Preface to third edition

In the brief space of five years since the production of the second edition, the pace of change in patent information has barely slackened. Even without feedback from reviewers, it became evident a short time after the second edition was printed, that revision would be needed given the extraordinary speed of development of patent information in East Asia, especially in China. As other countries have become more prominent in the world marketplace, they too have improved their IP regime in order to offer comparative levels of protection for foreign manufacturers seeking to set up a new manufacturing base.

To address this, the current edition has concentrated new material on the so-called BRIC countries and the prominence of the PCT system. New chapters have also been included on the importance of the non-patent literature and on sources for establishing the legal status of a patent within a specific jurisdiction. The remaining chapters have been updated to take account of new procedures which affect the documentation seen by the searcher, as well as multiple changes in sources and web-page addresses – the patent information community is no stranger to the “broken link”!

As with the second edition, many individuals have contributed to the continual flow of snippets of information which prove so challenging to collate into a coherent whole. I would particularly like to recognise the technical staff at many of the online services who have provided details of their content, the EPO’s Asian patent information team in Vienna, the Business & IP Centre staff at the British Library, and the speakers from national patent offices who have presented at the PIUG annual meeting over the last several years. Thank you all for your input and comments. I hope that the resulting text is a fair reflection of the enormous variety and complexity of patent databases and the work of the patent searcher in patent offices, legal practice or industry.

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