

[\[back to Help Center \]](#)

Related Topics

How do I order copies of patents?

I'd like information on licensing a patent. Can you help?

[Saving Searches](#)

Get the
**Delphion
Newsletter**
» sign up now

FAQs: Patent Searching

1. [How can I view the details of a specific patent?](#)
2. [How do I view patent images\(and why are the images missing from some patents\)?](#)
3. [What do all the codes mean on the Integrated View page?](#)
4. [What does the Score mean on the patent search results page?](#)
5. [When I'm viewing a patent image, how do I get back to the Integrated View page?](#)
6. [Why can't I find a patent number I know exists?](#)
7. [Can I search by date?](#)
8. [How do I search for a particular patent class or subclass?](#)
9. [How do I search for patents by a specific field \(such as patent expiration status or assignee\)?](#)
10. [How do I use the Advanced Text search?](#)
11. [How do I use the Boolean Text search?](#)
12. [I ran a search that produced over 300 hits. How can I view more than 20 patents per page?](#)
13. [I ran a search that resulted in over 500 hits. How do I see them all?](#)
14. [When searching INPADOC, some of the links on the Result Set go to Delphion Integrated Views rather than to INPADOC records. Why is that?](#)
15. [How can I search for a US patent that was issued before 1971?](#)
16. [Please explain the different prefixes used for US Granted patents.](#)
17. [Please explain the difference between searching "front pages" and "full text."](#)
18. [What are "collaterals?" I see the link, but I do not know what patents the link will lead me to.](#)
19. [Is there a way to search for patents that were not assigned when the patent was issued?](#)

1. **How can I view the details of a specific patent?**

From your Delphion Result Set, click the linked **Publication** number to display that patent's Integrated View. This unique view, exclusive to Delphion, presents all the information relevant to a particular patent in one document. It includes extensive links for access to things like other family members, forward and backward citations, non-patent prior art, business profile data, and information about licensing. Click the question mark (?) icon by any field on the Integrated View to see help for that field — or see [Enhancing Your Search with the Delphion Integrated View](#) in the Delphion Help Center for additional information on the Delphion Integrated View.

[\[back to top\]](#)

2. **How do I view patent images (and why are the images missing from some patents)?**

You can see a thumbnail view of the front page image or representative drawing for each of your patents right from your Result Set page. To see these thumbnail images, select **Thumbnail** from the **Show** options on the Advanced or Boolean search forms. Or, you

can choose **Thumbnail** from the selection box at the bottom of your Result Set and click **Refresh**.

Click a thumbnail image to open the PDF for that patent. If the patent does not contain an image (or if the image, for some reason cannot be distinguished from the text) the thumbnail on the Result Set will show an image of the front page of the patent instead. Thumbnail images are available to Unlimited and Premier subscribers only.

Patent images can also be accessed from the Integrated View. Both high-resolution and low-resolution versions are available, click to choose which you prefer. An occasional distortion or error may result if an image page scans poorly or is missing.

Patent images may not be available for older patents. Please consult the [Current Coverage](#) page for the current list of date ranges covered in our collections.

[\[back to top\]](#)

3. **What do all the codes mean on the Integrated View page?**

Patent offices use many summary codes for identification purposes. We strive to include as much information as possible directly on the details page, or present the code itself as a link. For instance, if you see "E1" (an expiration status code) on a patent, you can click on E1 to see a list of status codes and their description. Click the question mark (?) icon by any field on the Integrated View to see help for that field — or see [Enhancing Your Search with the Delphion Integrated View](#) in the Delphion Help Center for additional information on the Delphion Integrated View.

[\[back to top\]](#)

4. **What does the Score mean on the patent search results page?**

The score represents the frequency and location of your search word(s), relevant to the size of a particular patent document.

For example, if you search "igloo" and it is found only once in a thousand-page patent, that patent will have a much lower score than a hundred-page patent also containing just one reference to "igloo". Similarly, a single-page patent with 10 references to "igloo" will have a higher score than a single-page patent with only one reference.

[\[back to top\]](#)

5. **When I'm viewing a patent image, how do I get back to the Integrated View page?**

Most browsers will launch the patent into a *new browser window*, allowing for multiple, simultaneous patent image viewing. If a new window is opened, you can close or minimize that window to get back to the previous window. Otherwise, simply click Back in your browser.

[\[back to top\]](#)

6. **Why can't I find a patent number I know exists?**

If using the Patent Number search-method, note that the first alpha characters indicate the Country, and the following numeric characters are actually the patent number. Also note, if you are trying to locate patents that end in A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, or B3, you do not need to include these with the patent number; the system will find all matches for the basic patent number. If you're looking for a U.S. design patent, use the single letter D before the patent number.

