

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Michelle K. Lee  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and  
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450  
Attn: Nicole D. Haines  
Senior Legal Advisor  
Office of Deputy Commissioner for Patent Examination Policy

Via email to: [DesignWrittenDescription2016@uspto.gov](mailto:DesignWrittenDescription2016@uspto.gov)

**Re: Response to “Request for Comments on the Application of the Written Description Requirement to Specific Situations in Design Applications”, 81 Fed. Reg. 73 (April 15, 2016)**

Dear Under Secretary Lee:

The American Intellectual Property Law Association (“AIPLA”) is pleased to have the opportunity to present its views with respect to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (“Office”) Notice entitled “Request for Comments on the Application of the Written Description Requirement to Specific Situations in Design Applications” as published in the April 15, 2016, issue of the Federal Register, 81 Fed. Reg. 73 (hereinafter “Second Request”).

The American Intellectual Property Law Association is a national bar association of approximately 14,000 members who are primarily lawyers engaged in private or corporate practice, in government service, and in the academic community. AIPLA members represent a wide and diverse spectrum of individuals, companies, and institutions involved directly or indirectly in the practice of patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, and unfair competition law, as well as other fields of law affecting intellectual property. Our members represent both owners and users of intellectual property. Our mission includes helping to establish and maintain fair and effective laws and policies that stimulate and reward invention while balancing the public’s interest in healthy competition, reasonable costs, and basic fairness.

The Second Request was published in part for the purpose of soliciting public opinions concerning various topics related to the application of the written description requirement under 35 U.S.C. 112(a) (or for applications filed prior to September 16, 2012, 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph) (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Section 112(a)”) as applied to design patent applications. The Second Request follows up on the previously issued Office Notice entitled “Request for Comments and Notice of Roundtable Event on the Written Description Requirement for Design Applications,” which was published in the February 6, 2014 issue of the Federal Register, 79 Fed. Reg. 7171 (hereinafter “First Request”). In the First Request, the USPTO proposed a series of factors (hereinafter “Multi-Factor Test”) to be used for determining whether there was Section 112(a) written description support.

In a letter dated March 14, 2014 (copy attached hereto as Exhibit A), AIPLA submitted written comments to the First Request, whereby AIPLA expressed its opposition to the proposed Multi-Factor Test. Pursuant to the First Request, at the roundtable event held at the USPTO on March 5, 2014 to discuss the First Request, AIPLA presented its comments.

In the Second Request, the USPTO indicated that it was not going to adopt the previously proposed Multi-Factor Test of the First Request. Rather, it proposed some new general “considerations” that would be used to determine if there is Section 112(a) written description support in certain continuing or amended design patent applications. For example, USPTO stated that it would look at:

- The “totality” of the circumstances “including the title, any descriptive statements, and the drawings”;
- The parent application to see what it “reasonably conveyed to an ordinary designer at the time of the invention”;
- “how an ordinary designer in the art would have designed the article that is the subject of the design claim”; and
- “the nature and intended use of the article embodying the claimed design as identified by the title or description”.

Unfortunately, and as explained herein, this new “Multi-Consideration Test” raises the same concerns as the previously-rejected Multi-Factor Test. In the Second Request, the USPTO stressed that “in the vast majority of cases there is no question that a later-claimed design, composed only of a subset of originally disclosed elements, satisfies the written description requirement.” Second Request at 22234. Other than a hypothetical example regarding a checkerboard, the USPTO did not provide any examples in the Second Request of situations where Section 112(a) written description support would not be found. Indeed, in the Second Request, the USPTO now asks the public to provide it with examples where Section 112(a) written description support should not be found.

As was the case with the First Request, AIPLA does not support the Multi-Consideration Test described in the Second Request for determining whether an amended or continuation design claim, which contains a subset of elements disclosed in an application as filed (or in a priority application as filed), satisfies the written description requirement of Section 112(a). As more fully explained below, use of the proposed Multi-Consideration Test framework may lead to uncertainty in examination, increased cost to applicants to procure U.S. design patent protection, limiting continuation practice and limiting the ability to amend design patent claims during examination to an extent not justified by the current state of the law, and may cast a cloud over the validity of a substantial number of active U.S. design patents.

In particular, AIPLA opposes the proposed Multi-Consideration Test described in the Second Request for at least the following reasons:

1. As the Federal Circuit has said, an ornamental design meets the requirements of Section 112 if the earlier application contains illustrations, whatever form they may take, that depict the ornamental design illustrated and formally claimed in the later application. *Racing Strollers, Inc. v. Tri Indus., Inc.*, 878 F.2d 1418, 1420 (Fed. Cir. 1989) (*en banc*).

