The New Espacenet Tools for Patents Translation

Originally, the Espacenet interface (now called classic Espacenet) was available in the three official languages of the hosting European Patent Office (EPO) site: English, French, and German. The new Espacenet interface is now accessible in *all the national languages* of the patent offices connected to the database. In other words, the patent offices of the 38 states that are members of the European Patent Organization. An Arab-Pat[1] interface in Arabic also exists, as well as accessibility to LatiPat[2] and the Eurasian Patent Organization[3]. For translators, this means availability of parallel official translations of the Espacenet interface in their source or target languages, depending on the direction of translation. Here are some details on selected features of the new Espacenet interface, highlighted for their relevance to translation work.
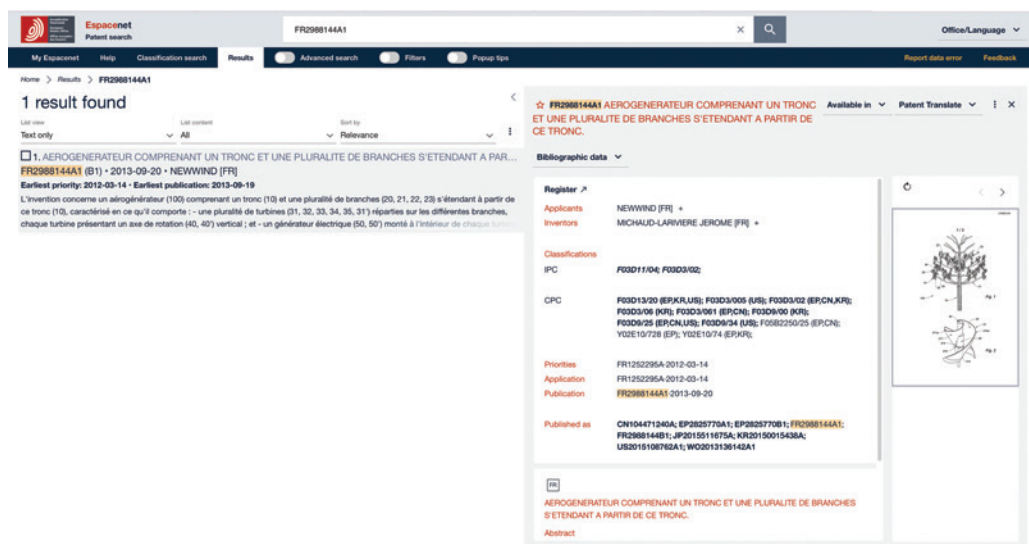
PatentTranslate

PatentTranslate is the EPO's translation engine, powered by Google's neural network technology and the EPO's corpus of 120 million patent documents. The new Espacenet has increased the number of languages translated: from translations from/into the three official EPO languages (English, French, and German) to translations from/into approximately 32 European and Asian languages, depending on the source patent. PatentTranslate also includes user evaluation and commenting forms for improving engine performance. PatentTranslate has a hovering function that brings up the source in a textbox next to the target for convenient verifications of the translations online.

PatentTranslate is very useful when existing translations are available. In this case, the engine works like a super translation memory. Serious limitations exist, however, thus requiring particularly careful examination of the output translations. This is crucial because when PatentTranslate is generating translations, the engine is always proceeding without the understanding necessary to avoid nonsense, especially subtle nonsense.

The New Espacenet Split-Screen Display

A sweeping transformative change from the classic version to new Espacenet interface appears in the split-screen display of information, comprised

FIGURE 1 The new Espacenet split-screen display showing three panels: 1) a list of patent search results; 2) bibliographic information of one patent on the list; and 3) a page of one of the drawings for the selected patent.

of panels that can be independently navigated online. Thus, the split screen now provides unprecedented flexibility and speed in the online manipulation of patents. For example, translators can:

- Preview a patent in one panel while still being able to view the full list where it was selected in another panel.

- Preview the significant sections of a patent (e.g., bibliographic data, description, claims, drawings), or the complete original document, in one panel while still being able to work from a list displaying a selected patent in another panel. (See Figure 1.)

- Work on one section of a patent (e.g., claims or description) while scrolling through and using another section of the patent (e.g., drawings) displayed in a separate panel. In other words, the new Espacenet interface allows side-by-side viewing of patent sections, which is otherwise impossible to do when scrolling through the single screen display of a patent.

- Rotate drawings in one panel while retaining the patent description, claims, or abstract in another panel. This function is invaluable, considering that tables and drawings are often inserted in patents in landscape mode, which cannot be read in portrait mode online.

