LIB 3010 Spring 2011: Students Choose an Image to Represent Patent Searching

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I’d like you to think about this class, which is all but complete. Then choose a graphic image that represents your thoughts. (Searching google images is a good way to do this.) Send the image to me as an attachment to an email message. In the message, please write a couple of sentences describing the image, and explaining why you chose it. You don’t need to worry about copyright this time, as the image will not be used for commercial purposes, but strictly for education. I may share some of these with my patent searching colleagues, (with no names attached of course). If you object to that, be sure to tell me and I will not share yours.

Here is an example:
Patent searchers once had to find a needle in a haystack – that one relevant document buried in the pile. Now we are searching for a needle in a pile of needles. The challenge is to identify the most useful document(s) in a pile of relevant documents.
An important part of patent searching is understanding and discovering the patent trolls of the world. While it is in nobody's best interest to horde technology, patent trolls do so without regard to the benefits that technology has on society, and on the economy as a whole. With knowledge of patent searching, we should be able to recognize these trolls.
To perform a thorough and complete patent search the searcher needs to be aware of ALL of the resources available to them. This can speed up the search but also make it more extensive and thorough.
Patent searching is a rather tedious process with many involved steps, but if we continue working hard we too can enjoy the fruits of our labor.
As in the game, patent searching is much like a maze. You often have to approach each search from several different ways to cover all the related, important information.
In order to find out whether a patent is unique or has prior art, you must determine its class and subclass and see what comes close to your discovery. In order to determine if you have caught a new species of fish, you must search first by genus and then by species. In each case, you may find something very similar, but not quite the same.
I chose a braided stream bed (this one’s in Alaska) because it represents the way I seem to go about patent searching. I’ll start with a destination in mind, but bits of sediment keep dropping out of the flow and forming new channels to explore until there are multiple relevant branches, some of which actually make it back to the main channel.
This is a piece of artwork titled “Complex ****.” This structure looks massive and complex at first, but once you have seen the structure long enough it still looks massive but is less complex. This is similar to the world of patents, because there are such a massive amount of them and they seem very complex, but when you learn more about them they become less complex, but there is still a massive amount.
Patenting seems to be about reaching the perfect height in uniqueness and coverage of the area, but where you are still successful in getting the patent through. Similar to the picture where you want to get a cool height, but still land and complete the move successfully.
The paperwork process can be overwhelming with the amount of prior art searching, proper documentation, and legal issues that are involved. Inventors may often feel like they are drowning in the strict rules and regulations enforced by the United States Patent Office.
My mother has always told me to be a sponge and absorb as much information as possible. After participating in this class I feel that there is no better source of information like patents. Patents are the newest and cutting age technology being used in genius ways. Patents contain an enormous amount of information that I'd like to absorb.
You must be patient and diligent when searching for patents. In a way you can think of searching for a patent like searching for a hidden image in an optical illusion picture. You have to keep trying, be patient and eventually you will get it. It can be tedious but the end result is rewarding.
We started out with just a foundation and general idea about patents and then with each successive class learned more and more about searching and how to do it correctly.
The picture of a tree farm represents the vast number of handouts we have received in the class, but it also reflects the efforts of the Patent Office to become nearly paperless throughout the patent application process. This movement decreases the demand for tree farms and has made the patent searching process infinitely easier, which is very much a two birds with one stone situation.
This is a Fibonacci sequence, occurring naturally in the center of a sunflower. To me this represents an entrepreneur’s steps toward ultimate success. Taking this class represents a step in the pattern of education leading us to the center the plant. Taking the proper steps lead us methodically to the goal.
This is a picture of a sign with a rather confusing message. All the different arrows on the sign represent all the different techniques you may take to get to the same patent. Even though there may be countless patents similar to the one you are searching for, the objective is to find the patent which best fits the one you were searching for.
This is a dime that was minted with a few errors (noted by the arrows). It is worth 500% its original value (50 cents). Patenting something is similar. Most of what you think of as a new idea is already out there - it's just like any other dime.

But sometimes, though rarely, your idea is original and there is nothing else out there that is anything like it.
Like this clutter of junk, you have to comb through all of the research databases to find what you are looking for. While searching for something you may stumble on that special piece of “junk” that can be very useful to you. “One man’s junk is another man’s treasure.”