

Anatomy of a U.S. Patent Document

Document number: The prefix US indicates that this is a U.S. patent. The B2 code indicates that this patent has a previously published application.

Source: Country that issued the patent.

Date of Issue

INID codes

Title of the invention

Inventor

Assignee/Owner

Application number and date

Prior publication data:

Number and date of previously published application.

Related U.S. application data: Number and date of prior application(s) related to this patent.

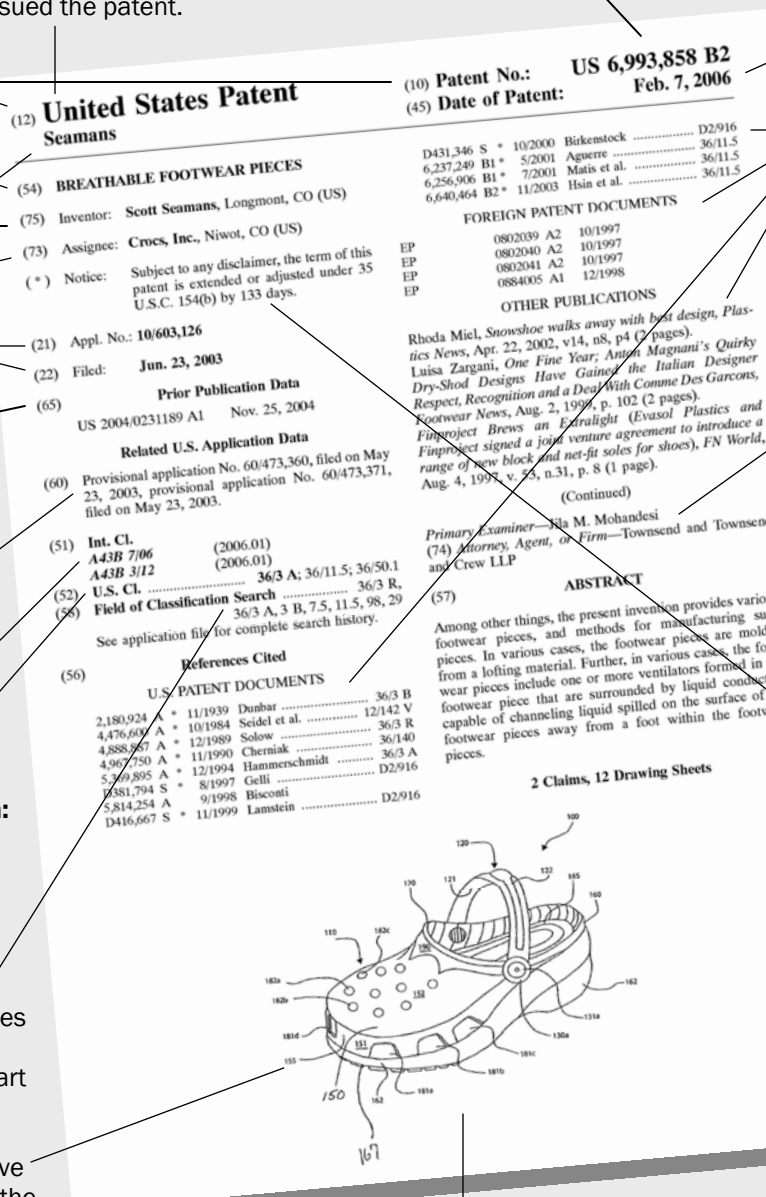
International Patent Classification

U.S. Patent Classification: USPC codes represent the subject matter of the invention. 36/3A is the code for shoe and boot ventilated uppers.

Field of search: USPC codes consulted by the patent examiner during the prior art search.

Drawing: Representative drawing selected from the drawing sheets.

The USPTO publishes unexamined applications 18 months after the earliest filing date. Prior to 2001, applications were kept secret until a patent issued.



References: U.S. and foreign patent documents and other publications cited as related prior art by the inventor and patent examiner.

Patent examiner: Official who examined the application.

Patent attorney: Legal counsel hired by the inventor to prosecute the application.

Abstract: Simple, non-technical description of the invention.

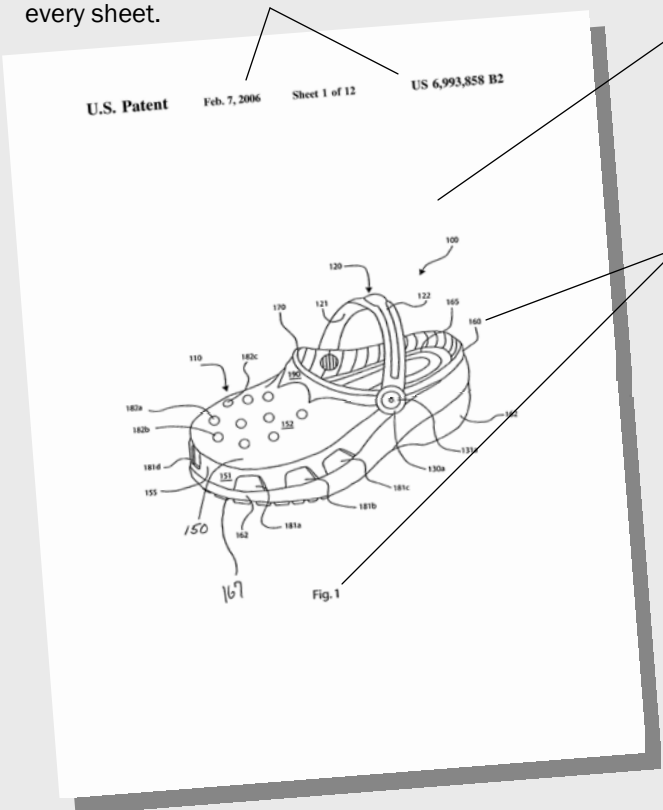
Term adjustment: Additional days added to the term of the patent to make up for processing delays.

