

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



**Privacy Threshold Analysis  
for the  
Serco Patent Processing System (PPS)**

## U.S. Department of Commerce Privacy Threshold Analysis

### USPTO Serco Patent Processing System (PPS)

**Unique Project Identifier: PTOC-016-00**

**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).

Serco Patent Processing System (PPS) is a Major Application (MA). This system processes inbound electronic images of patent applications received by Serco Inc. from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Patent applications consist of electronic documents that conform to requirements as defined by USPTO. The system consists of a variety of application review tools, research tools, and data entry tools to facilitate the evaluation and classification of the application creating a series of U.S. Patent Classification (USPC) system and Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system classification data elements that describe the application. The PPS is dedicated to securely processing patent information. The system is physically located at the contractor staffed and operated facility located at Serco Inc.

Address the following elements:

a) *Whether it is a general support system, major application, or other type of system*

PPS is a major application system.

b) *System location*

The system is located in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

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

Serco PPS has an Interconnection Security Agreement (ISA) to interconnect with the USPTO File Transfer System. There are no other system interconnections.

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

The purpose of Serco PPS is to assist USPTO in processing Patent Applications.

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

Serco PPS processes inbound electronic images of patent applications provided by USPTO. The patent applications consist of electronic applications that conform to the application requirements. Applications need to contain all required sections and content to be deemed complete.

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

Bibliographic data (Inventor name, Inventor address, Citizenship, Correspondence address, Employer name and address, Telephone number[s], and E-mail address).

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

Serco PPS consists of a system administrator and staff who assign, review, and create patent classifications.

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

Information is retrieved by the user through utilizing a toolset that consists of a variety of application review, research tools and data entry tools to facilitate the evaluation and classification of the application creating a series of US Patent Classification (USPC) system and Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system classification data elements that describe the application.

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

Serco PPS receives patent applications directly from the USPTO via secure channel. The PPS transport subsystem uses encryption to ensure secure transmission of sensitive data between USPTO and the Serco facility.

## 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-                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. New Public Access   | <input type="checkbox"/> | h. Internal Flow or     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                          |                       |                          |   |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Anonymous   |                          |                       | Collection               |   |
| 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.)*

|                    |                          |                                  |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Activities</b>  |                          |                                  |                          |
| Audio recordings   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Building entry readers           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Video surveillance | <input type="checkbox"/> | Electronic purchase transactions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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. |
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|   |
|---|
| 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 Serco Patent Processing System (PPS) 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 Serco Patent Processing System (PPS) and as a consequence of this non-applicability, a PIA for this IT system is not necessary.

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|--|--|
| <b>System Owner</b><br>Name: Terrence Mackey<br>Office: Classification Quality and International Coordination Division (CQIC)<br>Phone: (703) 756-1843<br>Email: Terrence.Mackey@uspto.gov<br><br>Signature: _____<br>Date signed: _____ | <b>Chief Information Security Officer</b><br>Name: Don Watson<br>Office: Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)<br>Phone: (571) 272-8130<br>Email: Don.Watson@uspto.gov<br><br>Signature: _____<br>Date signed: _____                                  |
| <b>Privacy Act Officer</b><br>Name: Kyu Lee<br>Office: Office of General Law (O/GL)<br>Phone: (571) 272-6421<br>Email: Kyu.Lee@uspto.gov<br><br>Signature: _____<br>Date signed: _____   | <b>Bureau Chief Privacy Officer and Co-Authorizing Official</b><br>Name: Henry J. Holcombe<br>Office: Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)<br>Phone: (571) 272-9400<br>Email: Jamie.Holcombe@uspto.gov<br><br>Signature: _____<br>Date signed: _____ |
| <b>Co-Authorizing Official</b><br>Name: Vaishali Udupa<br>Office: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS--P/COM<br>Phone: (571) 272-8800<br>Email: Vaishali.Udupa@uspto.gov<br><br>Signature: _____<br>Date signed: _____                              |  |