PATENT TRAINING SEMINAR – April 2006, Alexandria, VA - Godlind Johnson

Under discussion was the re-naming or re-branding of the "Patent and Trademark Depository Library Program (PTDLP)" to remove the word "Depository" since that is not describing the program any more. No final decision, but most likely it will be "Patent and Trademark Library Program (PTLP).

Updates on various programs such as Customer Information Services and Electronic Filing Systems. The USPTO website had been completely re-designed to make the E-Business pages most prominent and to lead people to e-filing; applications enter the system much faster this way and the applicant has immediate access to the status of the application through PAIR; but there is still a huge backlog of patent applications. Plan to hire 1000 new examiners/year.

Discussion of Indexes/Abstracts that include patent information and sometimes links to the full patents. For example SciFinder makes it very easy to search for chemical patents, since one can use all of SciFinder's access points without having to find the patent classification numbers; Pubmed includes patents in some areas of biomedical research; Lexis/Nexis' Legal Research includes patent searching from 1971 to date.

Patent Search Templates are a new tool for examiners, patent librarians, and public alike: Each technology area (e.g. Apparel, Compound Tools, etc.) will have a guide to the specific internal and external (non-patent) resources to use when doing a comprehensive "prior art" search in the pertinent group of classifications; a PTDLP librarian is very much involved in creating these templates.

Determining proper classification for a "prior art" search can be very difficult and frustrating; this is the one process that patent librarians can assist with. Therefore, every year there are workshops and presentations about the classification system and how to use it. Three types: "State of the Art Search" (for market survey); "Patentability Search" (review of granted patents to evaluate "novelty" and therefore patentability); "Infringement Search". Keyword searches will not give accurate and reliable results.

In response to previous questions about how patent librarians should respond to requests from prisoners, the director of the Maryland Prison Library System was invited and gave a very interesting and informative presentation: "Inside the Fence" – Library Services to Prisoners.