

Overview of the US Patent System The United States Patent and Trademark Office

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The United States Patent & Trademark Office ("PTO") is the Federal agency responsible for granting U.S. patents and registering trademarks. Though denominated an "office," it is technically one of the bureaus under the auspices of the Department of Commerce. The Director of the PTO is appointed by the President. The PTO advises the President of the United States, the Secretary of Commerce, and U.S. Government agencies on intellectual property policy, protection, and enforcement. The PTO also administers the publication of patents and patent applications, the system for filing documents reflecting ownership rights in patents, a system for resolving interferences among inventors and a publicly available database on issued patents and published applications.

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