Thus, Federal Circuit precedent sets forth a simple visual test for determining Section 112(a) compliance: Is the later claimed subset of features depicted in the original drawing figures? (hereinafter “Visual Depiction Test”).

The Federal Circuit’s Visual Depiction Test is consistent with the USPTO’s well-established and deeply rooted approach as memorialized in the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (“M.P.E.P.”) under the section entitled Considerations Under 35 U.S.C. § 112. See, e.g., M.P.E.P. § 1504.04 (9th ed. Rev. 7, Oct. 2015) (explaining that “the mere reduction of certain portions to broken lines or conversion of broken line structure to solid lines is not a departure from the original disclosure” and consistent with § 112).

In our opinion, the *en banc Racing Strollers* opinion adequately addresses this issue. See also *In re Daniels*, 144 F.3d 1452, 1456 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (holding that when analyzing Section 112(a) issues for design patent applications, “one looks to the drawings of the earlier application for disclosure of the subject matter claimed in the later application.”).

2. There has been no change in the law that warrants changing USPTO guidelines on this issue.
3. The Multi-Consideration Test of the Second Request, like the Multi-Factor Test of the First Request, injects uncertainty and complexity into the Section 112(a) written description support analysis. The better approach is to use *Racing Strollers*’ Visual Depiction Test.
4. A single checkerboard hypothetical—which was created solely for the purpose of illustrating a problem that may not exist—should not guide USPTO policy. In our opinion, the ability of stakeholders to file amended or continuing design patent applications according to *Racing Strollers*’ Visual Depiction Test may be seen a virtue of the U.S. design patent system, not a problem with the system in need of a solution.
5. Even if a problem exists, it occurs so infrequently in practice that the “benefit” of the proposed Multi-Consideration Test is not worth the expected detrimental effects to the U.S. design patent system. The USPTO has itself acknowledged that Section 112(a) written description support will be found “in the vast majority of cases.” Second Request at 22234.

In particular, implementation of the Multi-Consideration Test may create a number of unintended consequences, including: forcing applicants to “front load” applications with a multitude of embodiments, which is costly and inefficient for applicants and may cause administrative and examination burdens on the USPTO; causing USPTO examiners to spend valuable time wading through the fact-intensive inquiries of the Multi-Consideration Test; and, in turn, requiring applicants to spend resources, such as securing affidavits and declarations to establish Section 112(a) support under the proposed Multi-Consideration Test.

In short, compliance with the proposed Multi-Consideration Test may result in expending large amounts of USPTO and applicant resources on an unidentified “problem.”

6. The Visual Depiction Test is the best test available. In short, the drawings of the parent or priority design application sufficiently and fairly disclose and describe any depicted sub-combinations thereof. Moreover, the Visual Depiction Test adequately serves the public notice function.

#### Harmonizing Treatment of Designs for Two-Dimensional Surface Ornamentation

Lastly, AIPLA would like to take this opportunity to offer a comment on the harmonizing treatment of designs for two-dimensional surface organization. Presently, design applications for two-dimensional surface ornamentation on an article of manufacture, such as graphical user interfaces (“GUIs”), are examined differently than applications for three-dimensional designs. While the USPTO has made no formal announcements of its examination policy in this regard, this observation is based upon the significant experience of our membership before the Office. In particular, it appears that heightened scrutiny is given to any amendment to the surface ornamentation in the drawings as originally filed; for example, to change a solid line to broken. Apparently, the Office’s rationale for this approach is that two-dimensional designs are unitary things and that they have no divisible portions. We are unaware of a legal basis for this differing treatment, and urge that the Section 112 framework be used to examine applications claiming a three-dimensional design (i.e. Racing Strollers’ Visual Depiction Test) should also apply to applications claiming a two-dimensional design.

AIPLA appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments in response to the Request, and to assist in establishing reasonable guidelines for examination of design applications with respect to the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. Section 112(a). AIPLA looks forward to further dialogue with the Office in identifying difficulties and finding solutions with respect to the implementation of any examination guidelines relating to this topic.

