

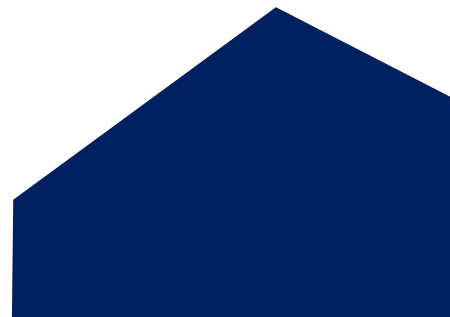
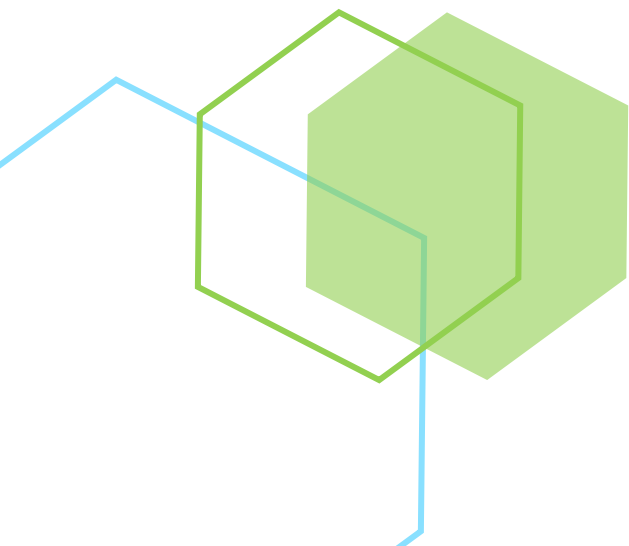
Locarno Classification: A Trending Tool for Design Searching

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1. Introduction

Design patents provide the owner with rights to use the invention to make a profit out of it and prevent third parties from using it commercially. Design patent holds the rights related to aesthetics or physical appearance of the product. Most of the countries protect through registering within their National Intellectual Property offices.

A design patent generally grants the rights to the owner for 15 years but may vary with the jurisdictions. For example, Chinese design patents last for 10 years while in India it grants the right for a maximum period of 15 years.

Design Patents do not have very lengthy claims; in fact, they have one-liner claims. There is also not much in the description as well, it only contains sentences mentioning different views of the invention.

There are generally two types of lines used in the diagrams of the invention, i.e. continuous and broken lines. Continuous lines describe aspects that are claimed or which the invention is all about while the broken line shows the other related parts that are not claimed and may change in appearance.

Design search is the process of searching the databases for design. It may involve searching on sources other than national databases. The goal of searching on the design database may be related to check the novelty of the subject design or to invalidate an existing design or to study the design trends.





The design searching can be done for registered or unregistered designs.

Mostly, the design searching is performed to know whether any prior art is conflicting with the subject invention. Design searching also helps in gathering valid references for litigations.

2. Design Databases

There are several design databases that allow search for a subject design using relevant inputs. Some databases are free like Designview while some are paid like Questel's Orbit Intelligence. As different databases support different languages, different inputs and different layouts, makes design searching a time consuming and tedious task.

Paid Databases:





S. No.	Database	Data inputs	Link
1	Orbit 	Title National & Locarno Class Owner Application/Registration/Priority Number Designer Name Priority Country Publication Country Date	Link
2	CIPIS 	Title Applicant Name Application Country Registration/Publication Date Design Number/class Locarno Class/Subclass	Link
3	Patent Cloud 	Title Patent Office Assignee/Applicant Inventor IPC/CPC/USPC/LOCARNO CLASS Agency Examiner Kind Code	Link
4	Thomson Innovation 	Title Kind Code IPC/CPC/Locarno/ECLA/US Class Assignee Status Application Number/Date/year/Country Publication Number/Date/year/Country Priority Date/Number/year/Country	Link

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Examiner


Inventor

Free Databases:


S. No.	Database	Data inputs	Link
1	 Designview	Title Patent office/territories Design/Application/priority Number Design Status Owner Name Designer Name Representative Name Locarno Class Expiry/filing/registration/publication/priority/effective Date Priority Country Exhibition Country	Link
2	 Google Patents	Title Priority/Filing/Publication Date Inventor Assignee Patent office Language Patent Status Litigation	Link
3	 WIPO Global Design database 	Title National/Locarno Class Application/Registration Number Filing/Registration/Publication/Priority Date Priority/Designation/Holder Country Applicant's Contracting Party Holder/Creator/Representative Name	Link

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4	WIPO Hague Express Database	Title	
		Locarno Class	
		Description	
		Registration Number	
		Filing/Registration/Publication/Priority Date	Link
		Entitlement/Designation/Holder Country	
		Applicant's Contracting Party	
		Holder/Creator/Representative Name	

5	BOIP	Registration Number	
		Holder	
		Registration/Publication Date	Link
		Locarno Class	
		Status	




6	ASEAN Design View	Patent office	
		Title	
		Design/Application Number	
		Status	
		Owner/Designer/Representative Name	
		Locarno class/subclass	Link
		Expiry/Filing/Registration/Publication/Priority/End of deferment Date	
		Priority Number	
		Priority Country	
		Exhibition priority	

7	US Design Database	Title	
		Issue/Application Date	
		Patent number	
		Application Serial Number	
		Application type	Link
		Applicant's/assignee name/city/state/country/type	
		International/CPC/US Class	
		Examiner	
		Inventor	
		Attorney Agent	


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		PCT Information Hague International filing date International registration publication Date	
		Classification Code/text Client reference number Court order number Description Finished article Interested Parties International registration number National application/registration Proprietor Status Registration Date	Link
8	Canadian Industrial Design Database 		
		Design Image Design number Owner Locarno Class Title Priority/Certified/Filed/Registration/Publication/refused/Withdrawn/lapsed/Registration ceased/revoked date Status Other indications Statement of newness and distinctiveness Address of service	Link
9	Australian Industrial Design Database 		
		Title Description of article Design description Japanese Design class/D-terms Old Japanese design class Old D-terms Locarno Class Applicant/Right holder Creator Agent Applicant's address	Link
10	J-Plat Pat 		

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		Applicant's Identification number Publication/Issuance/reception/Filing/Registration/International Publication/Advance Registration Date	
11	 <p>Indian Design Application Information Retrieval System</p>	Application Number Filing/Publication Date Applicant Name/State/Country Title IDC Class Priority Date Priority Country Journal Number	Link
12	 <p>SIPO</p>	Announcement/Application Number Announcement/Publication/Application Date Applicant Inventor IPC/Locarno Class Title Description Patent agency/agent Priority Number Divisional original application PCT national entry date PCT application number PCT publication Number	Link
13	 <p>EUIPO</p>	Design Image Design Number Title Designer Number Designer Name Status Reference Recordal Number Locarno/Vienna Class Owner ID number Owner Name Owner Country	Link

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		Representative ID Number	
		Representative Name	
		Filing/Publication/Expiry/Registration Date	
		Register/File/Design Number	
		Registration Date	
14		Title	Link
		Owner	
		Locarno Class	

Generally, the **search is performed by a set of keywords and/or classifications**. It can further go with the forward or backward citation of interesting design. Generally, there are larger number of search results and consumes a lot of time.

Some of the databases like EUIPO allows searching simply by uploading the image of the design to the database and showing design similar to the subject design.

3. Design Classifications

There are several classifications used for design searching. This classification helps in organizing the intellectual property and makes it easier to search when required, i.e. prior art searches.

Few examples of design classifications are:

- **US design classifications:** U.S. Design patents are classified into 33 classes of subject matter, and each class has several subclasses.
- **Japanese Classifications for industrial design:** The Japan Patent classification system for industrial design registrations consists of 13 design groups and 81 main classes.
- **Locarno Classifications:** Locarno Classification comprises a total of 32 classes and 237 subclasses with detailed descriptions of goods

There are other classifications as well, but we will focus on Locarno classifications. Locarno classifications allow organizing design patent data on an international level with ease. Many of the current databases, like Questel's Orbit, enables filtering data to use Locarno classification. This helps in removing junk/noise from the data.

