


Patent Research Lab

Part I: Patent Search

This handout is a summary of the 7-step patent search process. For a description of each step, view the slides and/or video at: <http://guides.lib.campbell.edu/patents>. You will document your search in your Research Log, a research practice that will help your “future self” remember what was most relevant when you conducted a search, and why.


Step 1: Brainstorm terms describing your invention.

Consider the physical components of the invention, how the invention is used, and technical terms that describe the nature of the invention.


 List keywords and synonyms in your **Research Log** (“Search Strategy” tab).

Step 2: Determine CPC classification(s) to search.

Find relevant CPC classifications by drilling down through this [CPC Listing](#), or by doing a keyword search in a patent database and noting the classifications to which relevant patents belong.


 List relevant classifications/sub-classifications in your **Research Log** (“Search Strategy” tab).

Step 3: Review CPC classification definitions to ensure relevance.

 Add a **summary** of the definition and its relevance to your invention to your **Research Log** (“Search Strategy” tab).


Step 4: Search for patents within the CPC classification you identified.

Use *Espacenet* and/or *Lens.org* to search for patents through a combination of keyword and classification searching.

 For each search, list the database, classification, keywords, and date searched in your **Research Log** (“Search Strategy” tab).


Step 5: Conduct a brief review of patents using front-page information.

Scan retrieved patents to determine which will require detailed investigation, and to rule out others are irrelevant. Pay close attention to the abstract and representative drawing to quickly determine relevance.

 List patents reviewed in this way in your **Research Log**, including the document number, relevance (Y/N), and date reviewed (“Patents Examined” tab).

Step 6: Conduct an in-depth review of selected patents.

Closely review the patent specification (written description of the invention, including its description, claims, and drawings) and other areas of relevant patent documents.


 Take careful notes in your **Research Log** (“Patents Examined” tab). List basic information like the document number, patent name, patent family information (also published as), and date reviewed. In your own words, include a summary of the drawing sheets, description, claims, and other leads; and provide an overall summary of your analysis and the relevance of the patent document to your invention.

Step 7: Repeat and/or broaden your search.

Patent searching is complex and it can take many hours to complete a thorough search. Depending on your invention, searches will often yield more relevant results that must be investigated. For this assignment, you will continue your search until you have examined at least **six patents** in detail.

Part II: Analysis and Reflection

In narrative format, provide a reflection of your search strategy and patent analysis. Taking careful notes in your Research Log (Part I of the assignment) will enable you to articulate your search strategy and highlight the most relevant patents uncovered in your analysis.

 Submit this reflection as a separate Word document. A thorough, but concise, document will likely be 1 page, single spaced, with 2-3 paragraphs each discussing Search Strategy and Patent Analysis.

Search Strategy:

Summarize and describe your search strategy (CPCs searched, databases searched). Of the CPCs that you identified, which were most effective in finding relevant prior art on your invention? Did you find anything unexpected? Did you learn something from an existing patent that could improve your product?

Patent Analysis:

Describe the patents you analyzed as relevant to your invention. What factors did you use to determine the patents relevance to your own? If you were to produce your invention, do you believe it would infringe on any prior art?