

**FOI Release**  
**Information released under the Freedom of Information Act**

**Title:** Patent application statistics in recent years

**Date of release:** 17 March 2014

**Information request:**

I would like to find out some general information on the number of patents applied for in the UK in recent years. It would be good to be able to say how many are applied for now as opposed to, say, 20 years and also how many in 2013 opposed to the 2012. I'd love to be able to say that DIY inventors are on the increase in the UK and support that with some simple statistics.

**Information released:**

We publish statistics annually and we haven't yet published them for 2013, but I can let you have provisional figures for last year, of the total number of applications received by us from all countries and those from locations within the UK, which I assume would be of most interest to you. The 2013 figures haven't been quality checked for publication, but any changes will be minor.

	2013	2012	1993
Total patents filed at the IPO	22,938 (provisional)	23,235	26,648
Patents filed (from within the UK)	14,971 (provisional)	15,370	18,727

You can find all our application statistics from 2002 in Facts & Figures/Annual Reviews available on our website. Prior to that date, the figures are available from our paper publications upon request.

Please bear in mind that although the above figures show a decline in applications to the IPO, there is another route available for patent protection covering the UK, the European Patent Office.

Although there are as yet no European patents, the EPO offers patent protection in a number of member states of the European Patent Organization, which includes the UK. According to EPO figures, 2% of EPO patent applications for 2013 came from the UK and total European filings have been increasing steadily since 2009. (Source: [http://documents.epo.org/projects/babylon/eponet.nsf/0/125011cc1d9b8995c1257c92004b0728/\\$FILE/epo\\_facts\\_and\\_figures\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://documents.epo.org/projects/babylon/eponet.nsf/0/125011cc1d9b8995c1257c92004b0728/$FILE/epo_facts_and_figures_2014_en.pdf) )

Your particular interest in 'DIY' inventors is noted. The IPO does not categorise applicants by type, other than noting whether they are 'represented', e.g. by a patent attorney, as indicated by whether they file an address for service. As a general rule, most corporate applicants are represented whilst most private individuals and smaller SMEs are not, which suggests that 70% to 80% of filings come from corporate applicants.

Of the corporate applicants, it is impossible to say how many are SMEs, though again the smaller the enterprise, the more likely they are to fall into the unrepresented group. It would therefore be difficult to establish whether applications from individuals and SMEs are on the increase or to identify influences other than the general economic climate, or track the progress of the 'DIY' patents to grant stage and transfer to the marketplace; to have a patent granted takes typically 4 years or more.

You may be interested to know that applications for trade marks are at a record high, despite an unfavourable economic climate and the existence of two alternative routes to trade mark protection through International or European applications. A similar surge in trade marks occurred during the years of the Great Depression, but there may have been any number of other factors in play at the time to explain the increase.

Design registration is also increasing after a period of decline. This is particularly encouraging given that registered designs declined sharply following the introduction of the unregistered design right, similar in effect to copyright, as well as an alternative avenue for registering designs at the European level.