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Welcome

The AOP CONNECT User Guide walks you through our research crowdsourcing process and the AOP CONNECT Platform. Familiarize yourself with the rules and guidelines that apply to your participation in our Studies. This includes basic tutorials, tips, knowledge and skills related to patent research.

Check our FAQ portal if you have any further questions. Interact with your fellow Researchers on our Forum to discuss topics about patent research. Finally, contact us if you need further information.

Studies

In essence, an RWS Study is a request for information. Researchers submit the requested information to a Study for a chance to earn the stated Reward.

The information you will submit varies depending on the type of research the Study requires. Whether it is prior art related to a particular patent or patent claims mapping to a technology standard, the required information is described fully in the Study page. Researchers may read the full Research Requirements and submit their responses through the Study page.

Getting Started

Welcome to the online, proprietary platform of RWS. Your participation in our Studies is an affirmation of your agreement to these policies and to our terms and conditions as set in the following:

• Researcher Agreement
• Terms of Use
• Privacy Policy

Review the Researcher Agreement and Terms of Use. Read the sections of this site to familiarize yourself with our policies and platform.

When you register as a Researcher with RWS, we welcome you to our global community of Researchers through an online registration process. The registration process walks you through the creation of an account and provides valuable information to get you started. Now that you've created an account, we invite you to take these next steps before participating in our Studies:

Complete your Researcher Profile. The profile allows you to provide more information about your education background, work experience, and areas of expertise. We will use the information to let you know about Studies that match your skills. We will also use the profile information to invite Researchers to participate in Invitation Only Studies as Experts.
Complete the Payment Info tab in your account to select your payment method. Make sure that your Payment Info is properly and completely filled out and updated before you start working on a Study.

How It Works

Though the types of available Studies and research may vary, the following process applies to every Study:

Select a Study

Once you have confirmed your account, you are free to choose a Study that suits your interests and availability. You may select any active Study on our Study List Page. If you wish to work on multiple Studies at a time, you are welcome to do so. Participation in our public Studies is open to all confirmed Researchers.

Conduct Research

Read the description of your chosen Study to know its requirements. Pay close attention to the Research Requirements that apply to the information being requested. Click on the “Qualify” button to complete the Eligibility Questionnaire for the Study. Once you have qualified and are ready to make a submission, click on the Respond button on the Study page to launch the response form. For each Study, you are only expected to submit information that matches the Research Requirements. For example, in a prior art search, you may only submit a copy of the prior art and basic information as prompted by the response form. No additional report or analysis will be accepted.

Monitor Your Responses

Check your Activity Dashboard to view the feedback regarding your responses. The Review Team may contact you through our Message Center to request more information about your response(s). You may also receive additional information in the form of leads. Use the feedback and information you receive to make additional responses, if needed.

Check the Study Results

The results of the Study are typically announced within a few of weeks after the Study’s Expiration Date. You will receive a notification if you have been selected to receive a Reward for your participation in the Study. You may monitor the status of your Reward payments through the Payment History tab. To get to this tab, go to your First Name dropdown at the top right of the page and Click Payment History or the tab available on My Account, Profile or Payment Info.

The following sections of the Researcher Manual will provide more details about the process above.
Research Types

As a Researcher, it is important to understand the purpose and goal of the research. The nature of the information we are seeking in a given Study dictates the type of research that is required. As such, each Study type and subject matter demands a different approach. These variables will impact how you read the Study and prepare your search.

Prior Art Search

A majority of the Studies posted require a Researcher to conduct a prior art search. This type of research aims to find prior art or evidence that may suggest that a given invention or technology was already known and publicly available by a given date.

Prior art refers to the entire body of public information that can potentially affect a patent’s validity. It is documented evidence that may show that an invention or technology already existed before a certain date of interest. Prior art searches require Researchers to find literature such as patents, journal articles, and other publications that disclose specific technical elements by a set date.

Prior art searches appearing on our site most commonly include Validity or Patentability-type Studies but may include others as well.

Validity

A validity search is a prior art search involving a patent that has already been issued. Its goal is to determine whether the patent is valid. It aims to uncover any prior art that may prove that the patented technology already existed before the patent was filed. Since patents are meant to grant rights to the first inventor of an idea, a patent is valid only if it covers a technology that was not previously known or available.

Understanding the claims of the patent is crucial in a validity search. The claims describe the individual elements of the technology disclosed in the patent. For Studies on AOP Connect™, these elements are included in the Research Requirements. A Researcher needs to find these elements in literature publicly available on or before the given Latest Date for Responses (LDR). Your responses must describe these elements in as much detail as possible.

Take the time to educate yourself about the Study before submitting responses to it. Some of your responses may contain key words that appear to meet all of the Study Requirements. However, contextually they are irrelevant.

Where do you find context for the Study Requirements? The easiest place to start is to read and understand the description provided on the Study Page and the background of the Study Patent itself to provide an understanding of the alleged point of novelty/focus point of the Study Patent. Next, is to conduct a background search on the subject technology area in Wikipedia or Google Scholar. Or, pull the subject patent file history from the granting patent office and review the prosecution history.
Patentability

A patentability search is a prior art search involving technical disclosures instead of an issued patent. Its goal is to determine whether the technical disclosures may be included in a patent application. Patentability searches are generally performed either during or before the patent application stage to determine whether or not a given technology may be patented.

Understanding the key elements of the technical disclosures is important in a patentability search. These elements describe the main novel idea that may be patented. A Researcher seeks to find these elements in literature that may demonstrate how the idea is already applied to a variety of industries and/or technologies.

State of the Art

A State of the Art Search aims to ascertain what is already known in a given field. Given a broad description of a technology, a state of the art search gathers literature that provides specific details about the latest developments in that field.

The general description of the field or technology is the Researcher’s starting point in a state of the art search. The description will help you come up with a list of keywords, synonyms, adjacent technologies, inventors, companies, institutes, and other industry leaders that will help facilitate your search.

Infringement

Evidence of Use (EoU) Research

Infringement of a patent generally means the unauthorized making, using, offering for sale or selling a patented invention. An Evidence of Use Study helps patent owners identify potentially infringing products. It is not a prior art search. Instead, the goal of the search is to find products that are already on the market, being advertised, or being prepared for distribution or sale.

