Conducting a Patent Search on the U.S.P.T.O Website
The 7-Step Strategy

1. **Initial Class/Subclass Search**

   - Go to [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)
   - Select "How to Search" located on the blue line
   - Select "How to search for patents at a USPDL."
   - Select U.S. Patent Classification (USPC) Index.
   - Click on the letter of the alphabet for the term you wish to search. For example, if I have an idea for a new design of an artificial fishing lure, I would click on the letter "L". Then arrow down to "Lures"
     
     LURES
     043 / 4______+ - - - - . FISHING
     043 / 42______+ - - - - . ARTIFICIAL
     D22 / 126____+ - - - - . DESIGN

2. **Identify Subclass(es).**

   - Click on class D22 and arrow down to subclass 126. Check to see if there is other classifications in the same area that are also appropriate. Note where the term falls within the system. Scan the entire class schedule, paying attention to the dot indents. Revise search strategy as needed. Class D22 is called Arms, Pyrotechnics, Hunting and Fishing Equipment. Most patents have more than one class and subclass.

3. **Classification Definitions**

   - From the Manual of Classification, click on "Class Definitions" at top right hand side of page. Then click on the Class. Clicking on the Title of the class will show you the definition of that class and clicking on the subclass will show you the definition of the subclass. Definitions will soon be added to design classes.

   - When possible definitions should be read to establish the scope of class (es) and subclass (es) relevant to the search. The definitions include important search notes and suggestions for further search options such as "see references".
4. **Initial Search**

- Check if you are on the right path by clicking on the red "P" to the left of the subclass.
- All patents in the class and subclass are displayed.
- Retrieve results and examine patent titles.
- Search published patent applications in class and subclass by clicking on the blue "A" next to the subclass in the Manual of Patent Classification.
- Try other relevant classes/subclasses.

5. **Patent Class**

- Once relevant classes and subclasses are identified, obtain a list of all patent numbers (1790 to present) granted for every class and subclass to be searched.
- To obtain patent list of titles go back to “Quick Search” and enter class and subclass as above or get list by going to the Manual of Classification.

6. **Examine Title List**

- Examine title list and click on title to display a summary of the patent, which includes claims, cited references, and US, classification numbers.
- Look up any other classification numbers assigned to each patent in *Index to U.S. Patent Classification* to determine relevancy.

7. **View Complete Patent**

- For those patents from the titles list that seem close to your invention, after viewing the summary of the patent click on blue "images" box on top of page. This will display complete patent including drawings.

**TO VIEW COMPLETE IMAGES ON USPTO WEBSITE YOU MUST DOWNLOAD ALTERNATIFF SOFTWARE!**

From [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) choose "search" under "patents" on left side of page. Select "How to Access Full-Page Images" from the purple section. Select "AlternaTiff". Select your internet browser and download.

**TO VIEW PATENTS IN PDF FORMAT:**
Go to [www.pat2pdf.org](http://www.pat2pdf.org) and type in patent number

*For a Video Tutorial of this Strategy go to [http://www.library.gatech.edu/search_locate/techres/patentsearching.wmv](http://www.library.gatech.edu/search_locate/techres/patentsearching.wmv)

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Revised on July 25, 2008
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United States Patent and Trademark Office
http://www.uspto.gov

European Patent Office – search and print worldwide patent
http://ep.espacenet.com

http://www.patentlens.net/daisy/patentlens/patentlens.html

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http://www.loc.gov/copyright

Georgia Office of the Secretary of State – Trademarks Database
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http://www.georgiainventors.com

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State Trademarks Database

Georgia Galileo Database – useful for searching non-patent literature
http://www.galileo.usg.edu
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### Notes

- **Phrases:** Wildcard, Truncation
- **Function:** Cons, Pros, Coverage

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**Database:** What is it?
Date:

Branch Chief  
Public Search Facility  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office  
Macison EAST Room 1B05  
600 Dulany St.  
Alexandria, VA 22313  
or  
Fax: (571) 273-0021 or (571) 273-0020

Please let me know what field of search, patent class/subclasses cover my idea. I understand class(es)/subclass(es) are preliminary and can be subject to change during the examination process of a patent application. The enclosed sketches on the back of this sheet with each part labeled show my intended invention.

My idea has certain features of structure, mode of operation, and intended uses, which I have described below.

I understand that a minimum of two to three weeks from the time the Public Search Facility receives it will be needed to fill this request and there is no charge for this information.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

NAME
ADDRESS:
CITY: ZIP:

TELEPHONE: FAX (if available):

E-MAIL (if available):

(1) Features of structure, or how it is constructed.

(2) Mode of operation, or how it works.

(3) Intended uses, or purpose of idea.

OVER FOR SKETCHES OF IDEA
(4) Rough sketches of my idea, viewed from all sides, with labels to identify each part. (If necessary, use additional sheets of paper, either plain or with lines. The sketches may be made in pencil and need not be drawn to scale.)