Although we strive to maintain accurate, complete and current data, we have identified some missing or incomplete patent data. An incomplete patent may have some unpopulated data fields, such as the inventor name or the text of the patent claims. Any

absent patents may not have been loaded onto our network due to difficulty in obtaining data.

[\[back to top\]](#)

7. Can I search by date?

Using the Boolean or Advanced search options, you can execute a search based on dates.

Advanced searchers can use our search language to type exact search criteria directly into the search box on the Delphion home page, the first line of a Boolean Text search (with "All Fields" selected), or the first search box of the Advanced search page. The most commonly used date field is PD, or "publication date". You can also search by AD, "application date", and DP, "priority date". Consult [The Basics of Creating and Refining Queries](#) for instructions and specific examples.

[\[back to top\]](#)

8. How do I search for a particular patent class or subclass?

Using the Advanced search function, enter the U.S. Patent or International Patent Classification Code as the search criteria. Alternatively, from the Integrated View of any patent in your result set, click on the IPC, US Class or ECLA Code link to view all the patents in that particular class.

To browse IPC, US Class, or Derwent codes, select the Browse Codes option from the main search navigation.

[\[back to top\]](#)

9. How do I search for patents by a specific field (such as patent expiration status or assignee)?

From the [Boolean Text](#) page, click the "All Fields" pull-down menu to view and choose the exact field you want to search, or go straight to the [Advanced](#) search page, where all the fields are presented in document format.

Advanced searchers can use our search language to type exact search criteria directly into the search box on our home page, the first line of a Boolean Text search (with "All Fields" selected), or the first search box of the Advanced search page. (Note — the date field is PD, or "publication date"). Consult [The Basics of Creating and Refining Queries](#) for instructions and specific examples.

[\[back to top\]](#)

10. How do I use the Advanced Text search?

The [Advanced Text](#) search allows you to search using any number of the designated patent fields. A keyword(s) can be entered into a search box, or a selection made from a fixed-list in a pull-down menu.

Another method is to type an advanced search formula into the very topmost search box on the page (entitled "Any Field"). Various links on the Advanced Text search page will explain how to use our search language, complete with examples.

[\[back to top\]](#)

11. How do I use the Boolean Text search?

The [Boolean Text](#) search enables you to search by key words or phrases, using up to four designated patent fields. For each search item, you may choose to search "All Fields", or

click the pull down menu to select the field you want to search. Boolean operators AND, OR, or AND NOT help to define the relationship between your search fields. (These operators will not be applied to your search if only one search box is used.)

A search for "dog" AND "sled", will only produce those patents that mention BOTH "dog" AND "sled". Searching for "dog" OR "sled" OR "igloo", will locate patents that mention ANY of those words. Searching "dog" AND NOT "sled", will find patents that mention "dog" but do NOT mention "sled".

[\[back to top\]](#)

12. I ran a search that produced over 300 hits. How can I view more than 20 patents per page?

The maximum number of patents you can view, per page, is 500. The default is 20 per page but this can be changed to 50, 100, 200, or 500 from the Boolean or Advanced Text search pages, or from the selection box at the bottom of your Result Set.

[\[back to top\]](#)

13. I ran a search that resulted in over 500 hits. How do I see them all?

Our system allows a maximum of 500 search results to be viewed. If your intent is to run a very broad search, please consider searching through just a few years' worth of data at a time. Both the Boolean and Advanced Text search pages allow you to set a range of dates to search within.

[\[back to top\]](#)

14. When searching INPADOC, some of the links on the Result Set go to Delphion Integrated Views rather than to INPADOC records. Why is that?

An INPADOC record generally contains less detail than a Delphion Integrated View. When a specific patent exists in one of our individual collections, there will always be a Delphion Integrated View for that patent. We assume that you want to see as much information as possible for that patent, so we give you the Integrated View rather than the INPADOC record. If you still want to see the INPADOC record, there is a link to it at the top of the Integrated View.

Keep in mind there are patents represented in the INPADOC collection that are not part of the individual collections available on the Delphion website, and those patents do not have Delphion Integrated Views.

[\[back to top\]](#)

15. How can I search for a US patent that was issued before 1971?

The primary method for locating US patents granted before 1971 is to search by patent number on the [Quick/Number](#) form.

Only images are available for US patents granted before 1971. What "only images" means is that we have scanned images of the individual patents, but the text of those patents is not searchable.

However, if you do not know the number of the patent you want, there may still be ways you can find it. One method is to search for post-1971 related patents that might *reference* the one you want.

For example: you are looking for an early patent on non-glare glass and you do not have the patent number. You know that the inventor is "blodgett" and you know that the patent would be in the US Granted collection. You also know that this patent was issued prior to 1971 so the text of the patent is not searchable.

