



## United States Patent and Trademark Office

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### Fiscal Year 2006: A Record-Breaking Year for the USPTO Patent and trademark quality best on record in over 20 years

In Fiscal Year 2006, the Department of Commerce's United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) set new Agency records in goals related to quality, production, electronic filing, telework, electronic processing and hiring.

"The USPTO has spent the last four years concentrating on meeting or exceeding objective measures, as required by the *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993* ("The Results Act"), continuing to make system-wide process improvements, and using related metrics and measures for gauging progress," noted Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property Jon Dudas. "I am proud that fiscal year 2006 was a record-breaking year for the USPTO. "These records reflect the hard work and sound decisions of more than 8,000 USPTO employees. Over the past four years, we have focused internally -- shining a bright light on our organization, raising the bar on our metrics and measures, and making system-wide improvements. We are now seeing the results of those efforts."

*Quality and Production – High quality and timely examination of applications advances science and technology and creates the certainty innovators need in capital driven markets.*

**Patents:** Patent examiners completed 332,000 patent applications in 2006, the largest number ever, while achieving the lowest patent allowance error rate -- 3.5% -- in over 20 years. At 54%, the patent allowance rate was also the lowest on record. Patent allowance rate is the percentage of applications reviewed by examiners that are approved.

**Trademarks:** The agency also processed a record number of trademark applications in 2006. USPTO trademark examining attorneys took final action on 378,111 trademark applications, a 36% increase over the previous year, and achieved a record low final action error rate, with mistakes found in only 3.6% of the trademark applications reviewed in FY 2006.

*Hiring and Training – Hiring top-notch scientists, engineers, and lawyers -- and properly training them in patent and trademark law -- are the foundation of a strong intellectual property system.*

**Patents:** The USPTO received in excess of 440,000 patent applications in 2006, a record number. To help meet the demand, the agency hired a record 1,218 patent examiners, exceeding its goal by more than 200 people. To support this dramatic hiring increase, the USPTO replaced its one-on-one training model with a university approach for new hires. This allowed the agency to deliver comprehensive training to new examiners, while more experienced examiners and supervisors focused on quality examination. The agency will continue to hire over 1,000 patent examiners each year for the next five years. Even so, the volume of applications will continue to outpace the agency's capacity to examine them. USPTO continues to look for ways, beyond hiring, to reduce the backlog, while maintaining examination quality.

**Trademarks:** In 2006, the USPTO received 354,775 trademark applications, a 9.7% increase over the previous year. To keep pace and reduce backlogs, the agency hired a record 87 new trademark examining attorneys, bringing the total to 413 -- the most in agency history.

*Electronic Filing and Processing – User-friendly patent and trademark processing systems are key to quality examination.*

**Patents:** The USPTO implemented the Electronic Filing System-Web (EFS-Web), a user-friendly, Internet-based patent application and document submission solution. This system dramatically increased the electronic filing of patent applications from 1.5 percent per month to 33 percent per month.

**Trademarks:** Since 1998, the USPTO has seen a steady increase in the number of trademark applications filed electronically. In 2006, a record high 94 percent of all trademark applications were filed electronically, compared with 88 percent last year.

*Telework - Giving employees the opportunity to do their jobs at alternative work sites is family friendly, raises morale, helps the agency attract and retain high quality staff, and reduces commuter traffic.*