Sincerely,



Denise F. DeFranco  
President  
American Intellectual Property Law Association

Encls. Exhibit A

**Exhibit A**

**AIPLA Comments on Written Description for Design Applications Dated March 14, 2014**

March 14, 2014

The Honorable Michelle K. Lee  
Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and  
Deputy Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
600 Dulany Street  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

*Via email: DesignRoundtable2014@uspto.gov*

**Re: Response to “Request for Comments and Notice of Roundtable Event  
on the Written Description Requirement for Design Applications”  
79 Fed. Reg. 7171 (February 6, 2014)**

Dear Deputy Under Secretary Lee:

The American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA) is pleased to have the opportunity to present its views with respect to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office) Notice entitled “Request for Comments and Notice of Roundtable Event on the Written Description Requirement for Design Applications” as published in the February 6, 2014, issue of the Federal Register, 79 Fed. Reg. 7171 (hereinafter “Request”).

AIPLA is a national bar association with approximately 15,000 members who are primarily lawyers in private and corporate practice, government service, and the academic community. AIPLA represents a wide and diverse spectrum of individuals, whose companies and institutions are involved directly or indirectly in the practice of patent, trademark, copyright, and unfair competition law, as well as other fields of law affecting intellectual property. Our members represent both owners and users of intellectual property.

The Request was published in part for the purpose of soliciting public comments concerning various topics related to the application of the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. 112(a) (or for applications filed prior to September 16, 2012, 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph) (hereinafter collectively referred to as “35 U.S.C. 112(a)”) to design patent applications. The Request follows up on discussions held between the Office and members of the public during the Office’s Design Day 2013 with respect to the specific application of the written description requirement to designs where only a subset of elements of the original disclosure are shown using solid lines in an amendment or in a continuation application.

AIPLA opposes the framework described in the Request for determining whether an amended/continuation design claim, which contains a subset of elements disclosed in the application as filed (or in the priority application as filed), satisfies the written description

requirement of 35 U.S.C. §112. As more fully explained herein, AIPLA's position is that the use of the proposed framework will lead to continued uncertainty in examination and will unnecessarily increase the cost to applicants to procure U.S. design patent protection. In addition, we believe this framework will limit continuation practice and the ability to amend design patent claims during examination in a manner to an extent not justified by the current state of the law, and will cast a cloud over the validity of a substantial number of active U.S. design patents.

In the Request, the Office states that "in some rare situations ... a question may arise as to whether the applicant had possession of the newly claimed design at the time of filing the original application, where the design results from the applicant including only a subset of seemingly unrelated, originally disclosed elements in the claim by way of an amendment or continuation application." AIPLA's main concerns with the Office's position on this topic are two-fold:

- (1) there is likely to be inconsistent application by the Office of any established examination framework for amended and continuation design applications, which would introduce significant uncertainty into the examination process for applicants; and
- (2) this uncertainty, coupled with the additional efforts necessary for applicants to minimize the risks of losing a priority date for amended or continuation applications, would substantially increase the necessary size of design applications and/or costs of preparing same.

So long as this uncertainty is present, many applicants will necessarily file larger and more detailed design patent applications, thereby both significantly burdening the Office's examination corps and rendering design applications less accessible to independent and small inventors.

Our concern regarding inconsistent application of the proposed examination framework is rooted in the fact that determining what constitutes a "subset of seemingly unrelated, originally disclosed elements" (emphasis added) will be highly subjective and is likely to lead to written description rejections in a broader set of circumstances than is justified by the current Federal Circuit case law. In addition, it is unclear on the Request whether a determination that the amended claim constitutes a "subset of seemingly unrelated, originally disclosed elements" is a prerequisite to applying the factors. AIPLA believes that the Office should set forth a detailed threshold test for "unrelatedness" to be applied before any of the individual "factors" are considered.

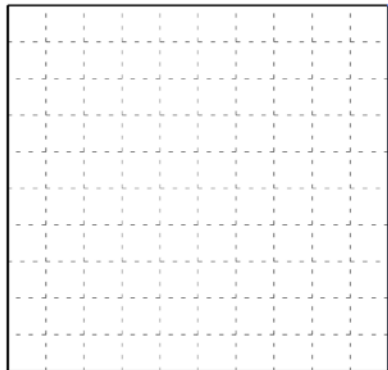
We are also concerned that an "unrelatedness" standard may represent an overly-broad interpretation of the particulars of the written description requirement, as it has been interpreted by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. We are not aware of any indication by the Federal Circuit, even in dicta, that the relative "relatedness" of the claimed elements plays any part in determining whether the written description standard is met in an amended claim.

