

Press release
Canberra, July 11th, 2007



Australian patents now under the Lens

For the first time, the full text of Australian patents can be searched, viewed and printed at no cost, by anyone, thanks to a non-profit international organization based in Canberra. Finally innovation in Australia can be done with a clear view of the playing field.

CAMBIA (www.cambia.org) has extended its worldwide patent resource the Patent Lens (www.patentlens.net) to include Australian patents. The full text of over 115,000 Australian granted patents and over 580,000 patent applications have been added to the Patent Lens collection of almost seven million worldwide patent documents.

Patents are limited monopolies granted by Governments over inventions, and when properly disclosed, can show new options for innovation but can also give warnings of possible pitfalls.

"Until now, the crucial information in Australian patents, such as what was invented and what is claimed, simply has not been searchable" said CAMBIA CEO Richard Jefferson. "If you don't know what's out there, you can't know whether you can deliver your own inventions and ideas. And you can't build on others' work. Worldwide innovation depends on clarity and transparency of patent rights."

The prestigious journal *Nature Biotechnology* agrees. In a recent editorial focusing on CAMBIA's patent work called "Patently Transparent" it said, "It is estimated that under-exploitation of technical information... costs European industry alone \$20 billion each year—simply because the inability to access relevant patent information results in duplication of effort or the creation of products that overlap with prior art... CAMBIA's Patent Lens is a giant leap in the right direction."

Researchers, investors, policy advisors, as well as business and legal professionals wanting to search Australian patents had limited options until now. Previous publicly available searches were limited to the "front page" information such as titles, patent numbers and inventors names.

Not only are the Australian patents now fully text-searchable, they are linked to their counterparts internationally, and the status of the patent family can now be easily determined. To achieve this goal, the Patent Lens team completed Optical Character Recognition (OCR) of almost ten million pages of Australian patent documents to turn the images into searchable text.

The Patent Lens (www.patentlens.net) is the rapidly growing informatics platform of the new international Initiative for Open Innovation (IOI), whose goal is to increase the equity and efficiency of science-enabled innovation for social benefit. The Initiative for Open Innovation also comprises the BiOS Initiative (www.bios.net), aka the Biological Open Source movement, dedicated to democratizing problem solving in health, medicine, agriculture and environmental management.

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Richard Jefferson is available for interview and is speaking at a Deakin Lecture in Melbourne on 16 July 2007 on who owns innovation and the impact of patents on the use of science to enable solutions to real-world challenges.

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