Patent Cooperation Treaty applications are available in the database with the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) are available in the Patents Database. However, the content of the Canadian Patents Database is not consistently updated. Patents filed directly with the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) contains patent images from 1920 to the present and bibliographic patent information from 1790 to December 1975. Patent applications from March 2001 to the present are also searchable in the United States Patent Database.

Canadian patent applications may be filed in either French or English. Most patents have parallel titles in both French and English, although the titles from 1960–1978 have titles only in the language of filing. This will affect the access to patent information filed from 1960 to 1978, since it is searchable in only one of the official languages.

There are six parts to the patent document image: cover page, abstract, claims, drawings, description, and representative drawings. The cover page is produced by the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). It contains bibliographic information about the patent. Some of the more recent patents documents include an abstract and representative drawing in addition to the bibliographic information on the cover page. The abstracts are only available for patents issued after 1975. Abstracts describe the inventions, while the claims section describes original aspects of the item that is being patented. The drawing section (optional) is a set of diagrams that represent the invention. The description section is a detailed explanation of the invention. The representative drawing section is a single visual image of the invention. Representative drawings are available only for patents filed after October 1989. The Canadian Patent Classification system is used for patents registered before October 1989 and the International Patent Classification system is used after October 1989.

The Canadian Patent database is for general informational use and the content meets this intended purpose. For more detailed information it is recommended that patent documents be obtained from the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO).

### Searchability

The database can be searched by the patent application filing number (PCT filing number), by the patent classification number or by keywords searched in the following fields: inventor, inventor’s country, owner, owner’s country, title, abstract and claim. The search may be limited by the availability of licence. A licence allows for the sale or licensing the rights to the patent.
The Canadian Patents Database offers four search options: basic, number, Boolean and advanced. The basic search uses natural language searching to find specific words or phrases in any field. Various search language may be used in the basic search function such as Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity operators. The basic search function is displayed in Figure 1.

The number search is used to find a particular patent by the patent document number (see Figure 2). The patent document number is a unique 8-digit number that identifies individual patents.

Two separate display options are available for viewing the results of the number search: document details and administrative status, shown in Figures 3 and 4, respectively. Document details include information about the patent such as title, abstract, claims, inventor, and owner. Administrative status shows the administrative status and payment history of the patent. All the fields in both the document details and administrative status view are hyperlinked to descriptions of the fields.

The Boolean search is used to find keywords in up to three different fields connected by the Boolean logic operators (AND, OR). This search may be limited by the availability of a licence, by the patent application filing number (PCT filing number) or by date. Several different types of date may be used to limit the Boolean search: issue date, filing date, “open to public inspection” date, priority date, and national entry date. Figure 5 illustrates the Boolean search screen.

The advanced search uses natural language searching to find specific words.
or phrases in any of the searchable fields. Various search language may be used in the advanced search function such as Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity operators. The advanced search may be limited by availability of a license, by the patent application filing number (PCT filing number), by language, or by date. Figure 6 shows the advanced search.

SEARCH RESULTS

The Canadian Patents Database has extensive search capabilities. It gives users several different options for accessing information. It is very intuitive to use for users who have a basic understanding of patents and the patent process. For the novice patent searcher, there are very well written Help menus that describe each of the fields in detail and describe how to use search language. The search engine is very reliable and offers consistent and reliable results. For example a basic search using the keywords “cup holder” offers a list of results that are ranked using a relevancy ranking system. This example is illustrated in Figure 7. However, the algorithm for this relevancy ranking process is not given. The default results display list is 50 items, but this may be increased to 500 items.

Conclusion

The Canadian Patents Database was created to provide patent information for the general public. Search options are suitable for both novice and advanced users. The administrative status and document details of the patents provide users with a variety of information.

Contract Provisions

The Canadian Patents Database allows users to freely access patent documents for information purposes only. There may be missing information in the database.
loading patent information from this database is limited to 300 pages. Some patent holders are willing to sell or lease the rights to their invention and this information is contained in the patent document. The Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) should be contacted if the patent information will be used for legal purposes or if more than 300 pages need to be downloaded.

**Authentication**

Since this database is freely available authentication is not necessary.

**Updates and New Information**

Updates and new features of the database are stated on the Canadian Patents Database Web site. Notices of upgrades to the database are also available on the Web site.

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**Contact Information**

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**Canadian Patents Database Review Scores Composite:** ★★★★★

*The maximum number of stars in each category is 5*

**Content:** ★★★ 1/2

This database contains patent document details and administrative status; however, the content in this database is not complete and there is inconsistency as to the completeness of the patent information depending on the date or type of patent application.

**Searchability:** ★★★★ 1/2

Search features are extensive, reliable, and intuitive. The database offers four different search options. The Help section describes each field and offers instruction on using search language. Search results use a relevancy ranking; however, the algorithm for this ranking process is not given.

**Price:** N/A

Accessing information in this database is free, but fees are charged for obtaining and maintaining patents.

**Contract Provisions:** N/A

Access is freely available for information purposes. Downloading is limited to 300 pages.

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**References**


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**About the Author**

Marcia Salmon is a Cataloguing Librarian at the Scott Library at York University. She specializes in providing access to serials and electronic resources. She also contributes to reference services at the Steacie Science and Engineering Library at York University. She received an honours B.Sc. in Biology and Applied Educational Psychology from University of Toronto, and an M.L.I.S. from the University of Western Ontario.