AIPLA urges the Office to adopt the following Examination guideline as an alternative to the factors suggested in the Request:

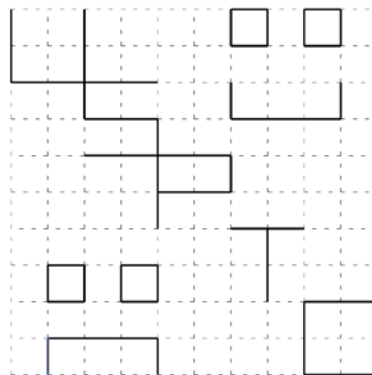
an amended claim that does not add subject matter to the original disclosure or remove subject matter claimed in the original disclosure satisfies the written description requirement unless the amended claim introduces a claimed element not “reasonably discernible” from the original disclosure.

For the purposes of the proposed standard articulated above, “removing subject matter claimed in the original disclosure” would mean to remove one or more solid lines that formed part of the claimed design as originally disclosed. Changing a solid line to a broken line or an unclaimed border would not be considered “removal.” In addition, the changing of any line present in the original disclosure (e.g. from claimed to environmental, from claimed to unclaimed border, from environmental to unclaimed border, etc.) would not represent adding subject matter.

Providing an exception to the general rule where a claimed element that is not “reasonably discernible” from the original disclosure would address situations in which the amendments introduce visual elements that were simply not visible in the original disclosure. The following is an example of an introduction of such elements.



ORIGINAL DRAWING



AMENDED DRAWING

In the amended drawing of this example, broken lines from the original disclosure have been converted to patterns of solid lines that form the visual elements (the word “USPTO”, a smiling face and a frowning face) that were clearly not “reasonably discernable” from the original disclosure.

The proposed examination guideline more closely comports with the legal standard set forth by the Federal Circuit, as best understood, than the “factor” analysis suggested in the Request. This proposal strikes a more appropriate balance between the legitimate right of applicants to protect claimed designs of differing scope on continuing applications and amend the scope of their



claims during examination, and the notice function that underlies the written description requirement.

**Comments and Suggestions Regarding the Office’s Proposed “Factors in Determining Whether an Amended/Continuation Design Claim Satisfied the Written Description Requirement”**

*Factors Proposed by the Office*

The Request sets forth five “and/or” “factors” that the Office proposes to use when determining whether an amended or continuation design claim satisfies the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. 112(a). As set forth above, AIPLA does not support the use of these factors. If, however, the Office decides to proceed with their implementation, we offer the following comments.

AIPLA believes the term “factor” is a misnomer, in that any one of the numbered items, if satisfied, demonstrates that an adequate written description exists for the design claimed in the amended or continuation application. AIPLA thus prefers the term “basis (-es),” since any one of the proposed bases, if met, demonstrates independently and definitively that adequate written description is present. Said another way, if an Examiner determines, for example, that the claimed subset of elements of an amended application has a “common appearance,” then adequate written description definitively exists, and the Examiner need not consider any of the other “factors” and should be barred from setting forth arguments that the consideration of any of the additional “factor(s)” weighs against a finding of the presence of an adequate written description.

The factors proposed by the Office appear below with specific AIPLA comments in the accompanying bullet points:

- (1) The presence of a common theme among the subset of elements forming the newly identified design claim, such as a common appearance;
  - The Office has provided no guidance on how a “common theme” would be defined beyond a “common appearance,” or how “common appearance” itself would be interpreted.
  - Would different elements of a design that share the same or similar ornamentation, curvature, dimensions, or shape be considered to share a “common theme” in all cases?
  - Don’t all elements of a design that appear in an original application share a “common theme” by the very act of their inclusion together in a design patent application?
  - The Office should provide multiple examples of amended drawings that do and do not meet this factor in an update to the MPEP, with detailed explanations of the reasoning for their determination in each example.