4. Locarno Classifications

Locarno classifications were **established in 1968** by the Locarno Agreement for a purpose internationally standardize the patent documents. Internationally accepted classification for industrial design makes it a lot easier to search design patents on international databases.

There are **32 classes and 237 subclasses** in Locarno classification system as per the 12th edition.

List of exemplary classes and what are they about is described below:

Class 1: Foodstuffs

Class 2: Articles of clothing and haberdashery

Class 3: Travel goods, cases, parasols and personal belongings, not elsewhere specified

Class 4: Brushware

Class 5: Textile piece goods, artificial and natural sheet material

Class 6: Furnishing

Class 7: Household goods, not elsewhere specified

Class 8: Tools and hardware

Class 9: Packages and containers for the transport or handling of goods

Class 10: Clocks and watches and other measuring instruments, checking and signalling instruments

Class 11: Articles of adornment

Class 12: Means of transport or hoisting

Class 13: Equipment for production, distribution or transformation of electricity

Class 14: Recording, telecommunication or data processing equipment

Class 15: Machines, not elsewhere specified

Class 16: Photographic, cinematographic and optical apparatus

Class 17: Musical instruments

Class 18: Printing and office machinery

Class 19: Stationery and office equipment, artists' and teaching materials

Class 20: Sales and advertising equipment, signs

Class 21: Games, toys, tents and sports goods

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Class 22: Arms, pyrotechnic articles, articles for hunting, fishing and pest killing

Class 23: Fluid distribution equipment, sanitary, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment, solid fuel

Class 24: Medical and laboratory equipment

Class 25: Building units and construction elements

Class 26: Lighting apparatus

Class 27: Tobacco and smokers' supplies

Class 28: Pharmaceutical and cosmetic products, toilet articles and apparatus

Class 29: Devices and equipment against fire hazards, for accident prevention and for rescue

Class 30: Articles for the care and handling of animals

Class 31: Machines and appliances for preparing food or drink, not elsewhere specified

Class 32: Graphic symbols and logos, surface patterns, ornamentation

Various databases like **Hague Express Database, Orbit intelligence, Designview** etc. allows design search using Locarno classifications.

The significant advantage of using Locarno classification is that one can narrow down the search results. **While searching with Locarno classification on the international databases like Hague Express can repetitive references and will save time by letting you analyze fewer results.**

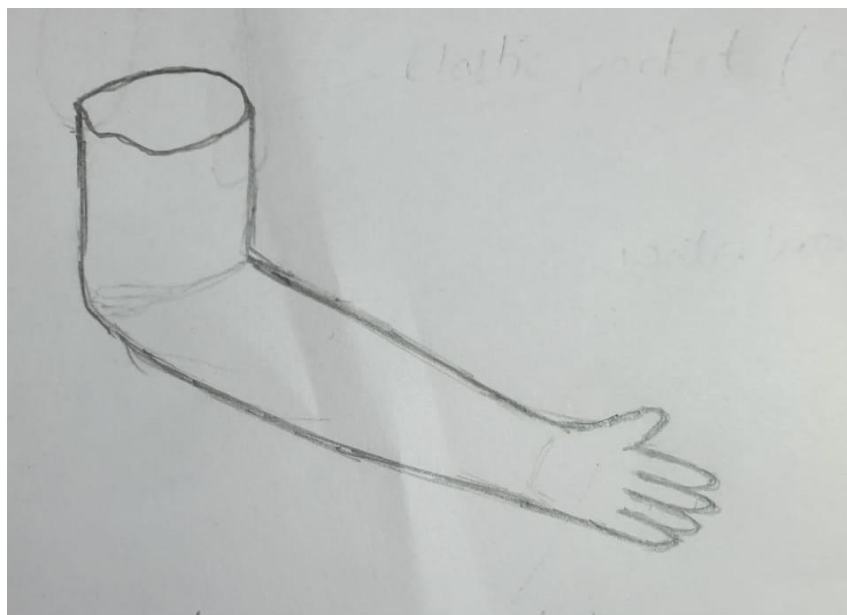
If one does not get any relevant result by searching on these databases, it is always good to search on internet using relevant keywords to track potential product that does not have any patent right conflicting with the subject invention.

