7 Step Patent Search Strategy

4. Search for related patents and applications by classification and sub-classification. Record all relevant patent numbers.

5. Access patents and applications by clicking on the ‘Original document’ tab on the left toolbar. Review all relevant patents and applications, including:
   • Claims
   • Specifications
   • Drawings

6. When reviewing patents, look for the ‘Also published as’ heading

   Also published as: GB2481247 (B)

   This heading only appears in the Bibliographic data tab for inventions that have patents and/or applications in different countries

7. To find other relevant patents, review:
   • Cited documents
   • Citing documents
   • International Patent Documentation Center (INPADOC) patent family

   Look at all of the documents in the left toolbar

Note: This example only shows one keyword search and one CPC search. You should plan to go through many iterations of keyword and classification searches.

For more assistance:

1. Visit our complete patent research guide: guides.lib.umich.edu/patents

2. Contact your patent librarians:
   Leena Lalwani
   734-936-2332  llalwani@umich.edu

   Paul Grochowski
   734-647-5738  grocho@umich.edu
Patent searching is complex and time consuming. Plan accordingly to spend several hours to learn the search process and evaluate results.

When searching for patents, keep a detailed record of:
- Keywords, classifications, and sub-classifications searched
- Document numbers of patents and applications examined

Tools available at the Art, Architecture and Engineering Library (AAEL):
- PUBWest and PUBEast databases
- Patent related books

Patent search services:
- Espacenet: free online patent search service from the European Patent Office (EPO)
  - worldwide.espacenet.com
  - Click ‘Advanced Search’
  - International coverage of over 80 million patents with complete cooperative patent classification (CPC) numbers
- United States Patent & Trademark Office
  - Covers only US patents
- Google Patents (shown below)
  - Patent coverage unknown
  - Contains CPC numbers

Starting a Patent Search

1. Brainstorm keywords related to invention
   - Describe function and features of invention
   - Generate broad and narrow terms

Keywords for ‘Rotating cylinder rodent trap’:
- Rodent
  - mouse, mice, rodent, vermin, pest, mammal
- Trap
  - trap, trapping, capturing
- Container
  - bin, box, bucket, pail, receptacle
- Rotating cylinder
  - axle, pipe, platform, rod, bobbin, spindle
- Ramp
  - ladder, steps, inclined plane

2. Perform a keyword search in Espacenet (worldwide.espacenet.com)

3. In search results, look for patents and patent applications similar to your invention
   - Look at the cooperative patent classification (CPC) numbers
   - Record all relevant classification and sub-classification numbers

Icons:
- S subclassifications
- D definitions
- i notes
- ! warnings