

Inventors' Network

Volume 7

of the Capital Area [INCA] Issue 6

Our meeting (on the 3rd Monday) is 21 June 99

This INCA newsletter's schedule is to encourage members and other readers to show-up for the SATURDAY SEMINAR (SS), June 12.

As of the 8th of June, we have about 43 reservations. Facilities will accommodate 80. Keep up with announcements on <http://www.uspto.gov>, and <http://inca.interspeed.net>.

Denise Ferensic 308 2597 is the coordinating hostess for the Saturday Seminar.

The Patent Academy is preparing sets of notes, discourses and resources for registered participants. A CD or local download of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) is an unusually valuable resource.

The MPEP includes the law, operating rules, basis for advice and forms offered to inventors or their agents, and the official base for judgment calls by all examiners. This tool has been completely revised as of July 1998. Its availability, use and source for understanding will make patents stronger for individual or team-inventors.

When the new MPEP is well-used by inventors and their agents, PTO examination and allowance will be easier, quicker and considerably less expensive for both inventor and PTO. MPEP can be directly downloaded from <http://www.uspto.gov>

SATURDAY SEMINAR

Patent Office executives will offer presentations to help guests understand the PTO's growing "customer-orientation" included within their managerial vision.

Talented professionals will instruct and share their approaches to use of internet and other capabilities in searching for applicable art.

Examiners with Independent Inventor experience will share techniques for linking intended claims to the specification and to numbering within figures.

IF you have not yet registered, call 308 9660 to confirm last minute seating. .

Underground parking is reported to be free on Saturday. Crystal Drive is one-way North between 18th to 15th Street S. On the left side of the street a post office is followed by underground entrance. Walk from parking up the ramp, South, past the post office to a first corner and West to the second building CS4, 7th floor. See map P 7 **Look for Patent Academy signs.**

Any local inventor needs to use Saturday 12 June for this Seminar!

Start at 09:00 Lunch is included in registration. Building is Crystal Square 4, Level 7: Patent Academy.

WORKSHOP INTERACTION BETWEEN INVENTORS AND BUSINESS PERSONS

Dennis VanDusen [vandusen@cais.com] **delivered again!!!**

Dennis shared his early experience in researching a new kind of product line that in only a few years became a high-volume, highly-productive, broadly-sold, computer-enabling software package. OOPS, at the time of his invention, the US Patent office was not yet ready for software as a US patentable “property”.

The evening included:

- * **An environment for conceptualization**
- * **Protecting concepts**
- * **How “value” is generated**
- * **Investment process for projects of substance**
- * **What inventors tend to want**
- * **Lessons learned from other workshop environments**
- * **Process for Innovation and Commercialization**
- * **Utilization of resources**

WORKSHOP: Six concept presenters worked within Dennis’ form of “idea expansion to enhance new- business strength”.

Special thanks also to beautiful Julie Hummel who managed the executive style decision system for the teams at the front of our conference room.

We all appreciate the business creativity of our MIT guest-panelists who served as “decision board members” for team centers at the front and at the rear of the conference room.

The interaction of business decision structure and creative design structure made this meeting-time into an exhilarating experience for idea presenters, direct participants and on-lookers. - EXCITING -

Visibility of business-oriented segments offered “what might be possible” for inclusion in a well-considered business plan.

FROM THE BACK OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM: Phill Shaw, Franklin Evans and Bob Pulfrey outlined their products’ status. The MIT “ad-hoc decision team” role-played corporate decision-support officers in considering a market options and a marketing focus.

In these three cases, considerable inventive effort was directed toward a marketing strategy as well as pricing policy to meet a anticipated, evolving “Niche” markets.

FROM THE FRONT: Concepts for a self sticking wrapping paper drew hearty response. Jerry Porter shared a bare concept and gained new appreciation of the front Decision-Board’s “pragmatic measures”.

**Presentation by inventors tended to focus on
“What” [This is my idea.] and
“How” [My idea corrects an unsatisfactory situation in this way:]**

Responses from the engineering and inventing community tend to draw focus on technical imperfection or to attempt “further optimization”.

