

chicago style citation examples patent

chicago style citation examples patent are crucial for academic integrity, especially when referencing groundbreaking inventions and their legal documentation. Understanding how to properly cite patents in Chicago style is vital for researchers, legal scholars, and inventors alike, ensuring that prior art is acknowledged and intellectual property is respected. This article delves deep into the nuances of citing patents, providing comprehensive Chicago style citation examples for various patent types and contexts. We will explore the essential components of a patent citation, differentiate between citing U.S. patents and international equivalents, and offer practical guidance for in-text citations and bibliographical entries. Mastering these examples will empower you to navigate the complexities of patent citation with confidence and accuracy.

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Understanding the Anatomy of a Patent Citation

A robust patent citation in Chicago style, like any scholarly reference, requires specific elements to uniquely identify and locate the source material. At its core, a patent citation needs to provide enough detail for a reader to find the exact document being referenced. This includes identifying the issuing authority, the patent number, the publication date, and the inventor(s). Understanding these fundamental components is the first step toward constructing accurate citations.

Beyond the basic identifiers, additional information can enhance the citation's utility. For instance, mentioning the patent title can offer immediate context about the invention's nature. Furthermore, specifying the type of patent (e.g., U.S. utility, design, or plant patent) can be important for disambiguation. Chicago style, in its flexibility, allows for some variation, but the goal remains clarity and completeness. The structure typically follows a logical progression from the issuing country to the specific patent identification. Ensuring all these pieces are present and correctly formatted is paramount for scholarly and legal purposes.

Citing U.S. Patents in Chicago Style

Citing U.S. patents is a common requirement for researchers working with American innovation. The Chicago Manual of Style provides clear guidelines for these citations, ensuring consistency and aiding in retrieval. The key information you'll need includes the issuing body (the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office), the patent number, and the grant date.

Bibliographical Entry for U.S. Utility Patents

For a standard U.S. utility patent, the bibliographical entry in your notes and bibliography will include the inventor's name, the patent number, the title of the patent, and the grant date. The patent number is usually preceded by "U.S. Patent no." and followed by a comma. The grant date is typically presented in month day, year format.

- Inventor Last Name, First Name. "Title of Patent." U.S. Patent no. [Patent Number]. Granted [Month Day, Year].

Let's consider an example. If you were citing a patent for a new type of solar panel, the entry might

look something like this:

- Johnson, Sarah L. "High-Efficiency Photovoltaic Cell Structure." U.S. Patent no. 9,876,543.
Granted January 15, 2018.

Bibliographical Entry for U.S. Design Patents

Design patents, which protect the ornamental appearance of an item, are cited similarly to utility patents, but the "Design Patent" designation is often explicitly stated or implied by the context if the title is descriptive enough. The structure remains largely the same, emphasizing the unique design rather than the functional aspects.

An example for a design patent might be:

- Chen, Wei. "Ornamental Design for a Smartwatch Casing." U.S. Design Patent no. D800,123.
Granted October 24, 2017.

Bibliographical Entry for U.S. Plant Patents

Plant patents, which cover new and distinct asexually reproduced plant varieties, also follow the general Chicago style format. The crucial identifier here is the "Plant Patent" designation, ensuring that the specific type of patent is clear.

Here's an example of a plant patent citation:

- Garcia, Maria R. "New Variety of Hybrid Rose 'Sunrise Gold'." U.S. Plant Patent no. PP28,900.
Granted March 1, 2019.

Citing International Patents

The world of patents extends far beyond U.S. borders. Chicago style accommodates the citation of patents issued by other countries, requiring careful attention to the specific issuing authority and the patent numbering system employed by that nation. The principles of clear identification and traceability remain paramount.

Bibliographical Entry for Foreign Patents

When citing patents from other countries, it's essential to specify the issuing country and the relevant patent office or authority. The patent number and publication or grant date are still critical. The format often involves stating the country and then proceeding with the patent details, similar to how U.S. patents are handled.

For example, citing a European Patent (EP) would include the patent number and grant date. The European Patent Office (EPO) is the issuing authority. Here's a typical format:

- Inventor Last Name, First Name. "Title of Patent." Patent no. [Patent Number] ([Country Code]).
Granted [Month Day, Year].

A practical example of a European patent citation:

- Kim, Ji-hoon. "Advanced Battery Management System." Patent no. EP 3,456,789 B1 (Europe).
Granted December 5, 2022.

Similarly, patents from other major jurisdictions, like Japan (JP) or China (CN), would follow a comparable structure, substituting the country code and issuing authority as appropriate.

In-Text Citations for Patents

Beyond the full bibliographical entry, Chicago style requires concise in-text citations or notes to direct readers to the full reference within your work. These notes are crucial for maintaining the flow of your writing while still providing clear attribution.

Notes for U.S. Patents

In footnotes or endnotes, you will typically provide the inventor's name, the patent number, and the grant date. You can also include the title for added clarity, especially if the patent number alone doesn't immediately convey the subject matter. The goal is to be specific enough that the reader can easily locate the full citation in your bibliography.

