

APEC IP Symposium “Innovating IP Exploitation”

Roundtable Discussion Summary

September 9, 2010

9:00 – 18:40

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

In this session, we will hold a roundtable discussion with the theme of “innovation in IP exploitation and the tasks ahead.” We need to learn more about new ways of exploiting intellectual property. Today, we heard thought-provoking presentations made by experts in the field. In this roundtable discussion, we will ask the three panelists, who served as moderators of Sessions 1 to 3, about the issues that we face in exploiting intellectual property, the economic advantage caused by improved exploitation of intellectual property, and the lessons we should learn from this Symposium.

Ms. Gilda Gonzalez (Session 1 moderator):

In Session 1, I felt that intellectual property in this digitalized world is becoming more and more complex. Today, IP rights are involved in a wide range of fields including medical science, biotechnology, robots, and space. The economy is globalized, and we have a large number of tasks in the areas of public policy, law, the training of personnel, the commercialization of patents, education, partnerships between universities, industry and government, public awareness, domestic research systems, laws related to licensing, the environment to exchange information, etc. It became apparent that there are many ways to improve the infrastructure.

Dr. Cheng Wei Liao (Session 2 moderator):

In Session 2, we were able to hear about many aspects of IP exploitation focused on how to attract researchers to the patent industry and how patent distribution should be carried out. When I think about how I can contribute as an examiner, one of the things that come to mind is improving the quality of patents, which I consider to also be an examiner’s mission.

Dr. George Vuckovic (Session 3 moderator):

The commercialization of intellectual property was discussed in Session 3. As a result, we understood that there is no single commercialization strategy that will work in all cases; that is to say, commercialization has to be adapted to each region’s circumstances and stage of development. Although it may be different for developing countries and developed countries, the definitive conclusion was that partnerships, strategic partnerships, and teamwork are important for making commercialization.

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

While I acknowledge it to be quite difficult to answer, I dare ask you what is one thing you have learned from this Symposium - “Innovating IP Exploitation”.

Ms. Gilda Gonzalez (Session 1 moderator):

It is that to protect technology itself using patents and to commercialize that technology, a well-established infrastructure is necessary. For that purpose, it is important to have more resources for developing infrastructure.

Dr. Cheng Wei Liao (Session 2 moderator):

Universities produce various types of technology. However, the problem is how to attract professors to file patent applications to protect their research achievements. In Taiwan, publishing a scientific paper used to be regarded as more important than filing a patent application. Now the government encourages professors to file for patent applications as much as possible.

Dr. George Vuckovic (Session 3 moderator):

It is that the government plays an important role in commercialization, as seen by cases where the government launches a Technology Licensing Office or is involved in the commercialization of research achievements in universities.

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

Are there any comments or questions from the audience?

Audience:

What role should an IP office play in the technology transfer? Furthermore, what and where is the position of an IP office in the technology transfer process? Isn't raising public awareness of intellectual property the very role of an IP office?

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

An IP office is the intellectual property agency of the government, but it also plays an important role in the transfer of technology. In what specific way does it take part in the transfer of technology?

Ms. Gilda Gonzalez (Session 1 moderator):

I'd like to share Mexico's experience regarding this matter. There is a council that deals with R&D issues. I'm not going to say that the main role of the IP office is the transfer of technology, but the IP office can provide support to the technology transfer system. By providing support, it is possible to raise the awareness of the general public.

Dr. Cheng Wei Liao (Session 2 moderator):

In Taiwan, we have established the Taiwan Technology Market Place, which is the technology platform for an information network. It serves as an important platform for transactions in developing technology.

Dr. George Vuckovic (Session 3 moderator):

At IP Australia, technology policies are formulated within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. We have recently created an organization called Commercialization Australia, an organization not so dissimilar to A*STAR in Singapore. It is engaged in activities to build capacity for research and entrepreneurs. Innovators turn to Commercialization Australia for advice on how to commercialize their product.

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

My impression is that the situations of each country are different. The strategies and actions of various governments are diversified. Are there any other comments?

Audience:

It is my point of view that patents are not necessary if there is no market for using or licensing the patented technology. Obtaining and maintaining a patent takes time and effort and requires money. I think that if a market does not exist, one should not waste the time and money to file a patent application. In developing countries, we need a link between patent rights and the industry or enterprises that use the rights. In order to motivate people to acquire rights for technology, we need a kind of translator of the technology or an intermediary that helps patent holders to exploit their patent rights because it is not easy to implement the technology in the market. In addition, we need companies to believe in the IP system. Since there isn't a market to exploit patent rights, they feel it is useless to obtain patents and therefore do not believe in the patent system. Moreover, we have to convince scientists of the benefits of the IP system.

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

Thank you for the very good summarization. Are there any other suggestions or questions?

Audience:

From the government's point of view, I would like to underline the importance of doing basic work properly such as maintaining the quality of patents by conducting thorough prior art searches and granting patents in a timely manner. The government may also play a role in breaking down information barriers between companies in this open innovation era and between university researchers and corporate bodies including SMEs. Specifically, these measures include the provision of information through licensable databases, best practice books, and patent maps. Through human resource development, we develop personnel who can offer important information regarding the exploitation of intellectual property. Apart from these things, the government has to be cautious because there is no one solution that meets all the needs. We have to be cautious in pursuing attractive looking measures of IP exploitation.

Professor Akio Nishizawa (Moderator):

Thank you for your point of view. As for Japan, although it is a developed country, it has only been ten years since it actively started carrying out the formal technology transfer activities. So we still have the same problems as the developing countries such as the cases in universities. Especially researchers in academe still do not understand the difference between doing research, filing patent applications, and commercializing the patented technology. We still have plenty of things to be learned in terms of innovating IP exploitation. Although each country is at a different stage, we all have similar issues and in this sense this Symposium was very informative.