Our business moderators overcame complexity by introduced simplifying assumptions such as:

- “We can assume, for now, that what this will work as intended.”
- “We can assume, for now, that future tests may show need to modify.”
- “We can assume, for now, that some imperfections are all right in a new product.”

The bottom line assessment, offered by Dennis included:

Who, within this audience would like to:

- work on this project?
- be a part of this project's talent team? e.g. Marketing
- be a director in a firm holding this property?
- be a significant investor to bring this concept to market?

Question: Who has responded so-far to Dennis' final assignment?

A "beta-test" needs feedback.

"Please inform me by e-mail, phone 301 656 9090, or fax 301 907 9393 with your assessment and comments about this Concepts / Invention workshop approach."

What wisdom and/or impression are you willing to share with Dennis?

Do you have other concepts would you like to expose to this process?

Would you like some portion of INCA meetings to be structured to this process?

Are you especially qualified to act role of: Business President?, Marketing Director? , Finance Director? Tooling Engineer?, Manufacturing Engineer?, Packaging Designer?, Materials and Purchasing Manager?, Investor? or other decision

What general or additional rules might enhance the timely operation of the process?

Are further refinements of the workshop process necessary to engage angels, venture capitalists and other investment resources into direct interaction with inventors, managers, attorneys and other entrepreneurs.

SPEAKER-PROGRAM

On June 21 **Frampton Ellis** [fellis@anatomicresearch.com] will be sharing marketing experience and new avenues from his role of an international licensed inventor. As many of you know, this past summer Raoul took photographs of the front of a Scandinavian street car on which Frampton's licensed shoe was advertised. Frampton's patent is 5,544,429. The more electronically-adventurous may want to find this number on <http://www.uspto.gov>.

Beginning again in June, the program chairman invites members to reduce their status-reports into 2-5 minute presentations, with pictures, sketches, and prototype hardware.

We can probably handle up to 4 reports per meeting. Call Ray (703) 971 9216 to get your time-slot.

FUTURE INCA PROGRAMS

Jerry Porter & his co-inventor, Pat Coffee anticipate presenting INCA with their "combination" that has resulted in a licensing cash flow from simple, much-needed products.

Fontelle Gilbert [fontelleg@aol.com] is currently scheduled to coach us about enhancing the strengths that we know within ourselves and within our networks. Her schedule has been put on hold pending strength renewal after a new-hip operation.

August 16 includes some short-term planning for a September family picnic. John Eckert, inventor of an electrical connector, has a place picked and needs 8 volunteers.

John's caveat: "I will say 'yes' to organizing the picnic --- provided that eight other volunteers sign up to plan and

pull-off such an outing.”

John handed out some half-sheet papers that cited, “I will offer my services and bring my talents forth for an INCA picnic”.

If you obtained one of John’s papers and have not yet responded, or you just want to be a volunteer for his project, John’s work phone is 301 972 3020.

August will be “Inventor’s month”. Between now and then is a good time to open your browser for topics about inventor and invention. INCA members, are also encouraged to open their web page <http://inca.interspeed.net> and follow links in the Information box for interesting research they might like to bring up near the close of our regular meetings.

HOSPITALITY

Our May 17 meeting demonstrated the capability for INCA to host a bunch of very knowledgeable, interesting people. **T H A N K S**

Those green badges were on. Local conversations during the Networking hour were working just fine!!!

It is clear that a volunteer organization can also be an effective organization.

Laurie Rackas of WETA lrackas@weta.com & 703 998 2619 was visiting in our May meeting and is now preparing a video program about some of our inventors and their products for a later showing.

Donna Sibilov (914) 633 5749 of the on-line New York Times talked to several INCA members in researching her up-coming article about independent inventors for the NYT.

Thomas Jefferson wrote to Isaac McPherson in 1813 about ideas. “--- an individual may exclusively possess [an idea] so long as he keeps it to himself; but the moment it is divulged it forces itself into the possession of every one ---. He who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine. That ideas should freely spread over the globe, for --- the improvement of [man’s] condition, seems to have been --- benevolently designed by nature... Inventions then cannot, in nature, be a subject of [exclusive, permanent] property.

CREATIVITY Seminars often emphasize the Creative strengths of children.

Jerry Porter has shared with INCA his correspondence to a Young inventor (age 6).

