

FOI Release

Title: Patent figures from 1820 to date

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Information request:

Could you please help me to get the patent figures from 1820 to date?

Information released:

Please see an Excel spreadsheet of patent application and grant figures recorded at the UK Intellectual Property Office from 1820. You will notice that from 1820 to 1852 there are no separate figures because during that period only granted patents were recorded.

A new patent law came into force on 1 October 1852 so the figures for that year are shown divided between two rows on the spread sheet. Also I do not have separate figures for each year from 1820 to 1853, so the figures given span periods of five years.

Lastly, the figure for granted patents for 1981 is missing because it wasn't recorded in our annual report for that year. The reason was the new law of 1977 came into force in July 1978 but patents were still being granted for applications filed under the 1949 law for several years, while patents applied for under the new law were still being processed and only gradually reached grant stage. So while fewer and fewer old Act patents were being 'sealed', i.e. granted, each year the new Act patent grants were gradually appearing on the register. For some reason we didn't publish the total number of successful patents for the last year of processing old Act patents.

The figures I have sent you are for patents filed at the UK Office from both within the United Kingdom and other countries worldwide. If you are interested only in patents from UK applicants, it would be possible to provide figures for recent decades, but for much of the period of time from 1820 we didn't record a breakdown of applications by nationality of applicant.

You can find out more about the history of patent registration from our archived website at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna/20140603093547/http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-about/p-what-is/p-history.htm> .