A **patent** is an exclusive right granted for an invention (a product or process that provides a new way of doing something, or offers a new technical solution to a problem).

**Why are patents important?**

Patents legally identify inventions and their owners/creators. Patents can:

- Prevent someone from appropriating your idea.
- Ensure that your idea is original (guarantee that no one else has already invented it).
- Provide useful information not available in traditional scholarly literature.

**Finding Patents**

The Sexton Library does not collect patents, but information about accessing electronic formats can be found in the **Patents** subject guide.

On the Libraries home page ([http://libraries.dal.ca/](http://libraries.dal.ca/)), select **Subject Guides** from the tabbed menu, and type **patents** in the search box.

**Canadian Patents**

The **Canadian Patent Database** (1869–present) provides access to patent information and images for claims, descriptions, and drawings dating back to 1920. Full text searching is available for patents filed after 1978.


The **Library & Archives Canada** database (1869-1919) provides access to nearly 200,000 patents registered in Canada, as well as their related images.

[http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/patents/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/patents/index-e.html)

**American Patents**

Patents are now integrated into regular Google searches. **Google Patents** (1790–present) are updated weekly from USPTO data.

Full text and related images are available for all patents.
American Patents (continued)

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) database provides access to full text patents and images, as well as helpful definitions.

http://www.uspto.gov/patent

International Patents

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) database provides access to 57 million patent documents.

Information is gathered from patent offices in 184 countries worldwide. A full list of participants is available.

https://patentscope.wipo.int/search/en/search.jsf

The Lens is an international open science database that provides access to over 81 million full text patents and datasets from the European Patent Office's DocDB, UPSTO, and the WIPO PCT.

Searching and translation are available in Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

http://lens.org/lens/

The European Patent Office operates the Espacenet database, which provides free access to over 90 million patents from more than 90 countries.

Options for search include basic, advanced, and classification searching.


Vocabulary Terms

Information about patents is often written in specific, technical language, which the following websites explain:

University of Toronto http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=250474&p=1670779


More Information

Visit your subject guide or contact a librarian at:

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