Dear Michael:

Your mother was good enough to send me an e-mail telling me of your recent experiences in the invention world. Apparently you came up with an idea, that was a very good idea, and then you all discovered that there was a recent patent issued that covered the idea.

Even though that may have been a disappointment, I want to tell you just how much of a success I believe that is. If you keep right on thinking and asking, you will come up with many ideas that are not covered by prior

art. [That is a fancy way of saying that they haven't been invented by someone already.]

Your invention demonstrated that you have several very strong traits.
Traits that I think are rather rare:

First, your idea was practical. Often people want me to help them with ideas and the ideas they present simply aren't practical. They have very a limited market, or they are unduly complicated.

Second, your idea was what I call "low tech". Your idea did not require complex production techniques or expensive state-of-the-art materials or computers.

[It is much easier to think up a complicated, expensive idea than to think up a good, simple one.]

Third, your idea showed that you use the world around you as your school.

You let your observations teach you, and then you do something or make something with what you have taught yourself. Super!!!.

At about your age I couldn't understand why a wrench worked. Why was it so easy to loosen a nut from a bolt with a wrench and so hard to turn it by hand?

So I stopped a man who was walking across the campus of our local college, and asked him. He was very patient and explained, as best he could, the principle of leverage. Then, just a few months ago, I got another lesson about leverage from a specialized moving company that moved our nine foot (very heavy) grand piano to Washington.

I told the boss of the crew that I could get several people in Charlottesville to help load it and several up here to help un-load it. "No, he said, we just don't do that.

We find that most people don't understand the principal of leverage and tend to hurt themselves."

Fourth, and this is most important. Your idea was easy for others to understand and easy for others to see how they could use it in their lives.

I once knew a full time inventor who said: "what an invention is, is a license to teach the public". If an idea has to have too much 'teaching of the public', it can be impossible to market.

It has taken me a long time to learn that not everyone has these four skills and I am glad that you and I have them.

My patent attorney and I discuss the nature of inventors from time to time.
We talk about what makes inventors a bit different than some other folks.

He feels, and he has worked with a lot of us, that the biggest difference is that a real inventor has no fear of being wrong. If a real inventor tries something and it doesn't work, or proves not to be true, he isn't bothered. I fear I learned this slowly.

My neighbor up the street has several uncles who are inventors. He says that inventors see more gray areas than most other people. In those gray areas lie the opportunity for inventions. In a way that is true of your invention. The 'gray area' you saw was that there was more than one way to handle the relationship of the gel

and the hair brush.

The process of inventing draws outsider advice such as:"That won't work because if it would, someone would already have thought of it"

As you become a more skilled inventor your mind will work on ideas that no-one has thought of. The confidence of knowing this is true is part of learning to invent.

Also, I am very careful of whom I tell ideas to. I am particularly careful to avoid people who's first reaction is to be negative.

Inventing is fun: My favored reward includes making people's faces light up from seeing otherwise complex things in a simple way.

For instance, I figured out some time ago that if I let certain house plants go too long without watering them, their leaves started to droop. I then invented a "fix" that was to put a piece of plastic pipe around the leaves and hold them nearly straight up for a period of time after watering them. When I demonstrated that to one of my wife's co-workers she allowed as how I was quite a genius! ---Take it where you can get it--.

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In CONTRAST: Be aware of "Invention Sharks".

An Inventors' Awareness Center consumer education website is at <http://www.uiausa.com>. Its purpose is to educate independent inventors about how to choose legitimate service providers and protect themselves from fraudulent "invention promotion companies" who routinely plague naive inventors who want their invention "taken to market".

The Inventors' Awareness Center has been created by Joanne Hayes-Rines who is president of the United Inventors's Association of the USA (UIA/USA) and also is publisher/Editor of the Inventors' Digest.

Both UIA/USA and Inventors' Digest are dedicated to exposing those invention promotion companies who are SCAM artists — and leading inventors to honest providers who have their best interests at heart.

