**Examples of Practitioners’ Issues with PatentCenter**

1. **Can’t log in, getting kicked out, timeouts uploading documents, search limit reached**

* Often PatentCenter log in does not work, thus practitioners use EFS and Private PAIR as backup.

Patent Center, EFS-Web (registered) and Private PAIR all utilize Okta for authentication. An authentication issue impacting Patent Center would equally impact EFS-WEB Registered and Private PAIR.

* Often users are kicked out shortly after logging in.

We have not received information from the EBC regarding this issue.

* PatentCenter often times out when uploading documents, users then use EFS

This could be a network issue. Users add 1 document at a time in EFS-WEB and then select upload and validate. In Patent Center users can simultaneously upload and validate multiple documents and assign document descriptions (based on certain naming conventions) at once.

PatentCenter will silently timeout. You will have a page up and when you go to take another action, it does not work. For example, I just had the Correspondence page up while doing docketing. I then went to adjust my search criteria. After clicking “Apply filter” the page reloaded and says No Data Available. See a below. I look to be logged in, but something has silently timed out on the PTO side. I need to reload the page the page. Then the page loads with my newly requested information.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

There is a similar issue with Workbench where it times out and you get an error that there are no customer numbers associated with the profile.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

There is a timeout for inactivity. We will investigate adding a pop-up message. If multiple tabs are open, users may not realize the timeout has occurred.

* Many repeatedly receive “search limit reached” errors when no prior entry/search was done.

A screenshot of a search limit

Description automatically generated

Please provide more information about the user/IP/window in which you’re experiencing this behavior so we can investigate. It could depend on if a single IP is supporting a large number of users.

* Failures are random within a given day, and from day-to-day

Thank you for your feedback.

* These are issues across a variety of browsers

Thank you for your feedback.

* Disappearing or Discombobulated Information in PDF Forms

Please call the EBC and provide screenshots and/or application numbers.

* Several users experienced problems with data in web-fillable PDF forms disappearing or becoming garbled and out of order.

Please call the EBC and provide screenshots and/or application numbers.

* This doesn’t happen when using EFS.

Thank you for your feedback.

1. **Lack of Immediate Confirmation of Filing**

* When filing new application, often filing is not immediately accessible and if one forgets to download the acknowledgment receipt, one does not have confirmation of filing. Sometimes takes several hours or a day or two to be able to access the filing receipt.
* In EFS, one can easily access filing receipts.
* Lack of immediate access/follow-on filing when using EFS is rare.
* Recently, I had to refile two provisionals because (1) I could not immediately access and confirm data, and (2) I forgot to file a paper and could not immediately access. When I refiled each using EFS, I could immediately access.

Response for #2: We will coordinate with our downstream systems to investigate this process. It helps to have the application number so we can troubleshoot and make any necessary improvements.

1. **ADS Upload Issues**

* Often does not accept an uploaded PTO ADS form, sometimes accepts the same form after several tries, some are never accepted.

When this occurs, please provide the ADS to the EBC. It could be due to an incorrect selection on the form, for example.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

* The AIA/14 ADS cannot be previewed.

Thank you for your feedback. We will investigate this issue further. However, when the ADS is uploaded on the Application data screen, the entered contents are displayed. When the user advances to the upload documents screen, the ADS can be downloaded and reviewed.

1. **Lacks certain fees and document descriptors**

One is required to file a PCT application with an ST26 SL on PatentCenter. But, as of the last time I filed a PCT (a few weeks ago), the filing fees were not correctly calculating. So I had to file on PatentCenter and then go to EFS Web to pay the correct amount. It is really annoying that the fees section will not allow you to change or pull in any new fees other than what it has calculated. (SKS experienced this several times as well.)

Please provide the application number for the 371 application. XML sequence listing fees were implemented July 1, 2022 when this WIPO requirement became effective. The XML requirement is determined based on the international filing date (i.e., PCT). Please indicate the expected fees that were wrong/missing.

* Web-based issue fee payment for plant applications unavailable. The only option is to pay the utility issue fee (e.g., $480 for small entity). Plant issue fee amount is different ($336 for small entity).

A temporary measure to accept plant applications was implemented in response to the COVID-19 Outbreak. Permanent acceptance of Plant submissions is currently being developed. In the meantime, the USPTO has given electronic filing guidelines you can follow for plant applications in the interim. We will give you this link in the chat as well as in an e-mail with the slides to all participants. <https://www.uspto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/plant-efiling-20200504.pdf>

* Recommend providing ability to enter generic fee, *e.g*., fill in what the fee is, amount, and any previously paid amount.

Thank you for your feedback.

