Topic 1-3

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IPC - International Patent Classification

Classification Practice

- What and Where to Classify (and Search)?

Koichi MATSUSHITA
IPC Section, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

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Where?

Selecting appropriate places is similar for

- ✓ **Classifying** patent applications / granted patents
- ✓ **Searching** state of the art for examination

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What is classified?

Two types of information worth classifying:

- ✓ **Invention information**

  Technical information worth granting a patent

  ➢ obligatory classification

- ✓ **Additional information**

  Supplementary non-invention information
  the classifier/examiner considers important

  ➢ discretionary classification

Invention and Additional Information

Example:

A metal rod wine rack (Training Example:M5)

- ✓ ***Invention Information***

  A wine rack which is easily dismantled (claim)

- ✓ *Additional Information*

  A rigid wine rack made of “wire”

Int. Cl.

A47B 73/00 (2006.01)

A47B 47/02 (2006.01)

A47B 55/02 (2006.01)

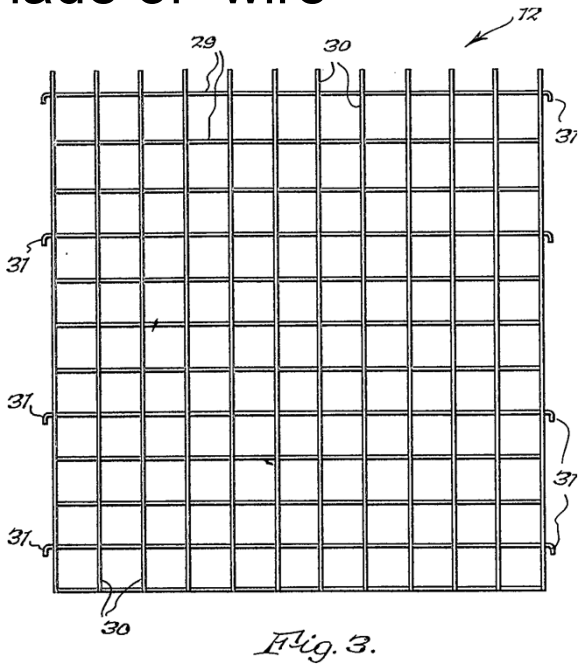

Fig. 3.

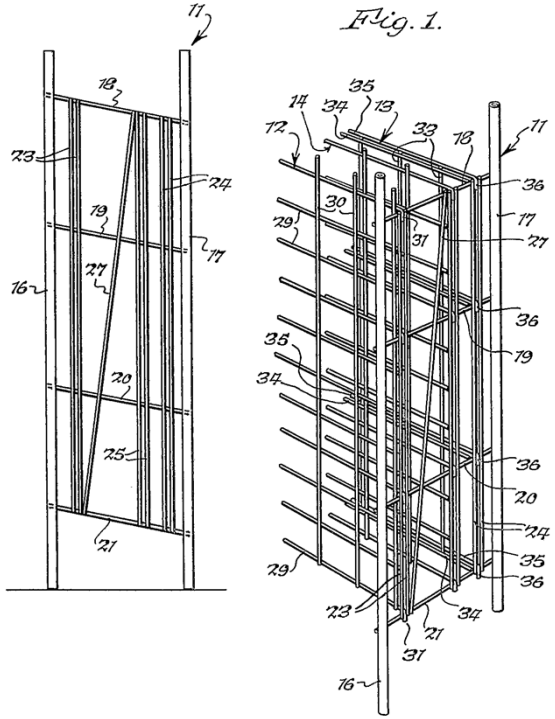

Fig. 1.

Invention Information

- ✓ Addition to the state of the art in its context
- ✓ All novel and unobvious subject matter in any part of document
  - Claims as guidance, but also in description
  - In examined patent only in claims
- ✓ Each piece of invention information classified separately as a whole >>inventive thing
- ✓ At least one symbol given as Invention Information even if no invention

➢ **obligatory classification**

Invention Information

- ✓ Technical subject matter should be classified as a whole – not constituent parts
  - Unless constituent parts novel and unobvious
- ✓ When classifying large systems as a whole, sub combinations should also be classified if inventive.

