

**U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office**



**Privacy Threshold Analysis  
for the  
Global Patent Solutions (GPS)**

# U.S. Department of Commerce Privacy Threshold Analysis

## USPTO Global Patent Solutions (GPS)

**Unique Project Identifier:** PTOC-024-00

**Introduction:** This Privacy Threshold Analysis (PTA) is a questionnaire to assist with determining if a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is necessary for this IT system. This PTA is primarily based from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) privacy guidance and the Department of Commerce (DOC) IT security/privacy policy. If questions arise or further guidance is needed in order to complete this PTA, please contact your Bureau Chief Privacy Officer (BCPO).

**Description of the information system:** *Provide a brief description of the information system.*

The E-Government Act of 2002 defines “information system” by reference to the definition section of Title 44 of the United States Code. The following is a summary of the definition: “Information system” means a discrete set of information resources organized for the collection, processing, maintenance, use, sharing, dissemination, or disposition of information. See: 44. U.S.C. § 3502(8).

The GPS is an information system that provides support to the USPTO patent review process. The purpose of this system is designed to support the USPTO international application or PCT application process. The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) provides a unified procedure for filing patent applications to protect inventions in each of its Contracting States. The GPS system facilitates PCT searches and enables GPS employees to submit an accompanying written opinion regarding the patentability of the invention in question.

GPS is under contract with the USPTO to perform work related to PCT applications. GPS receives PCT application data from the USPTO via secure file transfer protocol using the Tumbleweed File Transfer Application. Utilizing this data, GPS conducts searches and develops opinion papers in support of the USPTO contract.

Address the following elements:

- a) *Whether it is a general support system, major application, or other type of system*  
GPS Automated Information System (GPS system) is a major application.
- b) *System location*

The GPS data is stored on the GPS owned AWS FedRAMP approved cloud account (U.S. West Region). Local infrastructure is located in Arizona.

*c) Whether it is a standalone system or interconnects with other systems (identifying and describing any other systems to which it interconnects)*

GPS is a standalone system.

*d) The purpose that the system is designed to serve*

The GPS is an information system that provides support to the USPTO patent review process. The GPS system is designed to support the USPTO international application or Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) application process. The PCT provides a unified procedure for filing patent applications to protect inventions in each of its Contracting States. The GPS system facilitates PCT searches and enables GPS employees to submit an accompanying written opinion regarding the patentability of the invention in question.

*e) The way the system operates to achieve the purpose*

GPS facilitates PCT searches and enables GPS employees to submit an accompanying written opinion regarding the patentability of the invention in question.

*f) A general description of the type of information collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by the system*

GPS collects and maintains USPTO International Patent application data. The PCT provides a unified procedure for filing patent applications to protect inventions in each of its Contracting States. The GPS system facilitates PCT searches and enables GPS employees to submit an accompanying written opinion regarding the patentability of the invention in question.

*g) Identify individuals who have access to information on the system*

GPS personnel consisting of system administrators, managers and analysts who assign PCT applications, review and conduct searches, and develop opinion papers.

*h) How information in the system is retrieved by the user*

GPS receives the information from USPTO via secure file transfer. Assigned applications are accessed by analysts who connect to GPS hosted on AWS via Virtual Private Network (VPN) and Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP). Completed applications are returned to USPTO.

*i) How information is transmitted to and from the system*

Patent data is imported/exported from/to the GPS GSS via Secure Shell (SSH) File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) provided by USPTO.

**Questionnaire:**

1. Status of the Information System

1a. What is the status of this information system?

- This is a new information system. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*
- This is an existing information system with changes that create new privacy risks. *Complete chart below, continue to answer questions, and complete certification.*

Changes That Create New Privacy Risks (CTCNPR)						
a. Conversions	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Significant Merging	<input type="checkbox"/>	g. New Interagency Uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Anonymous to Non-Anonymous	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. New Public Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	h. Internal Flow or Collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Significant System Management Changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Commercial Sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	i. Alteration in Character of Data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
j. Other changes that create new privacy risks (specify):						

- This is an existing information system in which changes do not create new privacy risks, and there is not a SAOP approved Privacy Impact Assessment. *Continue to answer questions and complete certification.*
- This is an existing information system in which changes do not create new privacy risks, and there is a SAOP approved Privacy Impact Assessment. *Skip questions and complete certification.*

1b. Has an IT Compliance in Acquisitions Checklist been completed with the appropriate signatures?

- Yes. This is a new information system.
- Yes. This is an existing information system for which an amended contract is needed.
- No. The IT Compliance in Acquisitions Checklist is not required for the acquisition of equipment for specialized Research and Development or scientific purposes that are not a National Security System.
- No. This is not a new information system.

2. Is the IT system or its information used to support any activity which may raise privacy concerns?

NIST Special Publication 800-53 Revision 4, Appendix J, states “Organizations may also engage in activities that do not involve the collection and use of PII, but may nevertheless raise privacy concerns and associated risk. The privacy controls are equally applicable to those activities and can be used to analyze the privacy risk and mitigate such risk when necessary.” Examples include, but are not limited to, audio recordings, video surveillance, building entry readers, and electronic purchase transactions.