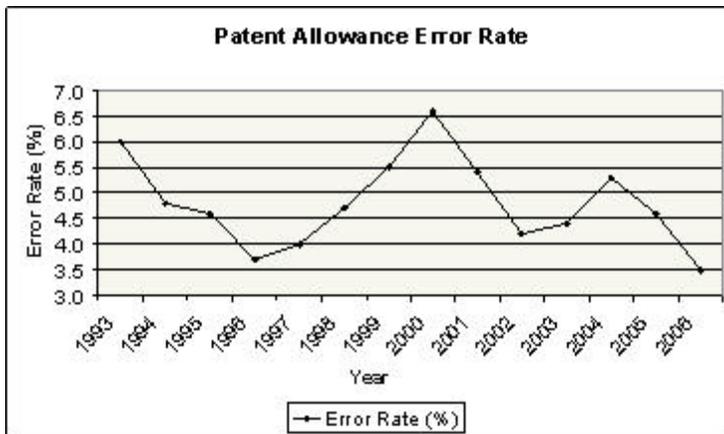
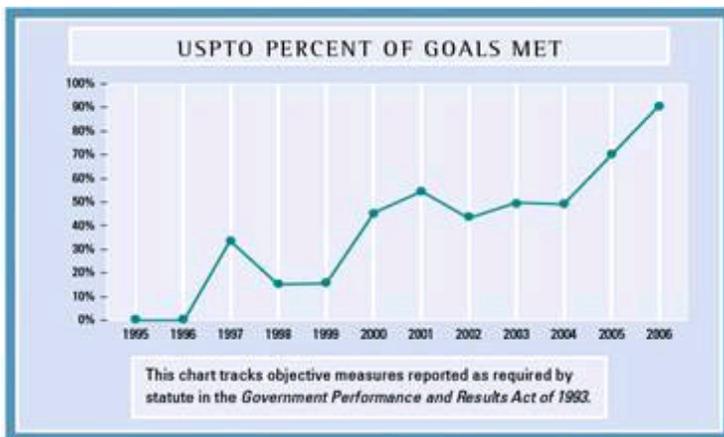
Patents: The first 500 patent examiners began working from home four days a week, using a hoteling program to book office space the one day a week they are in the office. The agency expects that an additional 500 examiners will be added to those already working from home each year for at least the next five years.

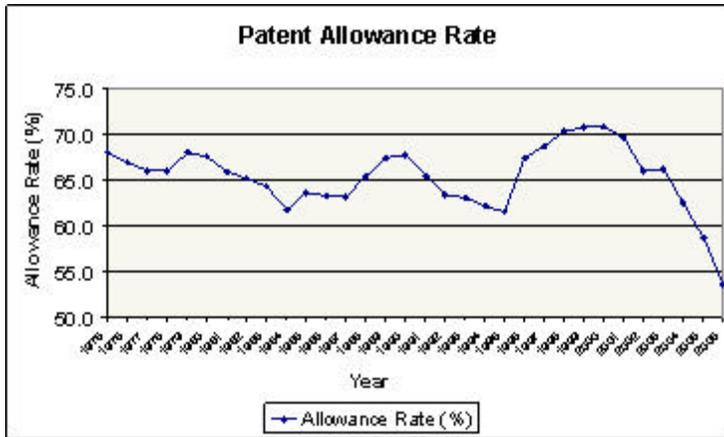
Trademarks: The work-at-home program for trademark examining attorneys is nearly 10 years old and is well known throughout government. Two hundred and twenty trademark examining attorneys (85% of those eligible) participate in the program. It is considered a model program and over the years has received numerous awards, including in 2006 the "Telework Program with Maximum Impact on Government Award" from the Telework Exchange.

*International Relations and Enforcement -- Protecting U.S. intellectual property around the globe is an important element of U.S. economic security.*

As part of the Bush Administration's Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy (STOP!), the USPTO worked with other U.S. Government agencies to fight piracy and counterfeiting around the world and continued a communications campaign to educate small businesses about protecting their intellectual property. The USPTO conducted more than 200 intellectual property rights training and outreach activities in over 100 countries. In addition, USPTO placed intellectual property experts in Brazil, China, Egypt, India and Thailand to advocate improved IP protection for American businesses and to coordinate training to help stop piracy and counterfeiting abroad.

Charts detailing goals met, patent quality results, and the patent allowance rate can be found below. Full results of the agency's progress can be found in USPTO's FY 2006 Performance and Accountability Report at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/annual/2006/2006annualreport.pdf>. [[download PDF viewer](#)]





(22DEC2006)

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