Front page: the first page of a patent document containing bibliographic data.

INID codes: Patent offices use INID codes to identify bibliographic data on the front page of patent documents. (See sidebar.) These two-digit codes, which may be enclosed in parentheses, brackets or circles, came into general use in the 1970s. INID is an acronym for Internationally agreed Numbers for the Identification of (bibliographic) Data.

Selected INID Codes	
10	Patent number
12	Document type
21	Application number
22	Date of application
45	Date of patent
51	IPC classification
52	National classification
54	Title of the invention
56	References
57	Abstract
58	Field of search
60	Related application data
65	Published application data
72	Inventor(s)
73	Assignee (owner)
74	Attorney or agent

Document number and date printed at the top of every sheet.



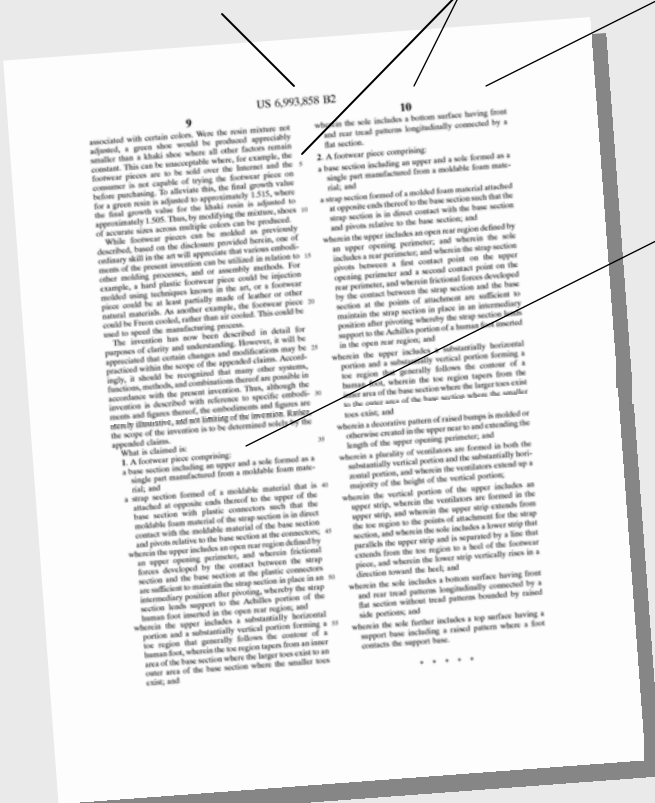
Drawing sheets: Located after the front page. Drawings are common in patents for electrical and mechanical devices as well as articles of manufacture; chemical and biotechnology patents may or may not include drawings. The patent office selects one representative drawing to appear on the front page of the patent.

Drawings must confirm to drafting guidelines set by the patent office. They must be labeled clearly and provide enough detail for the reader to understand the invention's design and use.

Types of U.S. patents:

1. Utility patent - protects new and useful:
 - Products (tool, shoe, toy, etc.)
 - Compositions (chemical compound, alloy, etc.)
 - Machines
 - Processes
2. Design patent - protects new and original:
 - Ornamental designs for articles of manufacture
3. Plant patent - protects distinct and new:
 - Varieties of asexually propagated plants. (Reproduced by means other than seeds, such as grafting, budding, etc.)

Document number **Column and line numbers**



Specification: Written description of the invention that precedes the claims. Includes a discussion of the related prior art (previously issued patents and other publications), a description of the drawings (if any) and the preferred embodiment of the invention. The specification must describe the invention in sufficient detail so that anyone of ordinary skill in the same technical field can understand it.

Claims: Paragraphs located at end of the specification that define the scope of protection of a patent. The phrases "I claim" or "What is claimed" precedes the numbered claims. Patents must have at least one claim, but most usually have several and some hundreds of claims. The claims define the legal boundaries of the invention in the way a property deed defines the physical boundaries of an area of land.

Limitations of Patent Documents

Unlike journal articles, patent applications are not peer-reviewed and experimental proof is not required in order to obtain a patent. Although patents contain detailed technical information, they can also be frustratingly vague (especially older patents) and written in an arcane technical-legal jargon often called "patentese."

Term: Twenty years from the date of application. In some cases, the term of the patent may be extended due to delays in the processing of the application. After the patent has expired, the invention becomes public domain. In addition, patent owners must pay a maintenance fee at 3.5, 7.5 and 11.5 years after issue or else the patent will expire.