

Russian Prior Art Search and Retrieval

Russian prior art search is a puzzling point even for specialized prior art search services. The problem comes due to several circumstances which the customers and service providers are usually not well aware of beforehand.

One thing is that patent documents in the Soviet Union covered less than 10% of knowledge in engineering and scientific domain of those years. This is due to a very specific nature of the Soviet patent system, in which all patent rights belonged to the state, so patenting was a kind of bureaucratic game commonly ignored by inventors. This is why the most of the knowledge dodged patent descriptions but may be found in journal articles, theses and reports. Some of these information sources were confidential or top secret back then, so they were never mentioned or cited in publicly available sources. Now they are declassified and may be found in paper-based libraries, but need manual search through old-fashion card index registers or by direct shelf browsing.

Another thing is a linguistic issue caused by polysemantic nature of Russian engineering terminology and a high level of implicitness in Russian technical texts, which makes known algorithms of automatic concept extraction ineffective, even if the target data is available in a searchable electronic form. This makes it technically inevitable to perform manual search by a native speaker skilled in the art, when the search coverage and precision are in focus.

One more thing is a copy availability issue consisting in that the most of information sources accessibly published in the XX century remain available in the paper form only. A bulk of old Soviet documents exist in scanned form but still not optically recognized, so at the best they are searchable by abstracts only. Some of these documents may be found in private collections through amateur forums, peer-to-peer networks or torrent trackers with limited access. Others need to be tracked through local libraries or even through second-hand bookshops. Therefore, even when an information source of interest is identified, retrieval of cited references published in Russian language is another issue for prior art search services.

If a reference is cited by Rospatent, the Patent Office usually does not furnish the Applicant with a copy of the cited reference. It is necessary to submit a separate request for such a copy and pay a corresponding fee. If correspondence in respect of an application is carried out on paper, then the request shall be submitted and processed in the paper form as well, and this may take a considerable time, so an alternative way of obtaining the copy may be optimal.

Delta Patent is a Russian patent prosecution boutique located in Saint Petersburg, the second largest technology hub in Russia. Here we have the Russian National Library and the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, both having extended collections of Soviet engineering and scientific papers, a dozen of university libraries and a lot of engineers and scientists skilled in particular arts, available as technology advisors. We will be happy to provide qualified Russian prior art search and retrieval services using the whole range of sources available both in electronic and paper form.

For further details of Russian and Eurasian patent law and practice, please feel free to contact Mr. Stan Fedorov of Delta Patent[®]. Stan is available by email: eng@delta-patent.com, by skype: stanified, or by phone: 7 812 998 1292.