Thus, the relevant references for an EoU Study include product brochures, user guides, manuals, datasheets, etc. that describe actual products. Academic papers and issued patents that merely discuss prototypes or models are not of interest in this type of Study.

Infringement is determined by the claims of the patent. Therefore, an EoU Study will require mapping each and every one of the claim elements, which will be set out in the Study Requirements, to an element of the product or method described in the response you submit.

Trademark

Unlike patents, a trademark may still be recognized even if it is not registered. Trademark rights may be established by the use of the mark for a specific product in a given geographic area. Since the trademark is not registered, searching government databases or registers for trademarks will not yield results. As such, a common law trademark search requires a
Researcher to find publicly available information (e.g. actual product, advertisements, product information or collateral, newspaper or magazine article, etc.) that demonstrates that the mark was used for a specific product in a given geographic area at a particular time. It's important to note that RWS does not perform trademark clearance studies.

**Study Types**

RWS offers a wide variety of Studies. While the types of these Studies are designed to address the different needs of our Clients, they are also structured to suit the diverse preferences of Researchers regarding the Research Type, level of participation, and Reward amount.

**CrowdSearch**

CrowdSearch (CS) Studies are the most common prior art search Study available. These Studies are open to all Researchers and typically have the largest Rewards.

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark ([More Info](#))
- **Community Participation**: Public – Open to all Researchers
- **Study Duration**: Typically, five weeks but can vary from as short as three to as long as eight weeks
- **Reward**: Varies ([More Info](#))

**CrowdSearch Mini**

CrowdSearch Mini (CS Mini) Studies are small search contests where selected Researchers compete for the stated Reward. Given the smaller contest format, this Study type offer a higher chance of winning Rewards to Researchers who consistently perform well in our Studies.

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark ([More Info](#))
- **Community Participation**: Private – Selected Researchers are invited, and the first ten to accept the invite compete. (Same selection criteria as Experts)
- **Study Duration**: Typically, three weeks
- **Reward**: For a $2,000 Study – One Winner of $1,600 and $20 each for up to 20 In-Scope responses

**ExpertSearch**

ExpertSearch (ES) Studies are in-depth searches where selected Researchers, known as Experts, earn guaranteed Rewards for their high-quality research. Experts are selected and invited to participate based on their performance in previous Studies and/or their qualifications as Study Experts. Each Expert is expected to complete five to ten hours of in-depth research. Learn more about the [Study Expert Program](#).

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark ([More Info](#))
- **Community Participation**: Private – Two or four selected Researchers ([Experts](#))
- **Study Duration**: Ten business days
- **Reward**: $300 guaranteed Reward per Researcher and additional $400 (total of $700) for one or two Winners
FlashSearch

FlashSearch (FS) Studies are short, high-level searches where a subset of the Community can compete for smaller Rewards within a shorter timeframe. Researchers are selected and invited to participate based on their performance in previous Studies. Each Researcher is expected to complete 30 minutes to two hours of high-level research.

- **Type of Research:** Prior Art (More Info)
- **Community Participation:** Private – Ten Researchers
- **Study Duration:** Within 48 hours from when each Researcher accepts the invitation to participate
- **Reward:** Four out of the ten participants win $100 each.

Evidence of Use (EoU) Studies

Evidence of Use (EoU) studies ask Researchers to match the elements of a patent claim to either a technology standard or to a product. Like CS Studies, this Study type is open to all Researchers. For more information about participating in EoU, please refer to this section.

- **Type of Research:** Evidence of Use (More Info)
- **Community Participation:** Public – Open to all Researchers
- **Study Duration:** Varies
- **Reward:** Typically, $500 for the Winner of a Patent-to-Product Claims Mapping (can be as many as 4 winners) or $1,000 for the Winner of a Patent-to-Standards Claims Mapping.

Parts of a Study

Study Page

The Study page provides the details of the research request. It includes information about the subject of the Study (e.g. patent or technology area), the description of the information we are requesting (e.g. prior art), and other guidelines specific to the Study. Keep these details in mind at all stages of your research.

Study Details

The following details are provided at the top of each Study page:

- **Study Title** – The Study Title identifies the subject of the Study.
- **Study ID** – The Study ID is a unique number used to identify the Study on the site. Aside from the top of the Study page, you may also see the Study ID in the URL.
- **Category** – The Category is the general technology area of the Study. You may use this to find other related Studies.
- **Research Type** – The Research Type is the general form of research the Study requires. Use this to understand the general goal of the Study. (More Info)
- **Expiration Date** – The Expiration Date is the deadline for responses. The Study will accept responses until 12 noon ET (United States) on the indicated Expiration Date.
- **Rewards Available** – Click on the Reward amount to see how the Reward will be distributed.
• **Qualify** – Click on the Qualify button to complete the Eligibility Questionnaire for the Study. For some Studies, the full Study description is available only to qualified Researchers.
• **Respond** – Click on the Respond button to make a response. The Respond button is enabled once you have qualified for the Study.

**Research Requirements**

The Research Requirements are presented in outline form to establish the relationship of the elements to each other. An icon next to each element indicates if it is a priority, conditional, or optional element. To facilitate the review of your response, you will be asked to highlight the specific sections of the text that correspond to the elements of the Research Requirements.

• A priority element has a ★ black star next to it. Ideally, all priority elements are present in your response. While a response may still be In-Scope even if it does not cover all the Priority elements, it will have a higher chance of winning the Reward if it covers most, if not all the Priority elements.
• A conditional element has a ☆ white star next to it. Refer to the parent requirement of the conditional element to understand when this element is required. For example, a parent requirement may ask for two out of six listed elements. In this case, all six elements under the parent are marked with white star ☆, and you have to meet at least two to fulfill the requirement.
• An optional element has an ✡ eight-pointed asterisk next to it. Optional elements are not required to be present in your response. The Client, however, prefers to see these elements if they are present.

**Special Instructions**

A Study may have special instructions based on the type of research required. Special instructions will be provided in the Study page as needed.