- Note 1: Sarah L. Johnson, "High-Efficiency Photovoltaic Cell Structure," U.S. Patent no. 9,876,543, granted January 15, 2018.

If you are referring to the patent multiple times, subsequent notes can be shortened after the first full citation. This is often done using an abbreviated format that still clearly identifies the patent.

Notes for International Patents

The same principle applies to international patents. In the notes, you will provide the inventor's name, the patent number, the issuing country, and the grant date. Explicitly stating the country is vital to avoid confusion with domestic patents.

- Note 2: Ji-hoon Kim, "Advanced Battery Management System," Patent no. EP 3,456,789 B1 (Europe), granted December 5, 2022.

When citing a patent in a note, the emphasis is on providing just enough information to link back to the comprehensive bibliographical entry. This maintains conciseness in your text while ensuring that all necessary details are readily available.

Common Challenges and Solutions

Citing patents can present unique challenges due to the specialized nature of the documents and the various ways they are published and referenced. Navigating these complexities requires attention to detail and an understanding of common pitfalls.

Patent Application vs. Granted Patent

A significant distinction lies between citing a published patent application and a granted patent. Patent applications are often published before they are officially granted. Chicago style guidelines may differ slightly in how these are presented, with application numbers and publication dates becoming more prominent.

- Bibliographical Entry for U.S. Patent Application:
- Inventor Last Name, First Name. "Title of Patent Application." U.S. Patent Application Publication no. [Publication Number]. Filed [Month Day, Year].

When citing an application, ensure you use the publication number and the filing date, as the grant date is not yet applicable. This precision is crucial for accurately representing the document's status.

Multiple Inventors and Assignees

Patents can have multiple inventors and are often assigned to a company or organization. Chicago style typically prioritizes the inventor(s) in the citation. If there are many inventors (more than three, for instance), you might list the first inventor followed by "et al." in the notes, but usually list all in the bibliography. The assignee is generally not included in the primary citation unless it is the only way to identify the patent or it holds particular significance in the context of your research.

Online Patent Databases

Many patents are now accessed through online databases like Google Patents, USPTO's Patent Public Search, or Espacenet. While these are excellent resources for finding patents, the citation itself typically refers to the official patent document, not the database hosting it. However, if you accessed a patent solely through an online platform and cannot verify its official publication through other means, you may need to include information about the database and URL, following general Chicago style guidelines for online sources. Always try to cite the official patent document whenever possible.

The Importance of Precision in Patent Citation

The accurate citation of patents is more than just a stylistic requirement; it is fundamental to scholarly integrity and legal accuracy. Precise patent citations allow readers to verify your information, trace the lineage of inventions, and understand the prior art landscape. In legal contexts, correct patent citations are non-negotiable for establishing rights and defending claims.

By adhering to Chicago style guidelines for patent examples, researchers demonstrate a commitment to thoroughness and respect for intellectual property. This diligence ensures that your work is credible, traceable, and contributes meaningfully to the body of knowledge surrounding technological advancements. The detailed examples provided in this article aim to equip you with the necessary tools to confidently cite any patent, fostering a more robust and transparent research environment.

FAQ

Q: What is the most crucial information needed for a Chicago style patent citation?

A: The most crucial information for a Chicago style patent citation includes the inventor's name, the patent number, and the grant date. For international patents, the issuing country is also essential.

Q: How do I cite a U.S. patent application that has not yet been granted?

A: When citing a U.S. patent application that has not yet been granted, you should include the inventor's name, the title of the application, the U.S. Patent Application Publication number, and the filing date.

Q: Should I include the assignee of a patent in my Chicago style citation?

A: Generally, the assignee of a patent is not included in a standard Chicago style citation unless it is the only way to identify the patent or it holds particular significance for your research. The inventor is typically prioritized.

Q: What is the difference in citation format between a U.S. utility patent and a U.S. design patent?

A: The core information needed is similar, but for a design patent, you might explicitly state "Design Patent" or ensure the title clearly indicates it is a design. The patent number will also be different (e.g., D followed by numbers for design patents).

Q: How do I cite a patent that was found on a website like Google Patents?

A: While it's best to cite the official patent document, if you accessed it solely through an online platform, you may need to include information about the database and URL. However, always aim to cite the official patent publication.

Q: What does "et al." mean in the context of citing patents with multiple inventors?

A: "Et al." is Latin for "and others." In Chicago style, if a patent has many inventors, you might list the first inventor followed by "et al." in your notes for brevity, but typically list all inventors in the bibliographical entry.

Q: Is there a specific way to cite the patent number itself in Chicago style?

A: Yes, U.S. patents are typically referred to as "U.S. Patent no. [Patent Number]," and international patents will specify the country and patent number format relevant to that jurisdiction.

Q: Why is it important to be so precise when citing patents?

A: Precision in patent citation is crucial for academic integrity, allowing readers to verify sources and trace the history of inventions. In legal contexts, accuracy is paramount for establishing rights and claims related to intellectual property.

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