- (2) the subset of elements forming the newly identified design claim share an operational and/or visual connection due to the nature of the particular article of manufacture (e.g., set of tail lights of an automobile);
  - The Office has provided no guidance on how an “operational connection” or “visual connection” would be interpreted.
  - A consideration of the presence of an “operational connection” is conceptually distinct from a consideration of the presence of a “visual connection.” Therefore, these two factors should be separated such that the presence of either would demonstrate sufficient written description.
  - A consideration of “operational” connectivity between parts of an article of manufacture is conceptually distinct from a consideration of whether a subset of claimed design elements forms some cohesive or appreciable design that is some subset of the original design.
  - The Office should provide multiple examples of amended drawings that do and do not meet this factor in an update to the MPEP, with detailed explanations of the reasoning for their determination in each example.
- (3) the subset of elements forming the newly identified design claim is a self-contained design within the original design;
  - The Office has provided no guidance on what would be considered a “self-contained” design within the original design.
  - Would this factor apply only if a clear visual distinction between parts is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art?
  - The Office should provide multiple examples of amended drawings that do and do not meet this factor in an update to the MPEP, with detailed explanations of the reasoning for their determination in each example.
- (4) a fundamental relationship among the subset of elements forming the newly identified design claim is established by the context in which the elements appear; and/or
  - The Office has provided no guidance on what would be considered a “fundamental relationship” between claimed elements.
  - This appears to be similar to the “operation connection” or “visual connection” factors, which as noted above should be separated.
  - The Office should provide multiple examples of amended drawings that do and do not meet this factor in an update to the MPEP, with detailed explanations of the reasoning for their determination in each example.

(5) the subset of elements forming the newly identified design claim gives the same overall impression as the original design claim.

- The Office has provided no guidance on what they consider to constitute the “same overall impression” as the original design claim.
- Under this factor, would it be always be permissible for an applicant to disclaim minor or “accessory” portions of an article of manufacture, for example fasteners, small holes, plugs, wires, ports/sockets, wheels, so long as the cumulative visual effect is that “not much” or “only small/minor elements” is disclaimed?
- The Office should provide multiple examples of amended drawings that do and do not meet this factor in an update to the MPEP, with detailed explanations of the reasoning for their determination in each example.

*The Initial Burden is on the Office to Show that None of the Proposed Factors is Satisfied*

As in all cases examined by the Office for adequacy under 35 U.S.C. 112(a), the initial burden should always be on an Examiner to make a *prima facie* showing that none of these factors applies. “[T]he PTO has the initial burden of presenting evidence or reasons why persons skilled in the art would not recognize in the disclosure a description of the invention defined by the claims.” *In re Wertheim*, 541 F.2d 257, 263, 191 USPQ 90, 97 (C.C.P.A. 1976). An Examiner should only be permitted to set forth a rejection for lack of written description in an amended or continuation application if he or she provides a detailed explanation of why the claimed design fails to satisfy each of the proposed factors.

*Suggestions for Additional Factor(s)*

An additional factor that should be considered by the Office for adequacy with the written description is:

(6) the subset of elements forming the newly-identified design claim forms a cohesive and identifiable partial design within the original design.

**Comments Regarding Potential Mechanisms for Establishing Adequate Written Description Support in the Original Disclosure**

In the Request, the Office has also sought comments on whether there are mechanisms that applicants can use to demonstrate that they had possession of designs claimed in future amendments or continuation applications at the time that an original design application is filed. AIPLA members have provided the following suggestions for mechanisms that can, if used appropriately, demonstrate in a meaningful way that applicants were in possession of designs claimed in later amendments or continuation applications at the time of filing of the original application:

- Providing a descriptive statement in the original application that specifically identifies elements of the article of manufacture (if necessary to identify the parts, labeled illustration(s) or photograph(s) of said article could be provided therewith) that, in various combinations, could comprise or constitute a later design claim;
- Including illustration(s) or photograph(s) of an article of manufacture including boundary line(s) that define possible claimed or unclaimed boundaries of additional design claims; or
- Including appendices of illustrations or photographs along with the original application that evidence additional design claims of which the applicant is in possession.

The concerns expressed by applicants with respect to the increased costs of preparing original design applications are primarily founded on the need to include these additional drawings and/or descriptive statements in original applications. It is the experience of AIPLA members that the costs associated with preparing design patent applications is doubled—and in some cases multiplied further—by the need to include additional sets of illustrations or to formulate and include a descriptive statement regarding other possible design claims at the time of filing of the original application.

Moreover, it is unclear what level of specificity would be required in any descriptive statement to avoid being considered a “generic boilerplate statement” in the opinion of the Office. For example, would clear identification of every conceivable element of an article, coupled with a descriptive statement to the effect that the “Applicant is in possession of additional designs that include the combinations of Element A and/or Element B and/or Element C ... and/or Element X” be adequate to meaningfully demonstrate that applicant was in possession of each of these additional combinations of elements at the time of filing of the original application? How will the Office consider such statements when the quantity of elements is high?<sup>1</sup>

AIPLA requests that the Office provide specific examples, in an amendment to the MPEP, of descriptive statements that would adequately demonstrate possession, at the time of filing of an original application, of additional designs that are not fully illustrated in figures provided along with the initial filing. It is also unclear whether the absence of the mention of an element in a descriptive statement of this type could be used to bar an applicant from later arguing that said element should be permitted to be claimed in combination with one or more additional elements because the overall claimed design meets one of the factors proposed by the Office in the Request.