**Study Status**

**Active**

An Active Study accepts responses. A Study is Active and appears on the Active Studies tab until 12 noon (ET United States) of the indicated Expiration Date. The Qualify button is enabled on the page of an Active Study if the Researcher has yet to fill out the Eligibility Questionnaire. If the Researcher has qualified, the Respond button will be enabled.

**Final Review**

A Study that is under Final Review no longer accepts responses. A Study is moved from the Active tab to Final Review (Completed tab) at 12 noon (ET US) of the Expiration Date. The Review Team evaluates the responses of a Study under Final Review to determine the Winners. The Study results are announced shortly thereafter, typically within a couple of weeks after the Expiration Date.
Completed
The results of the Study are announced when the Study is Completed. The Study is updated to show the usernames of the winning Researchers.

Participating in a Study
Once you have found information that matches the Research Requirements, you are ready to make a response. Responding to a Study is straightforward, but there are some important points to remember to improve your chances of earning the Reward.

Click on the Qualify button to answer the Eligibility Questionnaire for the Study. Once you have qualified, click the Respond button to make a response. The response form will guide you in providing the required information related to your response. You have completed your response once you have entered the necessary information and uploaded the related file.

The Review Team evaluates and ranks a response based on how well it matches the Research Requirements. Use the feedback the Review Team provides to fine-tune the focus of your research.

Response Process
Eligibility Questionnaire
Prior to your first response to a Study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine your eligibility to participate. This questionnaire helps to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest that may prevent you from participating in the Study. You need to complete this questionnaire only once for each Study. To complete the questionnaire, please click on the Qualify button.

Click Qualify and complete the questionnaire immediately if the Study page states that the full description is available only to qualified Researchers. For some Studies, additional information is provided to Researchers who have qualified to participate. Leads, if any, are also displayed on the Study page for Researchers who have completed the questionnaire.

Once you have completed the Eligibility Questionnaire, you may click on the Respond button to make a response. Clicking the Respond button on the Study page activates the form that will guide you as you complete your response.

Bibliographic Information
The initial step for each response is to enter the related bibliographic information. You will be asked to specify the document type of your response. The succeeding fields will depend on the document type you have selected.
• **Patents** – You will be asked to enter the patent number using the specified format. For US, European and WIPO/PCT patents, entering the patent number in the correct format automatically populates the information for the patent title, inventors, and relevant dates (if found). For other patents, you will be asked to enter the information in the fields provided.

• **Non-Patent Literature (NPL)** – For certain types of NPL, you will be asked to search by ISBN, DOI (Digital Object Identifier, a unique code that identifies an electronic document), or by title and author. If the search returns a match, the system will automatically enter the related information in the proper fields. Otherwise, you will be asked to provide the relevant information. When applicable, the response must meet the requirement for the Latest Date for Responses (LDR). Please refer to the section on [Response Dates](#) for more information.

**Document Upload**

For some patent types, providing the bibliographic information will pull a copy of the document from our database. For such cases, you will not be asked to upload a document. For most submissions, you will be asked to upload a primary document after providing the bibliographic information. Make sure that the file you upload includes the full text of the document, rather than the abstract. The file must not have any identifying information (e.g. your name) or other marks or highlights not part of the actual text of the document. The copy of the document must clearly indicate the relevant date, as described in the section on [Response Dates](#).

If your primary document is in a language other than English, you will also be asked to upload a translation in the field provided.

No additional explanations, reports, or analyses will be accepted as part of the response. The only files you may upload are the copy of the document itself and an English translation, if applicable.

Clicking the Proceed button will save the bibliographic information and upload the file(s) you entered in the fields provided. The timestamp for your response will be based on when you click the Proceed button.

**Submitting a Response**

To submit a response, a Researcher follows these steps:

• Upon qualifying for the Study, enter the details in the response form as shown above. Enter the title and select the applicable Mapping Type. Upload a copy of the standard for a Standard Map or the product literature for a Product Map. Click Submit to proceed.

• Use the [highlighting tool](#) to relate each element of at least one independent claim of the given patent to the relevant section of the standard or product literature. Note that mapping more than one independent claim is encouraged and can increase the value of your response and your chance of winning the Reward.
Response Dates

Earliest Accepted Date

For a response to be accepted, the response you submit must be published/available on or after the Earliest Date for Responses (EDR). This date is important in Evidence of Use Studies when a client is looking for products that infringe an issued patent, in which case, the published/available date of the infringing product must be after the patent was issued.

Latest Date for Responses

For a response to be accepted, the document must be dated on or before the Latest Date for Responses (LDR). The relevant date depends on the type of response.

For non-patent literature, the relevant date is the publication date.

For patents, the relevant date may vary depending on the requirements of the search and the needs of the client. The relevant date for each patent type may be one of these three dates:

- **Filing Date** – This is the date when the application for the patent was filed.
- **Publication Date** – This is the date when the patent document was first made available to the public.
- **Priority Date** – This is the earliest date to which a patent can claim priority. For example, this may be the filing date of a provisional application on which the patent is based or the filing date of a parent application for a patent that is a continuation.

Please refer to the Study page to see the relevant date corresponding to each type of patent
Preferred Latest Date

In a few Studies, there is a Preferred Latest Date for Responses (PLDR) that is earlier than the LDR. We will accept responses dated after this PLDR, as long as they are still dated on or before the LDR. You have a higher chance of winning the Reward, however, if you submit an In-Scope document that is dated on or before the PLDR.

Response Dates for NPL

Monthly periodicals and some other NPL do not provide exact publication dates. For such documents, you may select “unknown” in the corresponding date field(s) of the response form if the day and/or month is not provided. When “unknown” is selected for the day or the month, the system will assign the first day or the month by default. The Review Team reserves the right to validate this date on a case-by-case basis.

Before submitting NPL, please make sure that the document in its original form clearly shows the publication date. Please do not alter or modify the document by typing the publication date onto the document.

