

## How to Find a Patent?

Today's blog is a review of some free internet resources available to find a patent. But I can make it easy: go to Google.

When looking for a patent, start with [Google Patents](#). This is the easiest and most forgiving website to use. If you have the patent, application, or publication number you simply enter it and the information will come right up. If you don't have that information, you can enter the inventor's or owner's name and it is almost always on the first page. In a pinch you can enter a description of the invention because a lot of times you get lucky. As an example, I will use Patent # 8533976: *Footwear Having an Enclosed Toe*. I entered the following terms: 8533976, *Fuerst Patent*, *Keen Inc Patent*, and *Footwear with Enclosed Toe*. The patent came up as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> item.

Google Patents best feature is that the patent is usually available as a pdf file. This is a big advantage over other websites when it comes to printing or navigating the actual document.

Unfortunately, Google Patents casts its net broadly and can result in too many returns. For those situations I usually turn to the [United States Patent and Trademark Office](#) website which lists several patent databases. The first item is on the list is the full text database, [PatFT](#). The PatFT database contains all patents issued since 1790 with full text capability for patents issued since. A front end interface allows simple incorporation of search terms.

Some other websites of note include:

[PatentLens](#): While a little complicated to use, PatentLens has advanced features that help when you have to dig deeper for a patent.

[PriorSmart](#): I rarely use this website, but it has some nice features if you can limit your search to a specific country.

[Patentscope](#) and [Espacenet](#): These European websites, especially Patentscope, are handy when an international patent is involved. The [USPTO](#) index provides links to these databases as well as database links to Japan, Korea, Australia and many other countries.

[GSPN](#): Available since July of 2013, the Global Searchable Patent Network is a cooperative database between the USPTO and China's State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO). The database provides access to machine translations for Chinese applications and patents.

One last thing to keep in mind is that there is a difference between finding a patent and a patent search. Knowing the patent number, inventor name or having some idea about the invention is a big advantage when trying to find a patent. The term patent search refers to a broader search intended to find ideas or inventions that are similar to an invention being considered for patenting. While the databases listed can be used, patent searches are more about discipline and technique than databases.

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