Additional information

- ✓ Non trivial technical information constituting useful information for search
- ✓ Complementing invention information, e.g.
  - constituents of a composition or mixture
  - elements or components of a process or structure
  - use or applications of classified technical subjects if non-inventive
- ✓ Allows search by combination of symbols

➢ **non-obligatory classification**

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What and Where ?

N.B. One document may contain several different technical subject matters (inventive things) to be classified (e.g. independent claims)

- All inventive things have to be classified, several symbols must be assigned if needed!

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Example

Patent application

Claim 1 → ***G67K 1/00*** **(invention information)**

- Claim 2 (dependent claim)
- Claim 3 (dependent claim) ⇢ *B91M 1/00* (additional information)

• **Claim 4** → ***F88Z 1/00*** **(invention information)**

- Claim 5 (dependent claim)

IPC symbols

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Where?

- ✓ **Traditional principal**:

  As few symbols as possible, as much as necessary!

  > Idealy one symbol

  (historically important reason: limit paper search file)

- ✓ **Complementary principle**:

  Classify everything interesting for search purposes!

  (efficient retrieval of documents)

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Types of IPC symbols

- ✓ **Classification symbols** normally stand for **concepts** (longer titles), i.e. a combination of characteristics/features

- ✓ **Indexing symbols** only describe **one additional characteristic** of the subject matter to be classified

  - ➢ i.e. adding an indexing symbols is like adding a keyword (indexing)

Indexing symbols

- ✓ Used only in specific areas to classify additional information of interest for search
  - ➢ Discretionary classification
- ✓ i.e. indexing symbols are never given alone, they always supplement one or several ordinary symbols
  - ➢ Never presented first
- ✓ Only specific places in the IPC scheme are used for indexing
  - Indexing subclasses (B29K, B29L, C10N, C12R, F21W, F21Y)
  - Indexing main groups (e.g. A01D 101/00, C04B 103/00,..)

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Types of IPC symbols

Summary

- ✓ Invention information:
  - Classification symbols

- ✓ Additional information:
  - Classification symbols
  - Indexing symbols

Classification Rules

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Different classification rules may apply:

- ✓ **First place priority rule**
- ✓ **Last place priority rule**

B32B
Note(s)
5. In groups B32B 1/00-B32B 33/00, the first place priority rule is applied, i.e. at each level, in the absence of an indication to the contrary, classification is made in the first appropriate place.

Note(s)
In this subclass / main group(s) / group(s), the last place priority rule is applied, i.e. at each hierarchical level, in the absence of an indication to the contrary, classification is made in the last appropriate place.

- ➢ give priority between groups of the same hierarchical level
- ➢ avoid multiple classification in case of overlap

- ✓ **Special rules** (see § 155 of *the Guide*)
  - Multiple classification (C04B 38/00)
  - Subject-specific rules (C08L)
- ✓ **Common rule** (default, if no other rules specified)

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Common Rule

- ✓ Common Rule aims at limiting multiple classification when many symbols should be allotted
  - ✓ Priority for
    - groups for more complex subject matter
    - groups for more specialised subject matter
  - ✓ However, classification in several places if
    - priority not given, only places for subcombinations
    - place of lower priority is useful for search

Question

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Example:

Inventive subject matter A is characterized by subcombinations of A2 and A4 in the following scheme which has no provision for combinations:

A (1/00) main group
- A1(1/02) subgroup
- A2(1/04) subgroup
- A3(1/06) subgroup
- A4(1/08) subgroup

Question: Classification(s) under CR/FPPR/LPPR?

Answer: if Common Rule > A2 and A4
if First Place Rule > A2
if Last Place Rule > A4