Ways to provide proof of the publication date:
• The publication date is indicated in the document in its unaltered form.
• The submitted PDF file includes the original document merged with a screen shot or additional page showing the bibliographic information or copyright page with the publication date.
• Typing the date directly onto the document is NOT an acceptable way of providing proof of the publication date.
• Providing only a URL of a webpage is also NOT an acceptable way of providing proof of the publication date for any prior art response. Instead of (or in addition to) providing the URL, supplement the document with a screen shot or an additional page that shows the section of the webpage that includes the publication date.
• If the prior art response is itself a webpage, please provide a PDF copy of the webpage AND the URL. As in other document types, the publication date must be indicated in the PDF copy. If the publication date is not included in the original form of the webpage, you may use the Wayback Machine to authenticate the date. In addition to providing the relevant Way Back Machine URL in the field provided in the response form, supplement the PDF copy with a screen shot or an additional page that shows the relevant Way Back Machine page.

Sources to verify the publication date:
• The document in its original/unaltered form
• DOI of the document
• Bibliographic information on a database
• Wayback Machine (for webpages only, as described above)
• Dates from search engine results will NOT be accepted
• The publication date is always required even if the Study has no LDR requirement
Response Highlights

Accurately Highlight Responses

Unless otherwise stated in the Study, you will be asked to highlight the sections of the document that best match the Research Requirements. This is your opportunity to indicate why you think the response is relevant to the Study. Matching each Research Requirement to the related text or section of the document allows you to confirm that your response has the elements needed to be evaluated as In-Scope.

Proper highlights also allow us to evaluate responses quickly and accurately. Responses will be reviewed much faster if the Review Team does not need to look for each element in every submission because the relevant sections have already been properly cited.

How to Highlight Responses

The AOP Connect™ highlighting tool allows a Researcher to match the relevant section of the response to the corresponding Research Requirements. Upon clicking the Proceed button in the response form (as described in the Response Process), you have 120 minutes (two hours) to complete your response highlights. If you send your response less than two hours before the Study expires, you will only have until 12 noon ET US of the Expiration Date to complete the highlights. Edits to the highlights are not allowed after the allotted time.

To view your responses to a Study, please follow the My Responses link for each Study through the My Studies page, listed under Actions. For each response, the Highlights column in the table will provide a link to view your highlights. You may edit your highlights through the link within the allotted time.

Adding a Highlight:

- **Text** – Select the text you wish to highlight using the text selection tool. Choose the element(s) corresponding to the highlight. Click Save. If the text cannot be selected, switch to the area selection tool.
  - Click here for a demo

- **Area** – Select the area selection tool from the highlighter menu, then click and drag to create an area highlight. Choose the element(s) corresponding to the highlight. Click Save. Area selection is enabled after two unsuccessful attempts to select text in a PDF. This tool is ideal for non-text PDFs and images.
  - Click here for a demo

Once you have added the highlight, the corresponding element of the Research Requirements in the right panel will also be highlighted. This will allow you to see which elements are not yet covered by your highlights. Please provide highlights for as many Priority elements as possible. While a response may still be In-Scope even if it does not cover all the Priority elements, it will have a higher chance of winning the Reward if it covers most, if not all the Priority elements.

For more information about Priority, Conditional, and Optional elements, please refer to the Research Requirements section of the Parts of a Study page.
Reviewing and Editing Highlights:
• Click the icon corresponding to the element in the right panel to see the highlight(s) for that requirement. Hover above a highlight and click on the pencil icon to edit or the X to delete.

Additional Highlights:
• If available, use the Additional Highlights field in the right panel as instructed in the Study.

Highlighting Tips
• Precision is key. While the full document may be relevant, please focus only on the sections that directly match each element of the Research Requirements. Do not highlight the full document. Be as specific as possible.
• Be selective. The full document may have several sections that are related to the same Research Requirement. You do not need to highlight all if one or two will be enough to demonstrate that the Research Requirement is indeed present in the document.
• A 1:1 match is ideal. You may relate a highlight to multiple Research Requirements, but we prefer that you relate one highlight to only one element. If a section or block of text is related to multiple elements, we suggest that you break down the highlights, so that each is matched to the most closely related element. Do not associate a highlight with all the Research Requirements.
• Ask RWS Support. Do not resubmit the same document if you encounter a technical issue with the highlighting tool. Instead, send us an email to notify us about the issue. Include as many details as possible (for example, the Study number, the Response ID of the submission, any error message that is displayed, and the web browser you are using). Please note that we may not open the response for highlights once it has already been reviewed.

Evaluation of Response Highlights
Accurately highlighting your submission is critical. Simply using CNTRL-F to locate keywords is generally insufficient. Highlighting is intended to provide reviewers and clients with a shortcut to a specific passage relevant to the research requirement. Random, inaccurate or excessive highlights will not be accepted. In either instance, YOU WILL NOT WIN AN AWARD. Whether the Research Requirements is “required” or “optional”, it is far better to leave a “required” Research Requirement blank rather than highlight erroneous passages. Recall that the rules of every study require accurate highlighting. Accordingly, should you submit the best reference but highlighted the document unacceptably, we will award prize money you otherwise would have won to the second best reference.

The goal is to help the attorney viewing the document to quickly determine whether the reference is of interest. Once all of the documents are identified, the attorney will then review each document in detail while preparing the case. Accordingly, highlighting large sections of text is nearly as useless as providing no highlighting whatsoever. Be judicious. Optimally, you’ll highlight no more than a sentence or two for any instance of a Research Requirement.

The highlights for Accepted responses will be evaluated as follows:
• **Acceptable** – The highlights are accurate.
• **Unacceptable** – The highlights are inaccurate or misleading. They do not demonstrate the Researcher’s effort to provide useful highlights. The response is not eligible for the Reward.
Response Limits

Response limits are in place to help you focus on the most relevant information. With these limits, we encourage you to send only the responses that best match the Research Requirements. By being selective about your responses, you improve your chances of earning the Reward. In turn, we are able to offer you timely feedback while providing our clients the highest quality information submitted by the Community.

Limit Details

Each Researcher starts with a default limit stated in Your Scorecard. You may be allowed additional responses based on the quality of your work in the Study or the availability of leads. Your response limit for a Study is shown in the response form when you click on the Respond button.