The new flexibility of online document manipulation means no longer having to print original documents, whether it's to access the drawings for side-by-side viewing, the description for documentation, the claims section for a claims-only translation, or both claims and description to verify the terminology. The absence of lengthy downloads and printouts really accelerates the entire consultation process.

Multi-Platform Hosting

The new Espacenet interface tools, including the split-screen display, are viewable and usable on mobile phone, tablet, desktop, and laptop platforms. The availability of multi-platform hosting means convenient, on-the-go, wireless consultation of patents during translation assignments such as depositions and hearings.

"Sticky" Searching

Sticky searching is a function that memorizes the parameters of the search that you just launched, thus reducing the number of steps for similar types of searches and saving time. Imagine turning off your computer and being able to restart exactly where you left off, without having to relaunch previously active programs or reopening dozens of desktop files. In Espacenet, you can search for a patent, for example, when you are translating abstracts only. In this case, you might be searching the patent description to better understand the invention abstracted, or to find matches with a "brief description of the invention," or even possibly to access the specified definitions of some of the terminology. In any event, the sticky search function will remember you searched for a description. In turn, for all the patents you subsequently open in connection to your stack of abstract-only translations, the sticky search will call up the pertinent patent descriptions. This means that each time you want to access a patent description, you will not have to return to, and click past, the standard bibliographic data page for a new patent search.

Menu and Toolbar Access to Patent Sections, plus an "Available in" Language Option

The highlight of the classic (original) Espacenet interface was a toolbar on the left enabling direct access to the various significant sections of a patent, such as claims, description, bibliographic information with abstract, original document, drawings (previously called mosaics), legal events, and patent family. In the new Espacenet interface, the versatility of these functions has been significantly augmented. These functions are now accessible via dropdown

menus and horizontal toolbars to independently populate and/or inform one, or several, panels of the split-screen interface.

While you could previously call up just one patent section on the screen (e.g., claims, description, or drawings), it's now possible to consult two patent sections at the same time. Using the split-screen display, you can call up the claims and drawings of a patent, or the description and drawings, at the same time in panels that are independently navigated. (See Figure 2.) If you need to refer to the claims section, description, or abstract of any invention to search them, cite from them, or consult or verify information, this sort of flexible access to patent sections, together with the drawings section, is invaluable. The fact that such access is also happening online, without requiring downloads or printing, is also really convenient.

Finally, the functions offering direct access to the significant sections of a patent, such as the claims or description, can now be combined with an "Available in" menu function, designed to return a list of patent family members according to language availability. Thus, you can now immediately see in which languages your patent is officially available and then call up another language version of your patent directly from the "Available in" menu. (See Figure 2 showing the "Available in" dropdown menu with a list of English-language patent

