

INSURANCE IP BULLETIN

An Information Bulletin on Intellectual Property activities in the insurance industry

A Publication of - Tom Bakos Consulting, Inc. and Markets, Patents and Alliances, LLC

Farewell

We have published 51 issues of the Insurance IP Bulletin beginning in June, 2004 through October, 2012 – just about 9 years. We began with an idea to provide to the insurance industry (and the broader financial services areas) information about how patents – and, in particular – business method patents were being or could be used to protect intellectual property.

Our lead Feature Article in our first issue was written by our friend Frank Cuypers, at the time IP Head, Group Intellectual Property, Swiss Re Zurich. His article was based on a Bests Review article, circa 2004, which concluded: “There are relatively few insurance companies that are product innovators – most are content to go along copying those few companies.” Well, that was what everyone thought but that kind of thinking was going to bring problems to those whose business plan was based on going with the flow. Our little Bulletin was aimed at pointing out that IP, even insurance IP, was valuable and worth protecting. And, as we pointed out through the years, insurers and individuals were protection their innovations.

When we began publishing in June, 2004 there were 393 U.S. patent applications published in class 705/004 – the principle category to which insurance patents are assigned by the USPTO. Only 209 insurance patents had been issued since 1978.

In October, 2012 the number of published insurance patent applications had grown to 2,183 with over 200 published in each of the last five years – not big in the overall scheme of things but huge for the insurance industry segment.

By October, 2012 1,341 insurance (i.e. class 705/004) patents had been issued – nearly 300 in each of the last three years – as many as had been issued in the entire period 1978 – 2004, the year we began the Bulletin. You might say our work is done.

We have covered a lot of territory in our efforts to bring useful information on the importance of patents in the insurance industry and how they work to our readership of about 670. We’ve gone from basic introductions to the big changes now being brought by the America Invents Act signed into law in September, 2011 – the biggest change to the U.S. patent system since 1952. We hope that you all have learned something from our work. The rigor required to actually write about what we were doing certainly gave both of us a better perspective on the subject matter.

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However, we are both independent, sole proprietors of businesses that have begun to demand more and more of our time and keeping up with the routine of producing a new issue of the Insurance IP Bulletin even every two months and maintaining its quality has become difficult. Therefore, we have decided to stop publication on a routine, scheduled basis.

We may from time to time come across something that we believe our loyal readers may find of interest. If so, we will send it along. But, until then, farewell. We both remain active in the industry – one as patent agent extraordinaire specializing in business method patents, the other as a consulting actuary in non-traditional fields, primarily. We, of course, welcome calls or emails from anyone needing our help.

Thanks,

Tom Bakos & Mark Nowotarski