New Researcher Response Limits

Each new Researcher has a default limit of three (3) responses per Study. This is the default limit for a Researcher whose total number of responses to all Studies is less than 25.

Response Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-Scope %</th>
<th>Default Limit</th>
<th>In-Scope Bonus</th>
<th>Lead Bonus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above 40%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-40%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 15%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Researcher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are a Researcher whose total number of responses to all Studies is at least 25, your default limit will be based on the quality of your most recent 50 responses. As shown on the table, your In-Scope Percentage (i.e. the percentage of rank 3, 4, or 5 responses among your most recent 50) corresponds to a given default limit. A Researcher who consistently performs well in our Studies is therefore rewarded with a higher default limit. By making more In-Scope responses, you have the opportunity to increase your default limit.

• **Incomplete** – The highlights are useful but missed some relevant sections. The response, however, is still eligible for the Reward.

Below are some examples of highlights that may be considered as “Unacceptable”:
• The first page of a patent or the title page of NPL
• A section header with no relevant information
• Highlights that cover all the pages of a document
In-Scope and Lead Bonuses

Additional responses may be allowed if one of your responses is In-Scope or if a lead is available. Every In-Scope response earns a certain number of additional responses to the same Study, as shown on the table. Every lead we provide earns one additional response for all Researchers who have already participated in the Study.

In-Scope Percentage

The In-Scope percentage is a Researcher’s most important performance indicator. It determines a Researcher’s eligibility for Rewards and response limit. To meet the in-scope criteria, the following rules apply:

- Responses with Ranks 3, 4 and 5
- Responses must be reviewed (i.e. “Accepted” or “Declined” status)
- Excludes all duplicate responses
- Excludes any Expert responses (i.e. any Study where the researcher is assigned as a Study Expert)
- Excludes any responses on Evidence of Use (product) Studies

In calculating your In-Scope percentage, we consider the most recent 50 reviewed responses (i.e. “Accepted” or “Declined” status) that are not duplicates (i.e. marked as “New” in the Details column). Please note that we exclude any responses on Claim Mapping Studies and Studies where you accepted an invite in order to participate (i.e. CrowdSearch Mini, ExpertSearch, and FlashSearch).

To calculate your In-Scope percentage, divide the number of In-Scope responses by 50. (If you have fewer than 50 responses, use the number of responses that meet the criteria described above.)

Response Cap

Each Researcher is allowed up to a maximum of 25 responses per Study, including any In-Scope or lead bonuses earned beyond the default response limit. Once this response cap is reached, an In-Scope response will no longer earn additional response slots. Duplicates are not counted against your response limit or the response cap.

The Study Reviewers, at their own discretion, may increase a Researcher’s response limit above the response cap. Any additional In-Scope responses, however, are not eligible to earn bonus responses.

Review & Feedback

The goal of the Review Team is to identify the responses that best match the Research Requirements. To achieve this goal, the Review Team evaluates each response and provides feedback in the form of the response status and rank. In some instances, the Review Team may contact the Researcher for more information about a particular response.
The Review Team works closely with our clients to determine the progress of each Study. Additional information may be provided based on the responses received thus far, usually in the form of a “Lead.” The Lead will be posted on the Study page to help you narrow the focus of your research.

We encourage you to incorporate the response feedback and leads in your research. Use the response ranks to determine if your earlier responses are on the right track. Consider this information and the leads in deciding the direction your research will take.

Response Ranks

Reviewed Responses

Your Activity Dashboard provides updated information about your submission activity. Each response is identified by its title followed by a numerical Response ID. The Review Team uses this Response ID to identify a submission in any message sent to a Researcher. Include this Response ID in any message you will send to our Team regarding a specific response. The details provided in the Activity Dashboard are updated once a response is reviewed.

Response Status

A response is marked with one of the following based on the status of the review:

- **Submitted** – The response has not been reviewed yet. This is the initial status of all responses.
- **Accepted** – The response is relevant to the Study and is given a corresponding rank.
- **Pending** – The Review Team has placed the response on hold, pending additional review. In some instances, the Review Team may contact the Researcher for more information about the response.
- **Declined** – The response does not meet the requirements of the Study.

Response Details

Additional details may be provided based on the status of the response.

For Accepted responses:
- **New** – The Researcher is the first to submit the particular document.
- **Duplicate** – Another Researcher was the first to submit the same document. A duplicate response is unlikely to win the Reward.

For Declined responses:
- **Known** – The document is cited in the patent or the list of known prior art.
- **Past Date Range** – The document does not meet the date requirement.
- **Not Relevant** – The document does not match the Research Requirements.
- **Before Earliest Date** – The document does not meet the date requirement.
Response Rank
In an effort to provide clarity to our ranking system, the ranking descriptions have been changed to the below. Also, please note that ranking is not final until the Study is completed.

CrowdSearch/ExpertSearch/FlashSearch Rankings:
• **Rank 1** – not relevant to the research requirements
• **Rank 2** – background material, minimum relevance to Study Requirements
• **Rank 3** – In-Scope; relevant to Study Requirements; acceptable highlights
• **Rank 4** – In-Scope; strong relevance to key Study Requirements; reference provides a solid basis for invalidity or obviousness arguments; acceptable highlights; eligible for a reward

Evidence of Use Rankings:
• **Rank 1** – not relevant to the research requirements
• **Rank 2** – background material; minimum relevance to Study Requirements
• **Rank 3** – In-Scope; relevant to Study Requirements; acceptable highlights
• **Rank 4** – In-Scope; strong relevance to key Study Requirements; acceptable highlights; eligible for a reward

Winning a Study
The Review Team selects the winning response(s) typically within a few days to a couple of weeks after the Study is closed to responses. The following criteria will be used in selecting Winners:

• Accuracy of the mapping of the patent to a Standard(s)
• Demonstration of evidence of use of the technology in a product
• Market size and economic value

Please refer to the Reward structure provided in the Study page for more information about how the Reward will be paid.

