

Full-text & images of patents worldwide from [ESP@CENET](http://ep.espacenet.com)

By A. Ben Wagner

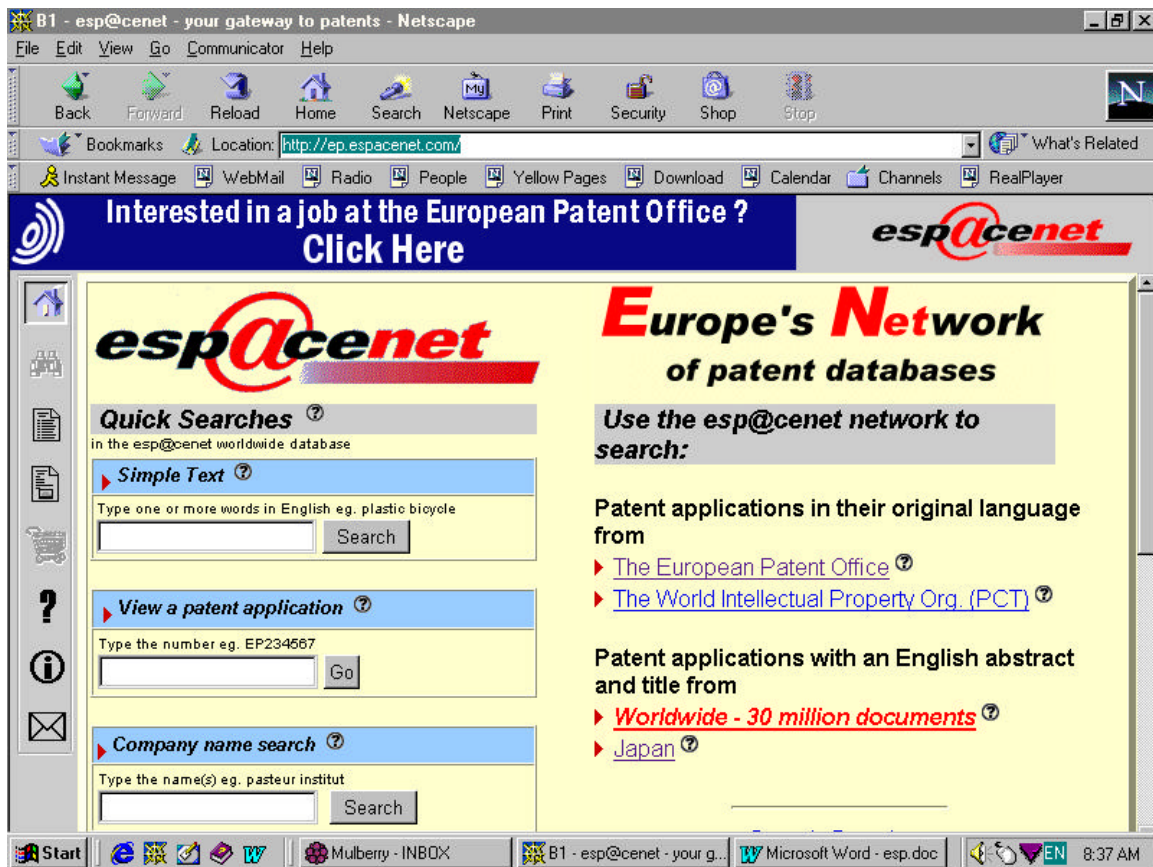
The European Patent Office has quietly built an extensive, free worldwide database of 30 million patent documents, many with full-text page images. It's all available from the [esp@cenet](http://ep.espacenet.com) home page [<http://ep.espacenet.com>].

Since the site is maintained by the European Patent Office, many people assume that it covers only Western Europe. Actually, bibliographical data for patents from 62 countries can be searched back as far as 1964. Nine countries also have searchable abstracts (China, EPO, France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and WIPO). Full-text page images (.pdf files) can be displayed for 23 countries as far back as 1920. For example,

Country	Searchable	Page Images (.pdf)
European Patent Office	1978	1978
Germany	1967	1920
Japan	1973	1980
USA	1968	1920
World Patents (PCT)	1978	1978

This site is definitely the first place to stop when looking for full-text of worldwide patents. SciFinder® Scholar via ChemportSM directs users to this site for the full-text of many of their patent citations. There are several important and non-obvious points regarding the [esp@cenet](http://ep.espacenet.com) home page and the procedure for printing page images.

[ESP@CENET HOME PAGE](http://ep.espacenet.com)



This article focuses on the third link, labeled "Worldwide - 30 million documents". This comprehensive database includes all the information in the other three links (European, PCT, and Japan). Clicking on the little question mark in a circle beside this link leads to a table detailing the search and image coverage in the database for each of the 61 countries.

Note that the Quick Search boxes in the left-hand column provide basic searching of this worldwide database. For additional search options, simply click on the Worldwide database link in the right-hand column. One hint: the navigation buttons on the extreme left-hand side of the page usually work much quicker than the browser's back and forward buttons on the top tool bar.

DISPLAYING AND PRINTING IMAGES

From any **search results page**, clicking on a hyperlinked patent number displays the **bibliographic citation page** with one or more patent numbers underlined as active links. If there is more than one patent number, it simply means that each of these patent numbers are equivalent in terms of the technology they disclose.

Clicking on the underlined patent number links on the **bibliographic citation page** opens up two new windows:

- 1) a browser window with navigation tools to move between the various pages of the patent image, and
- 2) an Adobe® Acrobat window that displays the page image of the first page of the patent.

You must use the browser window "behind" the Acrobat window to move to a new page. This can not be done inside the Acrobat window. Be certain to use the Print Icon in the Acrobat window to print the page image (not the Internet browser print icon at the very top).

Given that patents can be hundreds of pages long, printing each page image one at a time is extremely laborious. Fortunately, there is a way to print the entire text without graphics or figures quickly. Then you can go back and pick and choose which pages have graphics, or at least graphics important to you.

SHORTCUT TO PRINT THE ENTIRE PATENT TEXT WITHOUT GRAPHICS

To quickly print the entire text of the page, click in sequence on the gray buttons at the top of the **bibliographic citation page** marked Biblio, Page 1, Desc, Claims, etc. They are easy to miss! There are usually only 4-6 buttons representing the major parts of the patent. Clicking on these buttons pulls up a text version of each part as a single "page" that can be readily printed using the browser's standard print button.

This text version notes where graphics have been removed, assisting you in determining which pages images you will need to go back and print one page at a time from the Adobe® Acrobat window.

A. Ben Wagner
Physical Sciences Librarian
Science and Engineering Library
State University of New York at Buffalo
Buffalo, NY 14260-2200
abwagner@acsu.buffalo.edu