



How PatMOB is saving Sanofi \$100K in 2015 – while delivering a better solution

Patents give inventors exclusive rights in exchange for the detailed public disclosure of their inventions. The disclosure requirements make patents a valuable source of technical and scientific information. Scientists, engineers and administrators at many companies use patent publications to monitor progress of their competitors. At the pharmaceutical giant Sanofi, Patent Alerts related to many biological targets are reviewed weekly in the form of email-distributed PDF files.

For years, Sanofi patent information professionals have been using the CAplus database on STN [1] to produce the weekly Patent Alerts. STN features an SDI (alerts) service which can be set up to run database queries on a user-defined, periodic basis. The STN alerts are individually priced, with charges depending on the number of search terms in a query, frequency of runs, and the elements of the record “printed” in the results. As the popularity of Patent Alerts among Sanofi scientists grew and more biological targets were added, the STN fees grew also. They were well over \$100,000 for the first ten months of 2014. A strategy was needed to diminish these expenses.

In 2014 Sanofi signed a non-exclusive license agreement to use Genemob’s PatMOB software. PatMOB platform [2] is designed to facilitate rapid development of plug-ins for management of various patent data formats. For example, its use to combine multiple software resources in a large patent landscaping project has been described [3]. Now, a plug-in was developed to generate Patent Alerts through an alternative protocol.

The new PatMOB solution leverages Sanofi’s existing subscription to PatBase [4]. This subscription covers access to the patent data through the PatBase and PatBase Express web applications, and an API (application programming interface). With a click of a button, PatMOB reads a set of queries from a text file and, in combination with an appropriate update command, sends them as HTTP POST requests to PatBase API. The parsed responses are presented to the analyst for review in the form of a familiar PatMOB patent project tree, with the standard reference and edit tools. In the final step, PatMOB retrieves bibliographic data, abstracts and chemical structures for selected publications from the PatBase API. This data is written to an HTML table which the analyst opens in Microsoft Excel for final editing and conversion to PDF.

Before the Patent Alerts protocol switch in the first week of 2015, the last three alerts in 2014 were performed in parallel on STN and PatBase. As expected, both platforms provide good coverage of recent

US, EP and WO publications. However, some differences were noted:

- Technically, the STN alerts are run by the vendor while the PatBase API searches have to be launched by the user. In practice, however, the latter process is faster, more flexible and less cumbersome than the retrieval of the SDI results from STN.
- PatBase patent families are closely related to the standard INPADOC families, while CAplus uses an ill-defined system where a single publication can be a member of multiple patent families. In extreme cases, tens of CAplus patent families are retrieved for a single publication, not only inflating the cost, but also generating a noise the analyst has to sift through.
- Recent publications retrieved in the CAplus SDI alerts are displayed in the family records with information derived from the “basic” (first) member of the family. In many cases this information is outdated with respect to the newest publications. In contrast, while the PatBase searches are also performed in context of patent families, all the information extracted by PatMOB from the PatBase API is derived directly from the recent publication.

In conclusion, the use of PatMOB software with PatBase API enabled production of weekly Patent Alerts which have more relevant content, yet are less expensive and easier to prepare than the earlier, CAplus-based version.

REFERENCES

- [1] STN (<http://www.stn-international.com/>) – an online database service operated jointly by Fachinformationszentrum Karlsruhe (FIZ Karlsruhe) and Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS)
- [2] PatMOB (<http://genemob.com/patent/>) – Patent Mobile Objects Java software
- [3] Masiakowski P, Wang S. Integration of software tools in patent analysis, World Patent Information (2013) 35, 97-104 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wpi.2012.12.010>)
- [4] PatBase (<http://patbase.com/>) – a single, global patent family database developed in partnership by Minesoft and RWS Group