Study Winner
The Study Winner is guaranteed a minimum Reward. In recognition of the challenges of finding high-quality Non-Patent Literature (NPL) and Non-English documents, the Study Winner may earn $500 bonuses based on the type of winning document:

• **Document Type** – The Winner receives a $500 bonus for submitting a winning NPL document or a winning Japanese or Chinese patent (with an English translation).
• **Non-English NPL** – The Winner receives an additional $500 bonus for submitting a non-English NPL (with an English translation).

Study Rewards
The Study Type determines the distribution of the Reward. Private Studies, such as ExpertSearch and FlashSearch, have set Reward structures as described in the **Study Types** section. However, the Rewards for all Study Types may vary depending on agreements between RWS and the client.
Reward Eligibility

Reward eligibility is based on a Researcher’s In-Scope percentage. A Researcher needs to maintain an In-Scope percentage of at least 10% to be eligible for any Reward. This policy applies to Researchers with at least 25 reviewed responses to date. A Researcher with less than 25 reviewed responses is eligible for Rewards.

This policy seeks to encourage Researchers to perform well in our Studies. We ask you to send only the responses that best match the research requirements of each Study to ensure that you meet the minimum In-Scope percentage.

Reward Payment

You will be notified via email when you win a Study. The notification will clearly indicate the Study and the amount of the Reward you will receive. You can track the status of each payment through the Payment History page in your account.

Payments for ExpertSearch and FlashSearch Studies are due seven (7) days after the Expiration Date. All other payments including those for CrowdSearch and other types of Studies are due 60 days after the Winners are announced. As Rewards are paid on a weekly basis, payments are processed on the last business day of the week of the due date. If the due date falls on a Saturday to Thursday, the payment will be processed on the following Friday. This is shown as the Payment Initiation Date on your Payment History.

Reward Distribution Example

Most CS Studies follow the same basic structure as described in the succeeding sections of this page. The Winner in a CS Study is the Researcher who provides either the “highest quality response” or the “best collection of responses.”

- Highest Quality Response – For most CS Studies including Validity searches, the Winner is the Researcher who provides the most accurately highlighted response that best matches the Research Requirements. The winning response is chosen among all responses that are marked In-Scope, as described in the Response Rank section.
- Best Collection of Responses – For some CS Studies such as State of the Art searches, the Winner is the Researcher who submits the best collection of responses. The best collection of responses is determined by the total number of In-Scope responses and the overall quality of the collection.

The Reward for CS Studies is split among the Study Winner and the other Researchers who provided In-Scope responses.

To illustrate, the following is the breakdown of the total Study Reward for a $4,500 CS Study:
- **$3,500 – Winner Reward**: The Winner is guaranteed to earn a minimum of $2,500
- The Winner receives an additional $500 bonus for an NPL response.
- The Winner receives an additional $500 bonus for a Japanese or Chinese patent.
- **$1,000 – In-Scope Rewards**: Up to 20 In-Scope responses earn $50 each.
The following is the breakdown of the total Study Reward for a $6,500 CS Study:

- **$5,000 – Winner Reward**: The Winner is guaranteed to earn a minimum of $4,000.
- The Winner receives an additional $500 bonus for an NPL response.
- The Winner receives an additional $500 bonus for a Japanese or Chinese patent
- **$1,500 – In-Scope Reward**: Up to 30 In-Scope response earn $50 each.

For each Study, you may view the details of the Reward Structure by clicking the link in the Reward amount on the Study page.

**In-Scope Rewards**

Up to a certain number of new (i.e. not duplicate) In-Scope responses will earn $50 each. A Researcher may earn more than $50 for sending multiple In-Scope responses. NPL and non-English responses will be prioritized if there are more In-Scope responses than the allotted number of In-Scope Rewards.

**Payments**

**Researcher Payments**

If you win a Study, your payment will be processed via the payment method you indicated in your account. The payment will be processed in accordance with our Payment Terms (More Info). Your account allows you to track the status of each of your payments.

**Payment History**

You can track the status of each payment through the Payment History page in your account.

- **New** – The payment will be processed by the indicated Payment Initiation Date.
- **Payment Initiated** – Payment processing has already been initiated but not yet completed.
- **Paid** – The payment has been processed.

**Payment Reminders**

- Your account information must match your payment information. Your payments will not be processed if the name in your account does not match the name provided in your payment information (“Address” and “Payment Method” tabs).
- Payments are processed on a weekly basis. Payments are processed on the last business day of the week of the due date. If the due date falls on a Saturday to Thursday, the payment will be on processed on the following Friday.
- Your payments will be processed only after you reach your payment threshold, if any. The total amount will be processed the week after the threshold is met.
- Last-minute changes to your payment information may delay your payment. Any changes to your payment information within a week prior to the Payment Initiation Date may lead to a one-week delay in the processing of your payment.
- Your payment method may determine when you will receive your payment. While your payment may have already been initiated, it may take up to a few days for your payment to be received, depending on the payment method you have selected. As such, please allow
some time for your payment to be received after it has been processed.
• Your Reward may be forfeited if your payment information is incomplete. Please make sure that you have properly and completely filled out and updated the Payment Info page of your account to ensure that payments will be processed successfully. Please see the Expired Rewards Policy for more information.

Expired Rewards

Your Reward may be forfeited if your payment information is incomplete. Please make sure that you have properly and completely filled out and updated the Payment Info page of your account to ensure that payments will be processed successfully. It's a good idea to check this information on a regular basis and most certainly when you are notified that you’ve won a Reward.

Please be advised that if you receive an email indicating that you have a “Deferred Payment” status for a payment, this is your first sign that this Reward may be forfeited. A “Deferred” status may also be associated with a payment threshold not being met.

Both a Reward that can’t be paid due to inaccurate payment information or a threshold not being met will be forfeited 180 days from the first initiation of payment.

Study Expert Program

Researchers who demonstrate their research expertise may be invited to participate in Invitation Only Studies. To be eligible to receive invitations to these Studies, a Researcher must be a member of the Study Expert Program having met the requirements noted below.

