

The goal of this assignment is to get practice in describing novel improvements to existing technology, and then searching for patents related to the novel idea. The goal of the first part of the assignment – describing of a novel improvement – is to provide a calibration of your expectations for what *might* be patentable by comparing a prescribed novel idea to what has already been patented.

1. (10 points) Choose *one* of the following hypothetical inventions
 - A clipboard with built-in biosensors, GPS and cellular communications for mobile medical diagnosis.
 - An auto-dimming headlight control system for automobiles that integrates real-time weather information.
 - A jacket that uses body heat to provide power to a built-in ventilation system.

Describe the novel aspect of the invention in two to four sentences. “Novel” means “new, not known before”, and is more specific than the brief descriptions included above. In other words, you need to expand upon one of the basic ideas listed above. You can use diagrams or photographs to assist in your explanations (neat hand-drawn sketches are OK), but graphical representations are not strictly necessary. *Do not* consult the uspto.gov web site, or other source of patent documents until you have completed part 1 of the assignment. Your description, including drawings should easily fit on one side of a sheet of paper.
2. (20 points) *Only after* defining the novelty of the invention, visit the uspto.gov to find at least 5 patents that are relevant to the invention.
 - a. First, list at least 5 keywords to describe the invention. Include this list in the document you turn in for this assignment
 - b. Identify the primary classification in the Classification Schedule at uspto.gov. Scanning the list at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/classification/selectnumwithtitle.htm> will help
 - c. List the Patent number, title and date issued. Include a cover page in your report by copying the first page of the patent document to the end of your word-processed document.
3. (20 points) Write a three to ten sentence assessment of whether your novel invention is similar to any of the patents you have found. Identify the key differences and any similarities.

See over for Supplemental References.

Supplemental references.

The following web sites will be helpful in your patent search and in skimming the patent for relevant information.

“How to Conduct a Preliminary U.S. Patent Search”, US Patent and Trademark Office
<http://www.uspto.gov/video/cbt/ptrcsearching/>

University of Texas Libraries *Guide to Patent Searching*:
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/engin/patent-tutorial/tutorial/pattut.html>

Dan Shapiro’s *How to read a patent in 60 seconds*:
<http://www.danshapiro.com/blog/2010/09/how-to-read-a-patent-in-60-second/>
Hint: skip to the claims