

A NEW APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY MAPPING AND COMPETITOR ANALYSIS



Senior Intellectual Property Analyst David Beet, of UKSPA Business Affiliate Haseltine Lake LLP, looks at new ways to access key data about your technology sector and your competitor's innovation.

How do you keep yourself informed about what is happening in your technology sector and what technologies your competitors are developing? This is a question that faces all high-tech and science-based businesses and one that becomes ever more complex as the pace and scope of innovation continues to increase all around the world.

IP Analytics is a new tool for technology mapping and competitor analysis which uses powerful computer software to search vast patent databases and to group technologies

through an analysis of the terminology used in the patent documents. Using natural language processing algorithms, the software allows many thousands of documents to be searched and categorised into technology sectors and sub-sectors and summarised into tables, charts or graphical maps.

This creates opportunities for both high level and in depth analysis in a fraction of the time and far more comprehensively than could ever be achieved by conventional searching and reviewing methods.

“**Strategically, detailed analysis may identify opportunities to develop your own technology in a way that may hamper or block the ability of competitors to file patents in your technology field.**”

This sort of in-depth analysis can be used in due diligence exercises for mergers and acquisitions, and may also enable potential infringers to be identified at an early stage. Strategically, detailed analysis may identify opportunities to develop your own technology in a way that may hamper or block the ability of competitors to file patents in your technology field.

Figure 2. on the facing page shows the patent filing trends of the domestic appliance manufacturer broken down by appliance type and by date parameters.

Who is using IP Analytics?

Many large corporations have already invested in IP Analytics software. There are a number of software products available on the market, all with similar core functionality but with some differences in terms of the databases that they can search and the report outputs that they can generate. The companies that have invested in this software employ skilled in-house IP analysts to use it. This represents a big investment but the results of the analysis readily justify the cost.

Working with R and D teams and product development teams, the analyst can scope and search technology sectors indicating areas of both high and low patenting activity, and sometimes even identifying latent technologies that have not yet made it to market. They can also produce comparative filing trends showing how the product or technology outputs from a particular division or sector of the company stack up against competitor activity.

Until relatively recently IP Analytics tools were not readily accessible to smaller businesses and research institutions. However there are now a number of service providers in the market offering IP Analytics as a sub-contracted professional service, making this powerful tool, and the skills of the analysts who use it, available to all science and technology-based businesses.

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