Researcher Profile

An important step to becoming a Study Expert is to complete your profile. The following fields must be filled out:

• About Me
• Language
• Technical Knowledge Areas
• Expertise
• Education
• Work History
• Resume (as an attachment)

Selection of Experts

To be designated a Study Expert and become eligible to receive an invitation to an Invitation Only Study, a Researcher must meet the following requirements:

• Completed profile; and
• At least 25 reviewed responses to date; and
• An in-scope percentage of at least 40%; and
• An NPL percentage of at least 30%.

We use the information in the profiles to determine which Researchers are invited to specific Studies. As such, we encourage you to be as detailed as possible in completing your profile. We will inform you if further updates are needed or if supporting documents will be required.

AOP Connect™ will automatically designate you as a Study Expert once you've been approved and a blue shield with a check mark will appear next to your User Name.

Once selected for a specific Study, the Researcher receives an invitation. The Researcher may accept or decline the invitation as instructed in the message. If the Researcher fails to respond within the allotted time, the invitation expires. Another Researcher will be invited if an invitation is declined or expires.

**Study Expert Opportunities**

Study Experts may be invited to participate in the following opportunities:

- CrowdSearch Mini
- ExpertSearch
- ExpertSearch+
- FlashSearch

The Reward structure for each opportunity varies per Study type. Refer to [Study Types](#) for more information on each kind of Invitation Only Study. Please be aware that of the Expert Study opportunities noted above, the ExpertSearch and ExpertSearch+ studies are the ONLY studies with guaranteed compensation.

Study Expert opportunities are subject to availability.

**Study Expert Participation Policy**

A Study Expert commits to participating in the Study upon accepting the invitation. In the eyes of RWS, acceptance is considered a commitment to perform in the study. Accordingly, your review of the study will ensure that you are accepting invitations to studies where you are qualified to perform in terms of knowledge, time, and effort. Alternatively, if you accept a study where you are unable to invest your best efforts, please let us know as quickly as possible. These Invitation Only studies are presented to a small group of researchers, based on their good performance, and a lack of performance on your part inhibits other researchers from participating, and ultimately erodes your reputation with RWS. Additionally, due to client review of the art in AOP CONNECT™ early in the study, we encourage our researchers to submit responses within the first week of the study. Delaying your participation until the end of the study will ultimately erode your reputation and cause us to not extend future invitations.

**Guaranteed Compensation Policy**

Unless otherwise stated in the invitation or the Study, the following terms cover the Researcher’s participation for the Expert and Expert+ Studies. Of the Study Expert Opportunities listed above, these are the ONLY studies with guaranteed compensation.
Each Study Expert is asked to submit at least the three best references you can find.

We understand that in some cases, you may find few or no references that are relevant to the Study Requirements. If you don’t find any references that meet all the requirements, submit at least the best responses to show us the types of documents you encountered in your search. If you are notified that your response(s) is/are a duplicate, we still ask that you submit at least three references beyond those found to be duplicates. This is useful feedback we can provide to our client. Please note that your Study Expert responses are not included in your in-scope percentage. Having been excluded from the response limit and the in-scope percentage, a duplicate may not earn an In-Scope Bonus for additional responses to a Study.

Each Study Expert is asked to answer the Expert Questionnaire to demonstrate that a reasonably thorough search was conducted.

In case you do not have in-scope responses to the Study, we will use the Questionnaire (provided in the Study Guidelines) to see if a satisfactory search was performed. Please be as detailed as possible, so we can understand the challenges you encountered in the Study.

All Study Experts who meet the requirements above will be paid the Reward as described in the Study. If the Study Expert does not have an in-scope response, the Reward will still be paid as long as the Expert’s Questionnaire demonstrates that a thorough search was conducted. The Reward may not be paid, however, if the Study Expert does not have an in-scope response and the Questionnaire does not provide enough details to show that a thorough search was performed.

The Reward to be paid to the Expert is subject to our Payment Terms.

**ROTM/ROTY**

To acknowledge the outstanding contributions of our Community, we will continue to recognize our top Researchers through the Researcher of the Month and the Researcher of the Year.

**Researchers of the Month**
- Every month, we will honor the Top Researcher of the Month who will receive a $500 Reward.
- Four runners-up will each receive $50.

**Researcher of the Year**
- At the end of each year, we will select the Researcher of the Year from among the Researchers recognized each month.
- The Researcher of the Year will receive a $1,000 Reward.

The Researchers of the Month and the Researcher of the Year will be selected based on their Study wins, In-Scope percentage, the types and quality of their responses, and other factors that demonstrate the consistency and quality of their participation in our Studies. The Researchers of
the Month are announced in the third week of the succeeding month, and the Researcher of the Year will be named in our January newsletter.

For more updates, please check our blog and newsletter.

Researcher Policies

General Policies

The following policies apply to all Studies:

- **Reward Eligibility** – A Researcher needs to maintain an In-Scope percentage of at least 10% to be eligible for any Reward.
- **Response Limit** – A Researcher is allowed a certain number of responses per Study, as determined by his or her response limit. This *response limit* is based on the Researcher's In-Scope percentage for his or her most recent 50 responses.
- **Response Cap** – Each Researcher is allowed up to a maximum of 25 responses per Study, including any In-Scope or lead bonuses earned beyond the default response limit.
- **Duplicate Response** – A response is marked a “Duplicate” if another Researcher was first to submit the same response. Duplicates do not count against the response limit and the response cap. Similarly, a Researcher’s In-Scope percentage excludes duplicates. To determine a Researcher’s response limit, duplicates are not included in the past 50 responses used to calculate the In-Scope percentage. Having been excluded from the response limit and the In-Scope percentage, a duplicate may not earn an In-Scope Bonus for additional responses to a Study.
- **Unacceptable Highlight** – A Researcher needs to cite the specific section of the response that is most relevant to a Study. The highlight for a response may be marked as “Unacceptable” if the Review Team determines that a Researcher provided inaccurate or misleading citations. Responses with “Unacceptable” highlights are not eligible for any Reward.
- **Expiration Date** – A Researcher can make responses until 12pm ET US on the indicated Expiration Date.
- **Payment Terms** – Payments for ExpertSearch and FlashSearch Studies are made approximately seven (7) days after the Expiration Date. All other payments including those for CrowdSearch and other types of Studies are made 60 days after the Winners are announced. As Rewards are paid on a weekly basis, payments are processed on the last business day of the week of the due date. If the due date falls on a Saturday to Thursday, the payment will be on processed on the following Friday. This is shown as the Payment Initiation Date on your Payment History.
- **Expired Rewards** - Your Reward may be forfeited if your payment information is incomplete. Both a Reward that can't be paid due to inaccurate payment information or a threshold not being met will be forfeited 180 days from the first initiation of payment.
Confidentiality