FIGURE 2 Split screen showing a patent claims section and drawings in separate panels along with a dropdown menu of patent family members available in English.
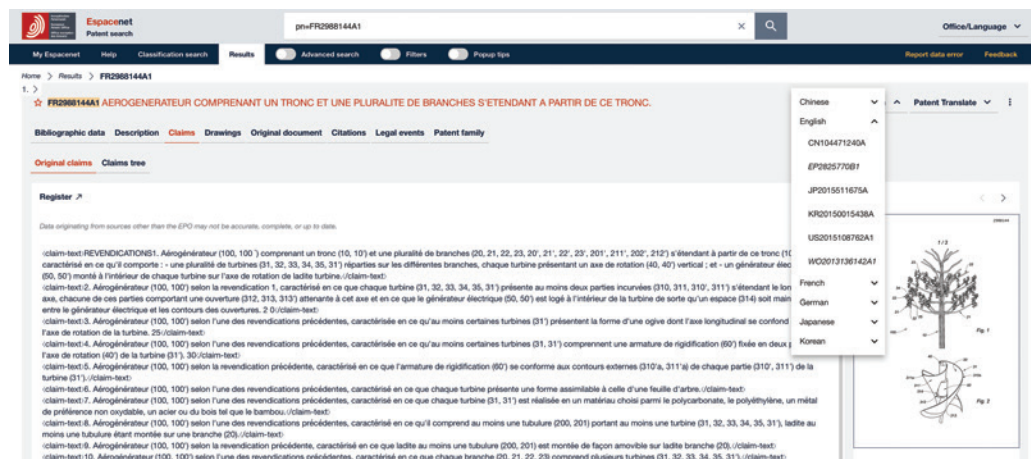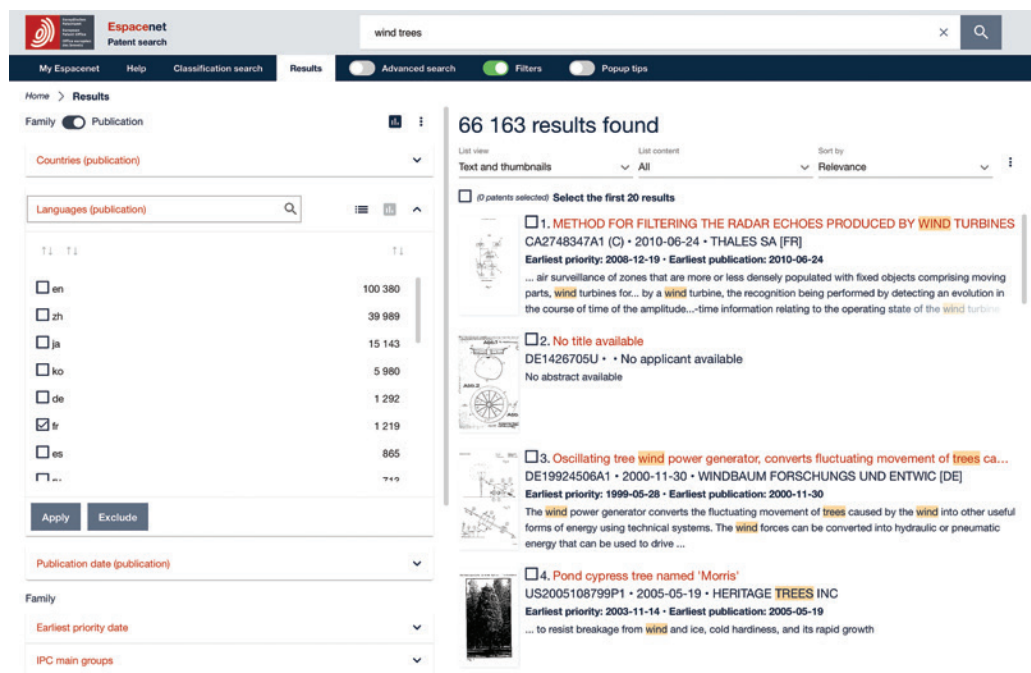

FIGURE 3 French patent filter comprising 1,219 patents, selected for application to a list of 66,163 hits.

family members.) In turn, the "Available in" function will open your selected patent family member as a claims or description section, or as an original document, depending on the sort of document you have opened previously, per the principle of sticky searching.

Filters

The new Espacenet filters enable you to dramatically reduce the results of a large list of patent search hits. For example, if you are doing a search on "wind trees" for documentation or lexical purposes, you will be able to reduce a list of over 66,000 patent result hits to about 1,200 hits by simply applying an FR (French patent) filter.

FIGURE 4 Enabling the Pop-Up Tips allows you to click for information on any item of the interface indexed with a small question mark

Doing so will return only the FR patents in your list. (See Figure 3 on page 39.)

Another significant advantage of the new filters in Espacenet is that they are front-ended with natural language, so that you "Apply" or "Exclude" filtering criteria. In other words, you are no longer manipulating Boolean operators (e.g., *and, or, not,* or *and not*) according to complicated syntax that includes special punctuation rules for slashes, parentheses, colons, semicolons, and commas to narrow your search results. Instead, you are simply checking boxes to "Apply" or "Exclude" filters on your search results. For example, for the "wind trees" search, you could check *"Exclude" 87,649 EN (English-language) patents* from the list to reduce the number of results.

Pop-Up Tips

When you enable the Pop-Up Tips menu option at the top by sliding the toggle button, you will be able to click for information on any item of the interface indexed with a small question mark. (See Figure 4.) The detailed Pop-Up Tips provided by Espacenet are substantial enough to clearly differentiate such items as, for example, inventor, applicant, and assignee. The Pop-Up Tips are also immensely useful for abbreviations such as IPC (International Patent Classification) and CPC (Cooperative Patent Classification), which are linked to a glossary that provides a detailed explanation that goes beyond a simple expansion of the abbreviations. The Pop-Up Tips enable you to bypass the need to search the branches of an online help tree. Alternatively, these tips prevent novice translators from getting lost in the large amount of patent information appearing on the database interface.

Multiple Options for Viewing Search Results

Four options exist for displaying patent search results: Text Only, Drawings Only, Text and Thumbnails, and Compact. (See Figure 5.) One of the advantages of multiple viewing options is the increased ease of identifying search results. For example, if you are specifically searching for the patents covering various pieces of the "serpenti" Bulgari jewelry collection, and the Compact list of hits only supplies you with patent title information such as "Jewelry article," "Earrings," "Bracelet," "Ring," or "Timepiece," you will immediately be able to identify the type of "Jewelry article" in the Text and Thumbnail view, as well as the "serpenti" collection pieces in the magnified "Drawings Only" view mode of the results. Conversely, if you are searching for patents on a specific topic for background information on your source, you might set the results to "Text Only" so you can preview as much abstract information as possible in the results list, when such information is available.

