

Homework #4: Patent Search & Analysis

Due: June 3, 2015.

This homework asks you to do a bit of patent searching.

1. Find a patent that lists a UW CSE faculty member as an inventor. List the patent number and the corresponding inventor:

2. Most patent applications publish 18 months after filing. Find a patent application publication that lists a UW CSE faculty member as an inventor (who is different from the inventor in question 1, above). List the patent publication number and the corresponding inventor.

3. Find the very first patent ever issued in the US. (Hint, this is not “Patent No. 1” -- patents were not numbered until the 1830s.) Who is the inventor? What is the patent directed to?

4. You are in the lawn mower business and a competitor has asserted a patent against you that includes the following claim. Your products infringe the claim, so you would like to determine whether the claim is invalid in view of the prior art. The asserted patent has a filing date of June 1, 1996.

An apparatus for cutting a lawn, comprising:
an electric lawn mower;
a solar panel configured to provide power to the electric lawn mower; and
a motion controller configured to autonomously navigate the electric lawn mower about a lawn.

(a) Search for patent documents that could serve as prior art against the above claim. List three documents (by patent number) that appear to be promising.

(b) For one of the documents, prepare a claim chart for the above claim. The claim chart should include the specific portions/passages (with citations) of the prior art that teach each of the elements of the claim.