* Recommend providing all document descriptors under all types of filing even if not applicable (simply because practitioners will be more readily able to select the given descriptor based on experience where in the given list the descriptor is located.

Document descriptions are made available based on application type to mitigate the incorrect selection being made by users. This allows the application to be received by the appropriate department faster.

* Appreciate the few auto-tag descriptors. RECOMMEND auto-tags made functional for all documents so practitioners increasingly turn to PatentCenter for convenience.

Thank you for your feedback.

1. **Sponsored User – Practitioner Verification**

* A couple of weeks ago I as a sponsored user prepared a Corrected ADS in PatentCenter. My attorney signed it. I was (as noted below) unable to file it. When he filed it, the acknowledgement receipts says that it was filed by ME and authorized by him. When he paid the associated fee, that receipt as well says that I authorized the fee, not him. I was not the logged in user completing the submission or fee payment. So now I have inaccurate acknowledgement receipts in our file.

Thank you for your feedback. If the attorney did not make changes to your saved submission and submitted it, it will show you as the submitter.

* A sponsored user cannot submit web-based documents that have been signed by a practitioner.

This is due to legal business requirements for Web85b, Corrected ADS, eTerminal Disclaimer and e-petitions. Once the attorney signs, they should submit.

* This is concerning because the USPTO OED has been cracking down on people filing things as if they were the person indicated.

Thank you for your feedback.

1. **Lacking same functionalities**

* XML download information is not the same as EFS and PAIR. Users have docketing software and form generation software that auto imports the XML data based on EFS and Private PAIR, which software import does not work with PatentCenter.

We have restored some XML data in Patent Center for user convenience.

* SCORE documents unavailable for some. Documents appear with links, but nothing happens when clicked. Download icon also unresponsive. I’ve asked the listserv about this problem before, and it seems to work for some people, but I haven’t had any luck on multiple browsers and after cache clearing. I can access through EFS-Web. (Some users can access, some cannot. Access is inconsistent across practitioners.)

We would need specific application numbers. The EBC can help with this.

1. **Not ADA friendly/accessible**

* In PatentCenter, when uploading documents and selecting the document description, you cannot navigate the drop down menu with keyboards. If I click the drop down arrow and then press a letter on my keyboard, nothing happens. If I click the drop down arrow and then selection a menu option on the left, (e.g. Change Requests), I still cannot use the keyboard to navigate that main category menu on the left or the document descriptions on the right. A mouse is required. IS THIS COMPLIANT WITH THE ADA AND WCAG?? <https://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/> We will investigate the drop-down arrow.

We will investigate the drop-down menu. The user can Tab and use the “help with document descriptions” link to get this information. Once the document is uploaded, the type-ahead feature can be used to select the appropriate document description.

* Too small of boxes to hover over in order to click/select

Thank you for your feedback.

* In PatentCenter, if a window is not maximized (or is on too small of a monitor), then the Split Document drop down menus for document description open off screen. You have to guess at what you are selecting. (CP19, CP134)

Please see response to #10

* In Private PAIR, I can select two items to download and click PDF to get them in a single PDF (3 clicks); in PatentCenter, that same process takes 4 clicks. Problem for those with carpal tunnel syndrome.

Thank you for your feedback.

1. **Downloading Cited Prior Art**

* Display References > View > Select Items > Click on X Select > Click download option – why do we need to click on X Selected and make another click to start the download then there is no choice to make (i.e., if you have selected 1 reference, you can only download a PDF, if you have selected more than 1 reference, you can only download a .zip) This is an extra click compared to Private PAIR (Display Refences > Select Form > Select Items > Click PDF icon)

Thank you for your feedback.

* In applications with a large number of references, they will not download but there is no error message.

Patent Center displays the approximate file size in Documents and Transaction. The maximum download file size is 45MB as set by the USPTO.

* Select all the references, click to download the .zip, there is a spinning circle for a moment and then it is gone. If you try to select a handful of the references to download, the same thing happens until you reload the page – then, you can select 10 references, download them. Uncheck those references and go to download the next 10 …. BUT you end up with 20 references even though only 10 are checked (you get the first 10 and the second 10).

We created a defect for this issue. Once we investigate the root cause we will provide a timeline when this will be fixed.

1. **Outgoing Correspondence**

* Workbench > View Correspondence defaults to Imaging Date, last 3 days view, and sorted by Image Date. This results in not seeing all items mailed the current day at a glance; it can also result in items that were imaged more than 3 days ago, but mailed today, not showing on the list. It should default to sorting by Mailing Date with the current date first.

Thank you for your feedback. It will filter by Imaging date, last 7 days which is the same as Private PAIR. This fix is planned to occur before retirement.

