

FOI Release
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Title: Historical patent data

Date of release: 11 February 2016

Information request:

I was wondering whether patent records, specifically those from around 1895 onwards would by any chance have a location associated with them, either where the patent was recorded (I am assuming the regional patent office) or else, and preferably, the location of the patentee.

Information released:

"I'm not entirely clear as to what would be helpful to you. If you are interested in statistics of applications I've attached figures dating from 1895 from our old Annual Reports, showing a breakdown of the proportions of filings at the UK Patent Office from various countries. I haven't copied every year because the tables are usually presented showing two or three years for comparison. (There is some duplication round about 1928 because I couldn't find the Report for that year.) I've stopped at 1984, but if you confirm that this information is useful I can continue to the present day – or up to 2002 from which date these figures are available online.

They don't give figures for the numbers of grants for all years. I'd have to copy reports for each year to give you grant figures, which I can do if you are interested in them as well as applications. I'm not clear as to whether you are after locations of applicants within the UK, but that information isn't available beyond the following regions: England & Wales, Scotland and Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man (separately). And of course Ireland was united still during the nineteenth century and Britain's relationship with what are now the Commonwealth countries was of course entirely different, as were the status and boundaries of many other states.

There is a gap in the figures from 1915 to 1919 when we just published total numbers of applications without a country of origin breakdown.

We've only been publishing UK regional figures since 1990 and a dataset that can be filtered by UK postcode areas in the last couple of years, of published patents from dating from 1995. Please let me know if you require geographical information of this level of detail, and for that matter if what I've sent you is the kind of information you are looking for."