For the purposes of your relationship with RWS, “Confidential Information” means all confidential or proprietary information, documents, and materials, whether printed or in machine-readable form or otherwise belonging to the Company or its clients, including but not limited to, processes, hardware, software, inventions, trade secrets, ideas, designs, research, and know-how; business methods, production plans, marketing and branding plans, and merger plans; identity of shareholders, directors, or employees; materials relating to business operations; all inventions (whether patentable or unpatentable and whether or not reduced to practice), all improvements to any such inventions, including but not limited to, all products created, designed, and marketed by the Company or its clients; all patents, including patent applications and patent disclosures, both domestic and foreign, together with all reissuances, continuations, continuations-in-part, revisions, extensions, and reexaminations thereof; all trademarks, service marks, trade dress, logos, slogans, trade names, and corporate names, together with all translations, adaptations, derivations, and combinations thereof and including all goodwill associated with any such marks and all applications, registrations and renewals in connection therewith; all writings and other works subject to copyright protection under any federal, state, provincial or local, or international copyright act or other law or international treaty, including, without limitation, the U.S. Copyright Act, including all copyrighted works, copyrightable works, all copyrights, and all applications, registrations, and renewals in connection therewith; all mask works and all applications, registrations, and renewals in connection therewith; all trade secrets and confidential business information (including, without limitation, ideas, research and development, know-how, formulas, compositions, manufacturing and production processes and techniques, technical data, designs, drawings, specifications, and business information); all computer software (including data, disks, licenses, source code, and related documentation); and all web sites and domain names.

Confidential Information shall include all information that should reasonably have been understood by the Researcher to be Confidential, because of legends or other markings, the circumstances of disclosure, or the nature of the information itself, to be proprietary and confidential to the Company or its clients, regardless of whether such information is marked “Confidential” or “Proprietary.” “Confidential Information” also includes the fact that you are providing services to the Company or its clients as a Researcher, any information or other materials provided to you by the Company or its clients in connection with any Studies and any information or work product generated by you in connection with any Studies (collectively, “Study Materials”), independent of whether that information has been made available on AOP Connect™.

The Researcher’s Confidential Information shall include all information provided by the Researcher designated as personal data, including but not limited to, any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person; an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.
For the purposes of your relationship with the Company, Confidential Information does not include information which: (i) was or is obtained by the Researcher from a third party which third party, to your actual knowledge as a Researcher, was or is lawfully in possession of such information and was or is not in violation of any contractual or legal obligation to the Company or other party with respect to such information; (ii) is or becomes part of the public domain through no fault of the Researcher; (iii) was or is independently ascertained or developed by the Researcher; or (iv) is approved for disclosure and release by written authorization of the Company.

As a Researcher, you agree that you will take all reasonable precautions and steps to prevent the disclosure of Confidential Information, including but not limited to the following:

• You will not use Confidential Information other than for the benefit of the Company and its clients and for the purposes described directly or indirectly in this Agreement or specific Studies.
• You agree that all Confidential Information is the sole property of the Company or its clients at all times, regardless of whether such information is situated on our premises or elsewhere, and that it is subject to inspection with or without notice.
• You will not use the Confidential Information to compete, either directly or indirectly, with the Company or its clients.
• Upon the Company's request by email or by other means deemed appropriate, you will promptly return or destroy all such Confidential Information and will confirm such destruction to the Company in writing. You agree to use the same degree of care in protecting and using the Company's Confidential Information and that of its clients as you would use in protecting your own Confidential Information. In no case will you use less than a reasonable degree of care to maintain the confidentiality of the information you receive from the Company.
• If you receive notice of any legal proceedings that request or require you to disclose any Confidential Information or Study Material, you agree to notify and coordinate with the Company, before making any disclosure.

For the purposes of your relationship with the Company, the Company agrees to take all reasonable precautions and steps to prevent the disclosure of the Researcher's Confidential Information, otherwise known as personal data, in accordance with the normal course of the Company's business.

Duplicate Accounts

You may open and maintain only a single account as a Researcher on AOP Connect™, the Company's online, proprietary platform, with the Company. You agree that you will provide accurate contact and personal information and that you will promptly update the Company with any changes to such information. The Company may share your personal data with clients, but only when we have your explicit consent to do so. The Company will seek your consent before disclosing any personal data internally and/or to any clients, as needed, and in accordance with our privacy policy.
Suspension & Termination

If we determine that you have failed to comply with any part of this Agreement or RWS’s Policies, we may in our sole discretion suspend or terminate your Researcher account with the Company. The Company may further exercise any and all other rights or remedies available under our Policies and applicable law.

If you have performed work which is selected for compensation, we may determine that such compensation is forfeited for any time period during which you are not in compliance with this Agreement or the Company’s Policies. You agree that if the Company determines that you have made false, inaccurate or incomplete statements to the Company or in response to a Study that you will immediately, upon demand by the Company return the value of any compensation that has been or may be paid to you. You further agree that we may use any available legal and/or equitable remedies to suspend or terminate your account with the Company, prevent payment of compensation while in noncompliance with this Agreement or the Company’s Policies, or seek remuneration of amount paid to you while you were in noncompliance with this Agreement or the Company’s Policies.

You may request a temporary suspension or pause of access to your account. Please contact RWS at aopconnect-support@rws.com to affect such suspension or pause.

Account Closure & Deletion

As a Researcher for RWS, you can close your account without the need of a formal request to the Company. There is a “close account link” on the My Account page. When you close your account, the Company tracks the date of such closure and you will no longer appear as a member of the Community.

As a Researcher for the Company, you can request the deletion of your account and its associated personal data. Please contact the Company at aopconnect-support@rws.com to effect such deletion.