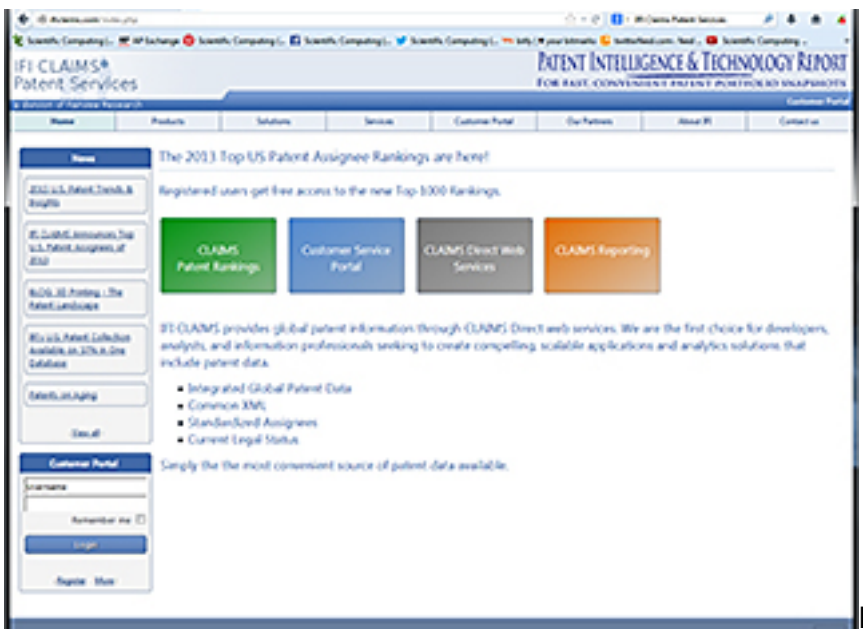
IFI Announces Top US Patent Assignees of 2013, IBM on Top Again

IFI CLAIMS Patent Services



MADISON, CT — IFI CLAIMS Patent Services, a producer of global patent databases, analytic solutions and Web services, released its annual tally of the top recipients of U.S. patents in 2013. The company posted the 2013 Top 50 Patent Assignees [1] on its Web site on January 14, 2014 and, for the first time, is offering free public access to the Top 1000 Ranking [2], a comprehensive tabulation of the global companies and organizations that received the most utility patents from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in calendar year 2013.

IBM is at the top of the list again with a record-setting 6,809 patents, continuing a dominance that has lasted 21 straight years. Up five percent over the previous year, IBM maintains a comfortable lead of more than 2,000 patents over the closest contender, #2 Samsung Electronics. Canon, at #3, increased its count by 20 percent over 2012, but the fastest mover in the Top 10 is San Diego-based Qualcomm, making its debut at #9, up 62 percent over 2012. The third American company in the upper echelon, Microsoft moves up to #5, edging out Panasonic and just behind Sony.

Changing of the (Patent) Guard in Silicon Valley

Google and Apple continue to move up as both companies break into the Top 20 for the first time, and with Google, at #11, beating #13 Apple for the second year in a row. These two new school companies have now pushed slightly ahead of two old school U.S. companies, #14 GE and #15 GM. What may be more significant is that this new tally dethrones Hewlett-Packard and Intel as the longtime Silicon Valley patent leaders. Intel, at #18, also displaces #19 HP, which had been #15 and ahead of Intel in 2012.

“Not only are the number of patents increasing, but the number of assignees increased this year by more than 4,000," said Mike Baycroft, CEO, IFI CLAIMS Patent Services. “If we look at all the nearly 60,000 assignees, only 62 grew by more than 500 patents and only 640 grew by more than 50, and that one percent contributed more than 40 percent of total new grants. What that indicates is tremendous amount of activity in the development of small patent portfolios. Are we starting to see signs that innovation is returning to the garage?”

According to IFI, the USPTO issued a record-breaking 277,835 utility patents in 2013, an increase of approximately 10 percent over 2012 and the most issued in a single year. A total of 18 U.S. firms made the Top-50 list in 2013, up from 17 in 2012 and 2011.

BlackBerry, the only Canadian company in the top 50, jumps 9 places to #20, which is counterintuitive given the company’s market performance. Other notable first appearances to the Top 50 include Samsung Display, at #22, which jumps up from #123 in 2012; Massachusetts-based medical equipment maker Covidien, at #46, up from #509, making it the largest gainer in the Top 50; and Ford Global Technologies, at #50, one of four automotive companies to place in the Top 50 including Honda, Toyota and GM.

“There’s little change happening in the Top 10 as most of the companies have been there for years, but as we move down list we start to see more jockeying and reordering,” continued Baycroft. “It’s fairly easy to see the ones with the most patent momentum — the ones that move up five, 10, even more than 500 slots in a year. Below the Top 50 we see the candidates that are likely to bubble up tomorrow, company’s like Amazon, Verizon and China’s Huawei Technologies, to name a few.”

Using proprietary algorithms and more than 50 years' experience analyzing USPTO data, IFI compiles the most trusted annual ranking of global companies assigned the most U.S. utility patents for the year. IFI’s ranking counts utility patents and does not include design or plant patents. Utility patents are the most common patent type and a primary means of protecting intellectual property and technological innovation. IFI compiles its ranking based on assignee name as filed with the USPTO. If a company files under multiple assignee names, IFI tracks each assignee as a separate entity. Many clients turn to IFI to assist with tracking “total portfolio ownership” and this area has emerged as one of the key services the company provides.

In addition to IFI’s Top 50 Patent Assignees [1], a collection of 2013 Trends and Insights [3] is available on the company’s website at www.ificlaims.com [4]. Access to the Top 1000 Ranking [2] is also available now with no fee to anyone who registers on the company’s website. The company’s full analysis comprises patent data on more than 7,000 companies and organizations.

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