## **Additional Issues**

### *Issuance of Ex Parte Quayle Actions in Design Applications in Which Priority Claim Denied*

Several applicants have received Office actions under *Ex parte Quayle*, 453 O.G. 213, 25 USPQ 74 (Comm’r Pat 1935), for design applications where the Office has rejected a claim to an earlier

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<sup>1</sup> In a design including just 10 separate elements, for example, in excess of 3.6 million different combinations of elements are possible, ignoring potential design claims in which only a portion of an individual element is claimed.

priority date or effective filing date based on an inadequate written description under 35 U.S.C. 112(a). The receipt of an *Ex parte Quayle* action severely limits an applicant's ability to address the underlying rejection. AIPLA recommends that, in design applications where an earlier priority date or effective filing date is denied for these reasons, the corresponding Office action should not close prosecution pursuant to the *Ex parte Quayle* holding.

*The In re Owens Holding Should Be Read Narrowly*

AIPLA's position is that the holding of *In re Owens*, 710 F.3d 1362 (Fed. Cir. 2013) ("*Owens*") should be read narrowly. The holding of *Owens* addressed the narrow factual scenario in which an unclaimed border was added in a continuation application in a location where no line was present in the original disclosure. *Owens* did not involve a set of facts in which a line or element that was present in an original application was disclaimed in an amendment or continuation application.

Therefore, the Office should not expand the holding of *Owens* to factual scenarios in which a line or element that was present in an original disclosure is disclaimed in an amendment or continuation application. The latter practice remains permissible post-*Owens*, and consideration of the *Owens* holding by the Office should be limited to the rare factual scenario present in that case.

*The In re DiLeone Holding is Inapposite to Design Applications*

During the Design Day 2013 presentation given by an Office design practice specialist, a slide was presented including the following quote from *In re DiLeone*: "[I]t is possible for a specification to enable the practice of an invention as broadly as it is claimed, and still not describe that invention." 436 F.2d 1404, 1405, 168 USPQ 592, 593 (C.C.P.A. 1971) ("*DiLeone*"). This quote—along with some visual examples of amended designs that were allegedly "disclosed but not described" by an original filing—was provided to support the Office's position that some amended or continuation designs could be enabled by an original design application, yet still lack adequate written description therein.

The issue in *DiLeone* was whether a broad claim encompassing two entire genera of chemical compounds adequately described the compounds available within the genera where there was no evidence that one of skill in the art could select a chemical compound from one of said genera. The chemical field is complex and subject to a much greater degree of uncertainty with respect to the interchangeability of elements than is a design application, in which all of the elements of the design are present and apparent at the time of filing of an original application. The context in which the *DiLeone* court considered the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112(a) is not pertinent to the context of examination of a design application.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that the *DiLeone* court reversed the examiner and the Office's Board of Appeals in finding that the illustrative examples of compounds provided in the specification of the application thereof did not limit the scope of the claim, and provided adequate written description for the entire claimed genera of chemical compounds.

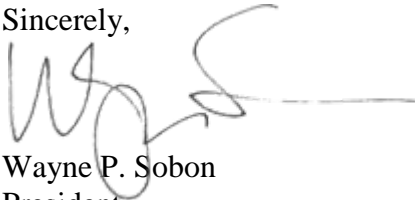
*Harmonizing Treatment of GUI Design Applications*

Presently, design applications for the ornamental designs of graphical user interfaces (“GUIs”) are examined differently than applications for the ornamental designs of other articles of manufacture, in that no amendment to the drawings for a GUI design are permitted under any circumstances. Because there is no qualitative difference between designs for GUIs and designs for other articles of manufacture, AIPLA submits that, for purposes of predictability and uniformity, design applications for GUIs should be examined under the same framework as applications for other articles.

\* \* \*

AIPLA appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments in response to the Request, and to assist in establishing reasonable guidelines for examination of design applications with respect to the written description requirement. AIPLA looks forward to further dialogue with the Office in identifying difficulties and finding solutions with respect to the implementation of any examination guidelines relating to this topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne P. Sobon', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Wayne P. Sobon  
President

American Intellectual Property Law Association