

How to Read a Patent

By Erik Chmelar



Business Executive -
Does my product infringe?



General Counsel -
Is this patent valid?



Product Developer -
Can I build this invention?



Inventor -
Is my invention patentable?

Cover Sheet

The cover sheet lists bibliographic information. For example, a patent is granted on the "Date of Patent," but earlier dates — including those of related applications — are important when determining validity.

Drawings

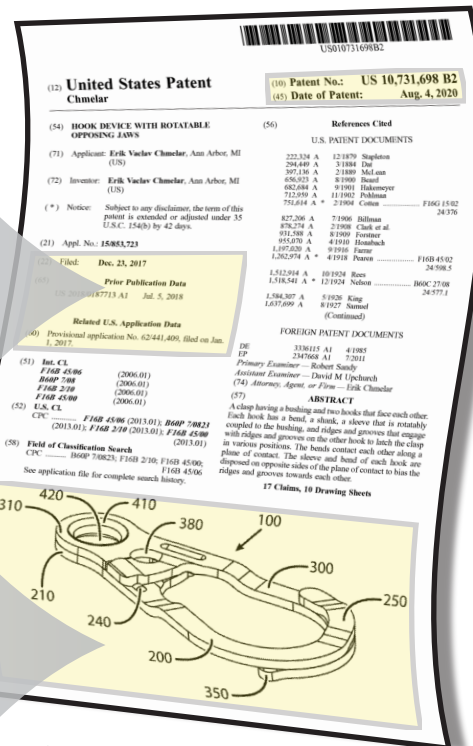
Figures include numeric callouts identifying important features of the invention. Look for these numerals in the detailed-description part of the specification.

Claims

Claims define the invention. A product infringes a patent when the product meets every element of at least one claim, regardless of any additional features the product may include.

Specification

The specification describes embodiments of the invention and defines terminology. The specification is critical when determining patentability.



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