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CEPIUG 2016 tool survey: A Patent Information Professional perspective

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1. Introduction

In October 2016, the "Confederacy of European Patent Information User Groups" (CEPIUG) [1] decided to conduct a survey on tools and databases used by Information Professionals across Europe. The aim was to assess the use of various tools and also with a perspective to develop future training courses in the patent information field.

This survey targeted individual users rather than vendors, i.e. those searching and analysing patent information as a profession. The idea of excluding vendors was to get the real picture of what is done on a daily basis and to review the actual experiences and tools used within the field rather than a flat overview of available systems. In addition, could the survey results might identify some unattended use of tools or practice, or even provide ideas of what is needed from a training perspective.

Optionally anonymous, the survey included a question about which national user group a respondent belongs to. This question was added to regionalise the outputs of the data gathered during the treatment of results. In all, 30% of CEPIUG user groups' members responded to the survey (a total of 263 responses) which represents a fair coverage from a wide cross section of industry interests.

2. Group affiliation

CEPIUG was founded in 2008 [2] with a vision to become a platform for cooperation for the Patent Information User Groups in Europe. The focus of the Confederacy is to target subjects and activities that are relevant to all member User Groups as well as for their respective individual members. The idea behind the Confederacy is to address common issues together rather than having them resolved by the individual member user groups, which would be a waste of valuable resources and potentially have minor impact.

At the time of tool survey launch, nine user groups were associated with CEPIUG:

AGM Arbeitsgruppe Elektronische Medien in der Patentinformation (DE)
AIDB Associazione Italiana Documentalisti Brevettuali (IT)
BEPIUG Belgian Patent Information users group (BE)
BPIP British Patent Information Professionals (UK)
CFIB Club Francophone d'Information Brevet (FR)
PATMG Patent & Trademark Group (UK), PIF Patent Information Forum (DK)
abrSIPIG Swedish usergroup (SE)
WON Werkgemeenschap Octrooi-informatie Nederland (NL)

The PING (Patentinformationsnutzergruppe-DE and German speaking countries) and an informal group of Spanish Information Professionals (now known as SPIP (Spanish Patent Information Professionals) also participated in the survey as CEPIUG observer groups.

Members of the PIUG and the PDG also participated in the survey, but neither of these user groups are part of the CEPIUG. The PIUG is a user group based in the United States but with members from around the world. The PDG is an organisation that represents the patent information interests of large corporations. As can be seen from Fig. 1, the

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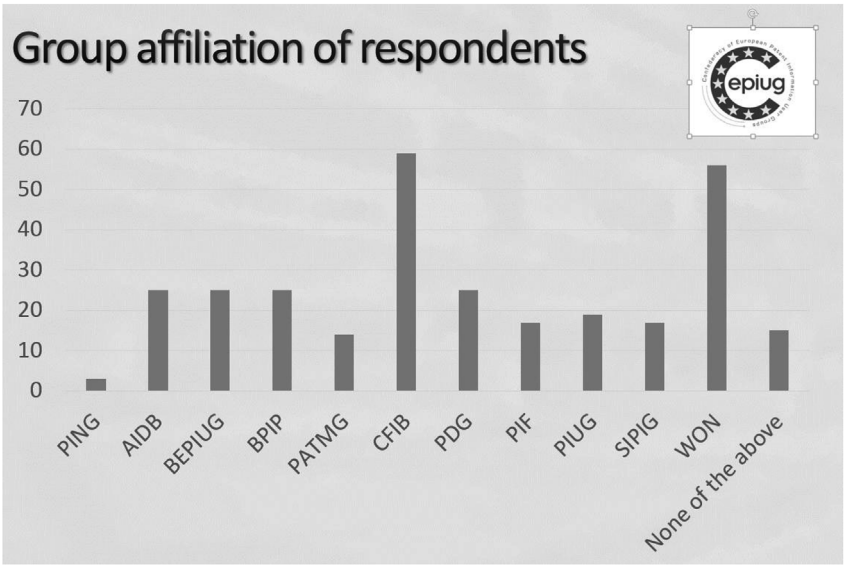

Fig. 1. ©Cepiug tool survey 2016.

survey respondents represented a wide European coverage in terms of location, but also in view of professional habits and procedures. Thus, the results constitute a rich and tangible set of data to analyse and draw observations from. Fig. 1 shows that the two user groups heading the count in terms of response to the survey, each with ~23% of the total individual respondents, were also in line with largest groups under CEPIUG umbrella, namely CFIB and WON.

Otherwise the remaining responses were fairly distributed between other user groups. The results of the survey revealed that quite a number of individual Patent Information Professionals connected to the CEPIUG are members of more than one user group. The chart in Fig. 2 discloses more specifically the working country of the 91 respondents who disclosed their country of origin.

The breadth of geographical coverage and the number of respondents to the survey as shown in Figs. 1 and 2 reflect the widely used networking, awareness and sharing opportunities offered within the patent information community. This strength is a fundamental characteristic of our job profile.

2.1. Main activity of respondents

From the pie chart distribution shown in Fig. 3 it can be seen that the traditional sectors with Chemistry, Automotive and Pharma represent about half of the respondents while Electronics, Biotech, Energy and Information Science cover another quarter. Therefore, it should be noted that the results of this tool survey may contain a certain bias towards chemical or mechanical fields, both requiring however similar databases and systems. The remaining quarter covers a variety of technology sectors with quite an even distribution, including Food, Health and Cosmetic/Personal Care, Agriculture, Metallurgy, Information Technology/Information Communication Technology, and Packaging.

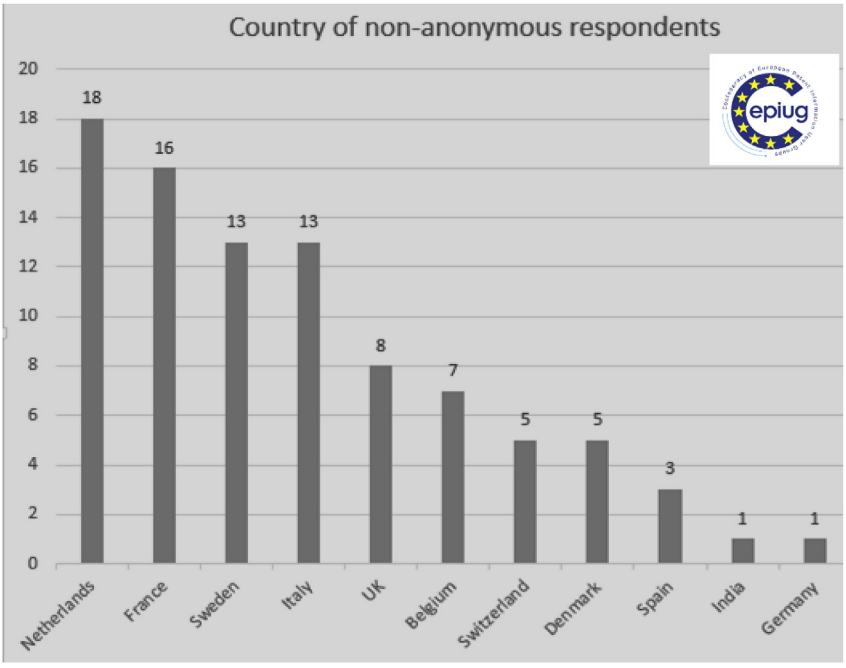

Fig. 2. ©Cepiug tool survey 2016.

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