

**U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office**



**Privacy Threshold Analysis  
for the  
Serco Patent Processing System (PPS)**

## U.S. Department of Commerce Privacy Threshold Analysis

### USPTO Serco Patent Processing System (PPS)

**Unique Project Identifier: [1858] PTOC-016-00**

**Introduction:** This Privacy Threshold Analysis (PTA) is a questionnaire to assist with determining if a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is necessary for this IT system. This PTA is primarily based from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) privacy guidance and the Department of Commerce (DOC) IT security/privacy policy. If questions arise or further guidance is needed in order to complete this PTA, please contact your Bureau Chief Privacy Officer (BCPO).

**Description of the information system and its purpose:** *Provide a general description of the information system in a way that a non-technical person can understand.*

The E-Government Act of 2002 defines “information system” by reference to the definition section of Title 44 of the United States Code. The following is a summary of the definition: “Information system” means a discrete set of information resources organized for the collection, processing, maintenance, use, sharing, dissemination, or disposition of information. See: 44. U.S.C. § 3502(8).

*(a) Whether it is a general support system, major application, or other type of system*

This system processes inbound electronic images of patent applications received by Serco Inc. from USPTO. Patent applications consist of electronic applications that conform to the application requirements as defined by USPTO.

The system consists of a variety of application review, research tools and data entry tools to facilitate the evaluation and classification of the application creating a series of US Patent Classification (USPC) system and Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system classification data elements that describe the application.

*(b) System location*

1450 Technology Drive Harrisonburg, VA 22801

*(c) Whether it is a standalone system or interconnects with other systems (identifying and describing any other systems to which it interconnects)*

Standalone System

*(d) The way the system operates to achieve the purpose(s) identified in Section 4 and (e) How information in the system is retrieved by the user*

The system consists of a variety of application review, research and data entry tools to facilitate the evaluation and classification of the application and the creation a series of US Patent Classification (USPC) system and Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system classification data elements that describe the application.

*(f) How information is transmitted to and from the system*

Serco PPS receives patent applications directly from the USPTO via SecureTransport.

*(g) Any information sharing conducted by the system*

Serco PPS does not share any information with other agencies, individuals, or organizations. The information provided by USPTO is used by Serco for authorized activities performed by its internal personnel only.

*(h) The specific programmatic authorities (statutes or Executive Orders) for collecting, maintaining, using, and disseminating the information.*

The PII and BII data is collected by the USPTO to enable identification of the inventory and facilitate the patent application process. It is provided to the Serco PPS so that classification activities can be performed on the collected patent application. The legal authority to collect PII and/or BII derives from 35 U.S.C. 1, 2, and 115; 5 U.S.C. 301.

*(i) The Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 199 security impact category for the system*

Moderate

**Questionnaire:**

1. What is the status of this information system?

- This is a new information system. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*
- This is an existing information system with changes that create new privacy risks. *Complete chart below, continue to answer questions, and complete certification.*

<b>Changes That Create New Privacy Risks (CTCNPR)</b>			
a. Conversions		d. Significant Merging	g. New Interagency Uses
b. Anonymous to Non-Anonymous		e. New Public Access	h. Internal Flow or Collection
c. Significant System Management Changes		f. Commercial Sources	i. Alteration in Character of Data
j. Other changes that create new privacy risks (specify):			

- This is an existing information system in which changes do not create new privacy risks, and there is not a SAOP approved Privacy Impact Assessment. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*
- This is an existing information system in which changes do not create new privacy risks, and there is a SAOP approved Privacy Impact Assessment (version 01-2015 or later). *Skip questions and complete certification.*

2. Is the IT system or its information used to support any activity which may raise privacy concerns?

NIST Special Publication 800-53 Revision 4, Appendix J, states “Organizations may also engage in activities that do not involve the collection and use of PII, but may nevertheless raise privacy concerns and associated risk. The privacy controls are equally applicable to those activities and can be used to analyze the privacy risk and mitigate such risk when necessary.” Examples include, but are not limited to, audio recordings, video surveillance, building entry readers, and electronic purchase transactions.

Yes. *Please describe the activities which may raise privacy concerns.*

No

3. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate business identifiable information (BII)?

As per DOC Privacy Policy: “For the purpose of this policy, business identifiable information consists of (a) information that is defined in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as “trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is]

privileged or confidential." (5 U.S.C.552(b)(4)). This information is exempt from automatic release under the (b)(4) FOIA exemption. "Commercial" is not confined to records that reveal basic commercial operations" but includes any records [or information] in which the submitter has a commercial interest" and can include information submitted by a nonprofit entity, or (b) commercial or other information that, although it may not be exempt from release under FOIA, is exempt from disclosure by law (e.g., 13 U.S.C.)."

Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates BII about: *(Check all that apply.)*

- Companies
- Other business entities

No, this IT system does not collect any BII.

#### 4. Personally Identifiable Information

4a. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate personally identifiable information (PII)?

As per OMB 07-16, Footnote 1: "The term 'personally identifiable information' refers to information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc... alone, or when combined with other personal or identifying information which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc..."

Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates PII about: *(Check all that apply.)*

- DOC employees
- Contractors working on behalf of DOC
- Members of the public

No, this IT system does not collect any PII.

***If the answer is "yes" to question 4a, please respond to the following questions.***

4b. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate PII other than user ID?

- Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates PII other than user ID.
- No, the user ID is the only PII collected, maintained, or disseminated by the IT system.

4c. Will the purpose for which the PII is collected, stored, used, processed, disclosed, or disseminated (context of use) cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level?

Examples of context of use include, but are not limited to, law enforcement investigations, administration of benefits, contagious disease treatments, etc.

- Yes, the context of use will cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level.
- No, the context of use will not cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level.

***If any of the answers to questions 2, 3, 4b, and/or 4c are “Yes,” a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) must be completed for the IT system. This PTA and the approved PIA must be a part of the IT system’s Assessment and Authorization Package.***

### CERTIFICATION

I certify the criteria implied by one or more of the questions above **apply** to the Serco Patent Processing System and as a consequence of this applicability, I will perform and document a PIA for this IT system.

I certify the criteria implied by the questions above **do not apply** to the Serco Patent Processing System and as a consequence of this non-applicability, a PIA for this IT system is not necessary.

Dave Bender

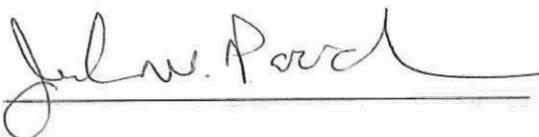
Name of System Owner (SO): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of SO: 

Date: 03/19/2019

John Pardun

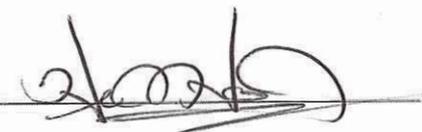
Name of Senior Acting, Information Security Officer (SISO): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of SISO: 

Date: 3-25-2019

Henry J. Holcombe

Name of Authorizing Official (AO) & Bureau Chief Privacy Officer (BCPO) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of AO & BCPO: 

Date: 01 APR '19

Maria Holtmann

Name of Authorizing Official (AO) or Designated Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of AO: 

Date: 4/8/19