Yes. *(Check all that apply.)*

Activities		
Audio recordings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Building entry readers
Video surveillance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic purchase transactions
Other(specify):		

No.

3. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate business identifiable information (BII)?

As per DOC Privacy Policy: “For the purpose of this policy, business identifiable information consists of (a) information that is defined in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as “trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged or confidential.” (5 U.S.C.552(b)(4)). This information is exempt from automatic release under the (b)(4) FOIA exemption. “Commercial” is not confined to records that reveal basic commercial operations” but includes any records [or information] in which the submitter has a commercial interest” and can include information submitted by a nonprofit entity, or (b) commercial or other information that, although it may not be exempt from release under FOIA, is exempt from disclosure by law (e.g., 13 U.S.C.).”

Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates BII.

No, this IT system does not collect any BII.

4. Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

4a. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate PII?

As per OMB 17-12: “The term PII refers to information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.”

Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates PII about: *(Check all that apply.)*

- DOC employees
- Contractors working on behalf of DOC
- Other Federal Government personnel
- Members of the public

No, this IT system does not collect any PII.

***If the answer is “yes” to question 4a, please respond to the following questions.***

4b. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate Social Security numbers (SSNs), including truncated form?

Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates SSNs, including truncated form.

Provide an explanation for the business need requiring the collection of SSNs, including truncated form.

Provide the legal authority which permits the collection of SSNs, including truncated form.

No, the IT system does not collect, maintain, or disseminate SSNs, including truncated form.

4c. Does the IT system collect, maintain, or disseminate PII other than user ID?

Yes, the IT system collects, maintains, or disseminates PII other than user ID.

No, the user ID is the only PII collected, maintained, or disseminated by the IT system.

4d. Will the purpose for which the PII is collected, stored, used, processed, disclosed, or disseminated (context of use) cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level?

Examples of context of use include, but are not limited to, law enforcement investigations, administration of benefits, contagious disease treatments, etc.

Yes, the context of use will cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level.

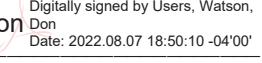
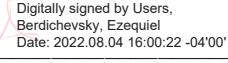
No, the context of use will not cause the assignment of a higher PII confidentiality impact level.

***If any of the answers to questions 2, 3, 4b, 4c, and/or 4d are “Yes,” a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) must be completed for the IT system. This PTA and the SAOP approved PIA must be a part of the IT system’s Assessment and Authorization Package.***

## CERTIFICATION

The criteria implied by one or more of the questions above **apply** to the Global Patent Solutions (GPS) and as a consequence of this applicability, a PIA will be performed and documented for this IT system.

The criteria implied by the questions above **do not apply** to the Global Patent Solutions (GPS) and as a consequence of this non-applicability, a PIA for this IT system is not necessary.

<p><b>System Owner</b>            Name: Harry Kim            Office: International Patent Legal Administration (IPLA)            Phone: (571) 272-3285            Email: Harry.Kim@uspto.gov</p> <p>Signature:  <small>Digitally signed by Users, Kim, Harry Date: 2022.08.05 09:35:19 -04'00'</small></p> <p>Date signed: _____</p>	<p><b>Chief Information Security Officer</b>            Name: Don Watson            Office: Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)            Phone: (571) 272-8130            Email: Don.Watson@uspto.gov</p> <p>Signature:  <small>Digitally signed by Users, Watson, Don Don Date: 2022.08.07 18:50:10 -04'00'</small></p> <p>Date signed: _____</p>
<p><b>Privacy Act Officer</b>            Name: Ezequiel Berdichevsky            Office: Office of General Law (O/GL)            Phone: (571) 270-1557            Email: Ezequiel.Berdichevsky@uspto.gov</p> <p>Signature:  <small>Digitally signed by Users, Berdichevsky, Ezequiel Date: 2022.08.04 16:00:22 -04'00'</small></p> <p>Date signed: _____</p>	<p><b>Bureau Chief Privacy Officer and Authorizing Official</b>            Name: Henry J. Holcombe            Office: Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)            Phone: (571) 272-9400            Email: Jamie.Holcombe@uspto.gov            By Direction</p> <p>Signature:  <small>Digitally signed by Users, Stephens, Deborah Stephens, Deborah Date: 2022.08.08 16:17:09 -04'00'</small></p> <p>Date signed: _____</p>
<p><b>Co-Authorizing Official</b>            Name: Andrew Faile            Office: Office of the Commissioner for Patents            Phone: (571) 272-8800            Email: Andrew.Faile@uspto.gov</p> <p>Signature:  <small>Digitally signed by Users, Faile, Andrew Andrew Date: 2022.08.18 07:32:42 -04'00'</small></p> <p>Date signed: _____</p>	