* Outgoing correspondence emails list applications in sequential order (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4), but the Correspondence section in PatentCenter lists them in reverse order (i.e., 4, 3, 2, 1) which makes processing correspondence inefficient.

Thank you for your feedback. We will investigate this issue.

* In Correspondence, if you use the checkbox at the top of the column to select all items displayed, you cannot download them – there is no item to click next to “In a single file” or “individual files (as .zip). See a below. If you individually select all the items, then you can download them all. See b below. In an interesting twist, once you have manually selected the items, you can now use the selector at the top of the column to select and download all the items at once.

This is an old issue that should be showing correctly. Please let us know if it is not.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a computer

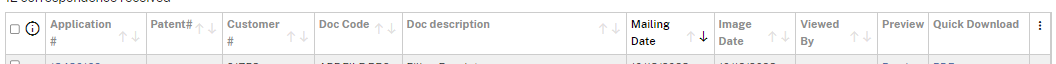
Description automatically generated

* Multiple items in 1 PDF download out of order. For example, if you receive an Office Action, 1449, and 892, then can come in any combination of order you can think of. There seems to be no consistency to it. Today, I have a matter where the 1449 is first, followed by a Final Rejection – but then, there is a Non-Final Rejection followed by the 892. So it’s not that the numbered forms are being downloaded first. It’s also not an alphabetical order issue because “List of References” would always come after “Final” or “Non-Final.” It’s not Image Date because they have the same image date. Yesterday this happened where it downloaded Welcome Letter and then Filing Receipt for one application, and Filing Receipt then Welcome Letter for another. In any event, this results in having to manually re-order the pages in the PDF that is downloaded along with the bookmarks for the PDF. This adds layers of inefficiency and was never an issue in Private PAIR. If I go into Private PAIR today, they are displayed in the expected order and download in the expected order. PatentCenter has also added underscores in the bookmarks to separate the customer number, application number, date, and description which adds clutter to the bookmark and reduces readability.

This issue is being tested and is planned to be fixed mid-November.

* PatentCenter does not default to the same columns used in Private PAIR. This could possibly be acceptable if a user was able to save a preferred column view, but you cannot. What is even the point of the Patent # column on the correspondence page if it never populates? It only pulls in information when you are on the Applications page – when also defaults to including the Attorney docket # column.

We plan to add a saved user preferences option in the future. We will make the Patent # column optional.





* In Private PAIR, after you download a correspondence item, the Viewed By and Earliest Image View Date columns automatically update. In PatentCenter, you need to reload the page to get those columns to update. Having the column automatically updated aids in efficiently tracking what items you have processed and what items you have not.

Thank you for your feedback.

* When processing correspondence, if you do not reload the PatentCenter page, you will get a pop-up that asks if you are still working – even though you are actively selecting and downloading items.

Thank you for your feedback.

1. **Viewability issues**

* When the document description drop-down list is used, the window doesn’t expand to show the full document description. This happens even when the browser window is maximized.

We will discuss this with our user design team to optimize the view. Please use the scroll bar.

* When the browser window is reduced to half screen, the file wrapper clickable tabs on the lefthand side of the screen (e.g., Application Data, Documents & Transactions, Continuity, etc.) are hidden behind a hamburger link for “Show/hide menu.” When I click on that tile, nothing happens. No list appears anywhere on the screen, no pop-up window, nothing.

We will discuss this with our user design team to optimize the view.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

* When creating a Split Document, you are able to click the Continue button prior to clicking Done. Doing so results in that you get to the Review & Submit page and the Preview item is grayed out, but there is no explanation to the user about Why it is unavailable. There is no warning to the user that there are documents without description. I do not know if you are able to actually click Submit or not.

Thank you for your feedback. We are investigating providing a warning to the user on the upload screen instead of the review and submit screen.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

A close-up of a computer screen

Description automatically generated

1. **Additional recommendations and issues**

* Ability to set user preferences for accessing outgoing correspondence, *e.g*., only certain customer numbers, and sorted by mailroom date for past 30 days.
* Fix typo :)

The Search menu shows Patents # and should be Patent #.

Thank you for your feedback.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

* **Classification System Links -** PatentCenter does not provide a link to the patent classification system as do PAIR and EFS. Practitioners need to check classifications for, *e.g*., restriction requirements. This is yet another thing that's found in PAIR/EFS that's nowhere to be found in PC, because there's no general search capability in PC. Recommend providing selectable/clickable class and subclass assigned right on application page and a link to the entire classification system in the left navigation bar.

Thank you for your feedback. We display the class/subclass in Private PAIR and Patent Center, but they are not active links. We will consider providing a link to the classification home page in the Patents drop-down menu on the Patent Center homepage.