIA Corporation, Santa Clara, CA, USA.

Software Products


Service Marks