1. Go to the [Advanced](#) search form
2. In the **Any Field** box, enter **non-glare**

3. Leave the **Select collection(s)** box defaulted to **U.S. (Granted Patents)**
4. Scroll to the **U.S. Specific Fields** section of the form
5. Enter **blodgett** under **U.S. References**
6. Submit your query

The information in the **U.S. References** text area of a patent includes not only patent numbers, but their issue dates (yyyy-mm) and inventor surnames as well. You know that **blodgett** is the inventor so you are asking for any patent that has **blodgett** in the U.S. References field.

The word **non-glare** was used as a way to help narrow the search. For example, (blodgett <in> usrefs) yields over 600 matches. But when you narrow your search in this manner ((blodgett <in> usrefs) AND non-glare), your Result Set has under 5 matches.

Your result set will contain all of the patents containing the word **non-glare** that also have the word **blodgett** in the U.S. References field. The Blodgett patent for non-glare glass should be referenced by at least one of the patents in your Result Set. If the patent you are looking for is not referenced by one of the patents in this Result Set, consider using a different word to narrow your search. Instead of **non-glare**, try **glass**. This search yielded a Result Set with less than 20 matches and several of the matches referenced the Blodgett patent we were looking for: ((blodgett <in> usrefs) AND glass).

See the [Collection Details](#) page for a full description of what is available for all the different collections.

[\[back to top\]](#)

16. Please explain the different prefixes used for US Granted patents.

The US Granted collection has several different patent numbering series and all but one of the series (the 1836-series Utility patents) are denoted by unique prefixes. When used, prefixes follow the country code (US) and precede the patent number itself (example: USPP4782).

Patent numbers are repeated between the different series — for example, there is a US53892 (1836-series Utility patent) and a USD53892 (design patent) and they are different patents.

The following summarizes the different series used for US Granted patents and the prefixes that identify them:

Series	Prefix	Example	Dates
1836-Series Patents (also known as Utility Patents) Note: these constitute the bulk of the US Granted patents	none used, just "US" and the numerics	US6303094	July 13, 1836 - present
Design Patents	D	USD453600	1843 - present
Plant Patents	PP	USPP12410	1931 - present
Reissue Patents	RE (Utility) RD (Design) RX (X-Series)	USRE37547	1838 - present
Defensive Publication Series (DEF)	T	UST100604	1969 - present (a different numbering scheme was used before 1969, see the USPTO website for conversion scheme)
Statutory Invention Registration Series (SIR)	H	USH1921	1985 - present

X-Series Documents (originally not numbered, but then assigned numbers based on the order in which they were issued)	X	USX2005	1790 - July 4, 1836
AI-Series Documents (inventor's improvement on original patent)	AI	USAI43	1838 - 1861

[\[back to top\]](#)

17. Please explain the difference between searching "front pages" and "full text."

Delphion treats the front page and full text of each of our patent databases as separate collections. We do this for two main reasons:

- First, maintaining separate front-page and full-text collections enables faster searching when searching only on front pages.
- Most importantly, relevance of keyword search results would be unreliable if the front-page and full-text collections were mixed. This is because one of the factors for the relevancy score in our search engine is the frequency with which keywords appear in a document. In a mixed front-page/full-text collection, the full-text documents would almost always rise to the top of the score, because there is more opportunity for keywords to appear.

You only need to think about searching both the full-text and front-page collections when you want to search a term in a front-page field and join it by OR with a term in a full-text field. In that situation, you would need to search against both the full-text and front-page collections to get the full results.

However, if you are searching in the abstract field, for example, you only need to search the front-page collection, because it already includes all of the abstract data (as well as other front-page data) found in the full-text collection. Likewise, if you are searching in the description field, it doesn't make sense to search the front-page collection, as the description field is only found in the full-text collection. Finally, if you are joining a front-page field and a full-text field by AND, you only need to search against the full-text collection, as those are the only documents that could include both criteria.

[\[back to top\]](#)

18. What are "collaterals?" I see the link, but I do not know what patents the link will lead me to.

"Collaterals" are all US References, plus all backward references for each of those patents.

On the Delphion Integrated View (for a patent that has US References), click the **All US References** link. A Result Set will display showing you all US patents that reference, or are referenced by, your original patent. At the top of that Result Set, there is a **Show collaterals** link. Click that **Show collaterals** link to display a Result Set that contains all the US patents that reference, or are referenced by, your original patent *plus* all backward references for each of the patents in that set.

[\[back to top\]](#)

19. Is there a way to search for patents that were not assigned when the patent was issued?

You can find patents that were not assigned at the time the patent was issued by searching for "NULL" in the Assignee field. Your query should look like this:

(<not> (* <in> assignee))

[\[back to top\]](#)