Locarno classifications help find references having unusual text in the title which cannot be tracked using standard keywords. These unusual keywords do not come to mind when searching the databases. So, searching by Locarno classification makes it easier to find these references which are probably missed using the keyword search.

5. Case Study

Let us understand the importance of Locarno classification in design search with an example.

The objective of the study was to search for prior art for the given **Protective glove**:



Let's start with the keywords preparation for the snow glove:

(SOCK*1 OR GLOVE*1 OR MITT*3 OR (HAND NEAR2 COVER*3))

Starting with the keyword searches, we found references that are mentioning gloves in the title:

S. No.	Patent Number	Title	Images
1	USD479384S1	GLOVE	 FIG. 4  FIG. 5

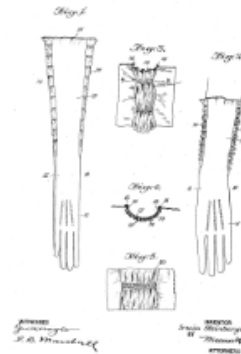
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2 [USD555876S1](#) WORK GLOVE WITH REINFORCED, SLIP-PREVENTIVE PALM

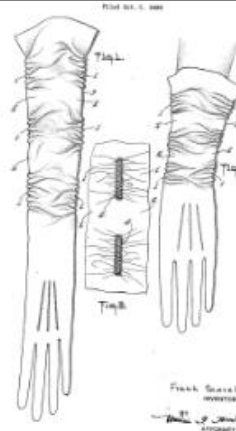


FIG.3

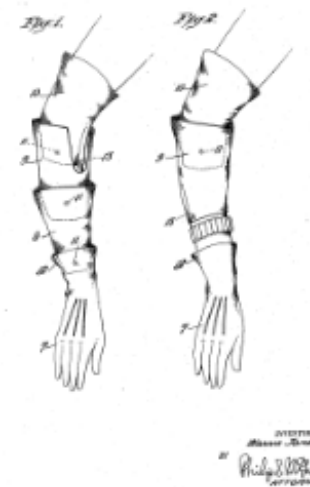
3 [US1883062A](#) GLOVE



4 [US1757095A](#) GLOVE



5 [US2418887A](#) CONVERTIBLE GLOVE

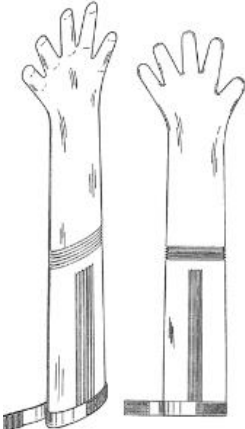
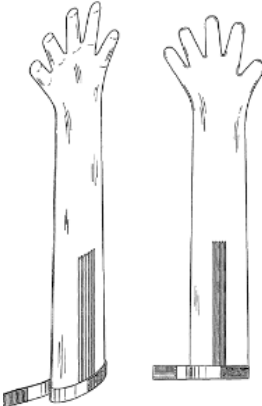


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Further, identifying relevant Locarno classification related to the gloves.

Relevant Locarno classification for the gloves is “02-06”.

Running Locarno class through databases, we found the following references that were missed by keyword searches:

S. No.	Patent Number	Title	Images
1	USD712098S1	FULL ARM PROTECTOR	
2	USD710548S1	HAND AND FOREARM PROTECTOR	

These references would have been missed if we only follow keyword-based searches. So, considering Locarno classifications is always a smart choice to avoid missing any references.

6. Conclusion

Design search is an elegant way to search the prior art for any design invention. An internationally accepted system for classification of industrial design (Locarno classification) makes it more efficient and precise by categorizing results.

International design databases help a lot in maintaining the design patents and organizing them according to Locarno classifications. Locarno classifications also help in narrowing down the results and make the process more precise and efficient.

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