UIA/USA represents 3000 inventors. It was established in 1990 at the urging of Dept of Energy. Carol Oldenburg is administrator. (716) 359 9310 UIAUSA@aol.com

UIA/USA referred an inventor's inquiry to Public Affairs of USPTO. Their response included:

The trend over the 1997-1998 year has shown -

a 31.5% increase in the total number of US patents issued,

a 27.5% increase in the total number of patents granted to independent inventors, and
on average,

14.4% of total US patents issued were issued to US individuals. 1/7

Our June 21 meeting will have application sheets for a new subscription to INVENTORS' DIGEST @ \$18, - to be billed later. For renewals call 1 800 838 8808

INVENTORS' DIGEST (IG) interest in good government and responsible decision-making.

H.R.1907 is being analyzed from a perspective of independent inventors on <http://www.inventorsdigest.com>. IG cites national implications of this year's proposed changes to the patent law. They want any proposed change in law to be understood by lawmakers before it is subject to vote. They want to discourage a proposed "fast track" and / or voice-vote for the proposed high-impact law change regarding patents. They want good citizens to communicate with their representatives.

SATURDAY SEMINAR MAP

Last month this corner had a few introductory remarks about TRIZ. It is a recently-popular Russian-oriented approach toward inventive creativity in a structured analytical method.

Ten years ago, our business and technological literature was describing Japanese-oriented approaches toward inventive creativity and enhanced operating effectiveness.

Twenty years ago, most North American scientific and social communities were building a recognized value for inventive creativity. Since WWII the General Electric Company had shared the benefits and analytical techniques of Value Analysis (VA). The "value analysis" combined creative synthesis and economic analysis to bring competitively-strong products to market with significant profit.

Is INCA ready for some rigorous instruction and analysis about product economics?

General Eisenhower set a standard for creative approaches as he demanded that "completed staff work" include multiple options for executive decision, wherein the options were expected to include unconventional and creatively resourceful approaches that would result in a "win-win" condition for cooperating parties. While he was President, "winning" meant sound economics that were visible and Nationally viable.

INVENTOR QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS

-about broad, independent claims:

Convention in writing and in examining claims is to expect the first claim to be the most broad.

It will have the fewest number of elements.

It will use the most-broad terms for each element.

Whereby the claim will not be within the prior art, and yet will cover possible approaches of others that, on seeing this property, might propose a near look-alike to achieve the same result.

(Mastery of claim-breath writing within a technical fields implies that the master will retain insights that can add high value for both present and future.)

-about narrow, dependent claims:

Convention in claim negotiation is to support broad, independent claims with more narrow dependent claims.

Note: Should the examiner discover prior art that covers the most broad claim, a substitute claim can be

combined from described elements within the dependent claims that are supposedly disclosed within drawings, specifications and other claims.

A format for claims will include a name for the claim, a list of elements such as items, methods, or steps, and how these elements cooperatively interact with one another to provide a working whole.

Reality in writing and examining claims is that almost anything can be awarded a patent as its definition is narrowed in depth to include greater and greater depth of unique features--- Of course an extremely narrow patent may be easy to “design around” with an equivalently narrow patent revealing different means to do a common task.

Conclusion: Claims for a breakthrough technology or a new use for a known product can be very broad, with few dependent claims. Licensees may be the ones who add their proprietary style to their products through multiple dependent claims.

Conversely, a claim set for mature technology tends to be narrow, with many dependent claims.

[A viable broad claim is usually much more valuable than a lot of narrow ones.]

Words of Claims: The writer gets to select the words within his claim, but

A same word must mean the same thing in any claim, specification or drawing.

In a second and subsequent use of a word, it may be described as “the” or “said” word.

There are more examples in Pressman’s “write it yourself”. However, skill comes in the doing.

However, an initial set of claims is vital to be assured that drawings and specifications are sufficient for anyone to do a viable set of claims.

“ **A concept is expressed and refined with concept explanation and value additions.**
Commercialization and directive-focus follow.
Protection strategies for intellectual property considered
Business formation (with a balance of talent) is discussed
Marketing with definition and segmentation outlined
Financing converts aforementioned considerations into economic terms and marshals:
Deal Structure evaluation
Likely Investor demands
Program requirements and recommended posture.

A growing, evolving concept is summarized. Moderator / Mentor(s) suggest direction & offer advice.

Audience reaction is noted. “Beta test” records reactions. Division of the audience into groups of fewer than 30 offers a close relationship to presenters, moderators, mentors and recorders.