

Invention Disclosure Guidelines

In order to assist in drafting as complete and comprehensive a patent specification as possible, the inventor(s) should address each of the following points.

Background

1. What is the problem that the invention seeks to address?
2. How has this problem been addressed in the past?
3. Why is the invention an improvement to the past approaches to addressing the problem?
4. In the inventor's view, what past approach to addressing the problem was closest to the invention? How does the invention differ from that past approach?

Description of the Invention

5. Please explain the best way of implementing the invention with text and diagrams. The parts of the diagrams should be labelled with item numbers and the description should refer to those numbers.

Bear in mind that the description of the invention should include enough detail for another person skilled in your technical field to readily implement the invention.

If any special terminology or acronyms are used then please provide an explanation.

Where possible include:

- i) **for electronic inventions**, please include a block diagram of a preferred version of the invention. The block diagram should show any, processors, I/O devices, memory devices, sensors, e.g. motion detectors, switches, light or vision sensors, microphones etc., and actuators, e.g. motors, LEDS, video displays, loudspeakers etc. used to implement the invention.
- ii) if the invention relates to **software or a business method** please provide, in addition to a block diagram, a flowchart, or a number of flowcharts, to document the major steps involved. Each box of the flowchart should be numbered.

The process that is occurring in each step of the flowchart then needs to be explained in an accompanying description that refers to the boxes of the flowchart. For example:

"... at box 5 each of the variables are initialised. At box 6 the processor determines which option has been selected by the operator of the machine. At decision box 7 control diverts to box 8 if the selected option requires that prompts for further information have to be generated. Otherwise the process diverts to box 9. ..."

- iv) give an example of the use of the version of the invention that you have described. For example:

"In use an operator of the machine will firstly manipulate the control module 3 to select a desired option from the menu 5 displayed on video display 7. In response

processor 21, under control of software product 38, looks up table 31 from ROM 22 to select a graphic corresponding to the selected option..."

Variations to the Invention

6. Please provide information about any variations to the implementation of the invention that you have described which might be commercially significant.

Don't withhold information

Patents can be invalid if the applicant is found to have deliberately withheld information that a reader would need to know in order to best implement the invention. Consequently, please be sure that you describe the best version of the invention known to you.

Describe the Structure of the Invention

Suppose that you've come up with a new invention being a rocking chair.

You could write a description of it like this:

"In order to provide support and a sense of relaxation to a user, we have developed a chair that rocks back and forth taking a seated person with it. The person's back is supported and the chair is set up so that it automatically self-rights itself. Care is taken in the design to ensure that a person sitting in the chair can't overbalance. The chair is able to decide when it is close to rocking back too far and is able to take action to prevent over-rocking."

The above statement says a lot about the benefits of the chair but not about the structure that provides the benefits. From a patenting point of view it isn't very helpful to write like that because we can't get patent claims for benefits, only for the structure, or procedural steps, that provide them.

A much better description would go like this:

"A rocking chair includes a seat for a person to sit on. Two legs extend downward from the seat and terminate on a pair of parallel arc-shaped rockers. Stops are fixed at either end of the underside of the runners. Other arrangements to provide the rocking motion could be provided. For example the seat might be mounted on a large spring which is in turn mounted on a stable base. In use the chair is rocked back and forth on the rockers with the stops preventing over-rocking."

Note that we haven't gone into a lot of detail about how the legs are fixed to the seat or what the stoppers are made out of. That's because a furniture maker would know that kind of information. The other point to note is that the structure of the apparatus is explained first and then the way in which it is used.

Use Consistent Terminology

In your description try to consistently use the same terms throughout to refer to the same parts of the invention. For example, if the invention concerns an engine with a flywheel then don't use the term "weighted disk" to refer to it interchangeably throughout your description.

Where possible number each item on a drawing and use the item numbers from the drawings throughout your description.

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