

# Patent Searching for Librarians Course Outline

Welcome to Patent Searching for Librarians. This short, 15-hour course is intended to help public-service reference librarians build confidence in their ability to help patrons search for patent documents.

As the title implies, this course is primarily a course on patent searching. As a patents and trademarks librarian in the USPTO's Patent and Trademark Resource Centers Program, I know that there are many periphery patent-related topics and issues that arise that we will not be able to cover in this course. For example, this is not an introduction to patent laws, or to intellectual property issues in general. While I expect some of these issues to arise through our activities and discussions, I will attempt to keep us focused within the scope of the course by offering links to resources that you may explore on your own time for topics beyond the scope of this course.

I have broken the course into four fairly simple modules, each building upon the previous module.

## Module 1

In the first module we'll be focusing on determining a patron's information needs when it comes to patents, and what kinds of help we as librarians are able to provide. This module will include reading a few articles, responding to some questions in the forum, and some general discussion where we'll all participate. Expect to spend about four to five hours on this module.

## Module 2

The second module will cover the anatomy of a patent document. It will include some simple activities and an assessment to help you gain an understanding of patent documents. Expect to spend two to three hours on this module.

## Module 3

The third module will introduce a few freely available online patent databases. You'll learn how patents are organized and common search strategies, and be able to list some pros and cons of each of the databases used. This module will include some activities and an assessment, and you should expect to spend three to four hours completing it.

## Module 4

Finally, the fourth module will cover patent classification systems. This is often the most difficult aspect of patent searching for our patrons to grasp, so I feel it deserves an entire module dedicated to it. Here I will also introduce the "Seven-Step Search Strategy" for patent searching, recommended by the USPTO's Patent and Trademark Resource Centers program. This module will also include some activities and an assessment, and you should expect to spend three to four hours completing it.