My Espacenet

The My Espacenet menu option is immensely useful to store the results of your patent searches for current

and future translation needs. My Espacenet was also immensely useful when preparing this article, since I could store all the specific patents referenced and cited without relaunching a new search. To store individual patents, just select/deselect the red stars (as seen in Figure 1 on page 38) preceding the patent number links. You can also use the dropdown menu accessible via three vertical dots on the interface in the search results panel (after selecting the patents returned in the search list you would like to save to your Espacenet). The actual search field terms that you input are also automatically stored in a tab designated "My queries," which you can also "rerun" or delete.

Download, Print, and Share

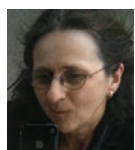Previously, only patent download and print functions existed in the classic version of Espacenet. Now, however, a direct access link to patents (or parts thereof) can also be generated and shared via email or copied to your clipboard. The share function has the advantage of speeding up information flow, since you can bypass downloading and/or printing and instead upload directly to an email, server, or drive, for sharing purposes.

Espacenet: A Congenial Mediator

If patents are indeed the best source of information for patent translation, and access to this information requires digital mediation, especially considering the vastness of global patent information, then the EPO Espacenet tools are certainly congenial mediators, ready for translators to befriend. ⓐ
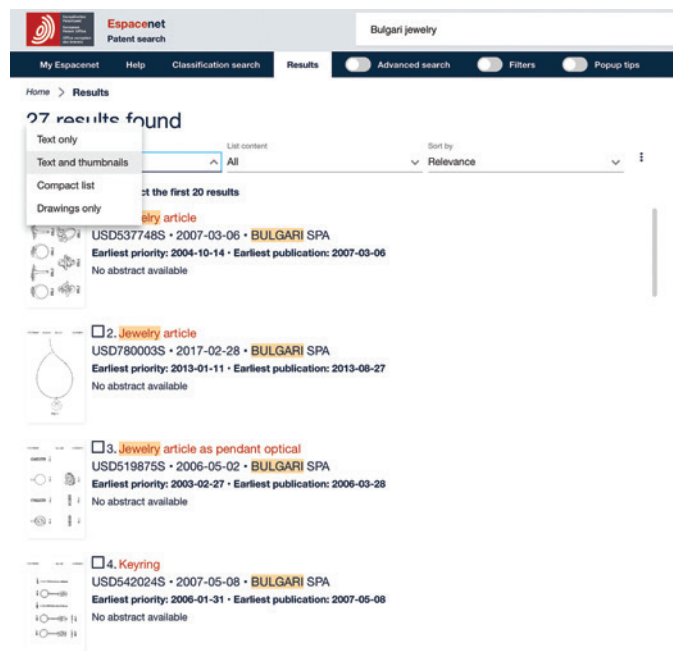
FIGURE 5 — Options for viewing search results set to the Text and Thumbnails display mode

Françoise Herrmann is a freelance translator and interpreter (French and English) specializing in medical and patent translation. She has taught patent, medical, and technical translation at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and New York University. She maintains a blog, *Patents on the Soles of Your Shoes*, to keep in touch with her students, and has published two collections of patent reviews based on posts from the blog. Currently, she is teaching and conducting research at San Jose State University, where she also blogs for her students in French. *fherrmann@igc.org*

NOTES

1   ArabPat is a patent information dissemination platform that offers access to patent data from Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia, with provisions for all Arab countries to participate.

2   LatiPat is a search interface used to search for technical information in Spanish and Portuguese in patent documents from Latin American countries and Spain.

3   The Eurasian Patent Organization was established for states party to the Eurasian Patent Convention ratified in Moscow in 1994, enabling member states to file for Eurasian patents.

USEFUL LINKS

ArabPat
www.arabpat.com/?lang=en

Espacenet Pocket Guide
https://tinyurl.com/y44pf5ro

YouTube Espacenet Webinars
www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Espacenet+webinarss

Espacenet Forum
https://forums.epo.org/espacenet-107

Eurasian Patent Organization
https://www.eapo.org/en/

Eurasian Patent Organization (States party to the Convention)
https://www.eapo.org/en/members.html

LatiPat
https://lp.espacenet.com/?locale=en_LP

Searching for Patents—New Espacenet—Search Now!
www.epo.org/searching-for-patents.html

Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetzsche at jzetzsche@ internationalwriters.com.