



# EPO faces backlash over scrapping of permanent employment contracts

The European Patent Office (EPO) is considering proposals to scrap permanent employment contracts for all new staff in favour of renewable five-year fixed-term contracts.

There are currently no alternative employment options listed in the proposal, which will affect staff joining after 1 January 2018.

According to the proposal, which sets out plans for the “modernisation of the

employment framework of the EPO”, these reforms would ensure the office’s “long-term sustainability” and allow for a more “flexible management of the EPO’s workforce”.

In an internal memo, the Staff Union of the European Patent Office (SUEPO) described the move as “Kafkaesque”.

The outgoing EPO president Benoît Battistelli entered the proposal alongside the EPO’s

director of human resources Elodie Bergot at the budget and finance committee’s meeting on 24 October.

SUEPO revealed that the proposal was met with criticism from the budget and finance committee, particularly from representatives for Italy, the UK, Poland, and Germany.

According to SUEPO, Battistelli took issue with the criticism, intimating that “it was his

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## Do licensors dream of a BlackBerry portfolio?

BlackBerry expects to earn over \$100 million in Q2 2017 from the outsourcing of its licensing portfolio. Doris Spielthener of Practice Insight explains how

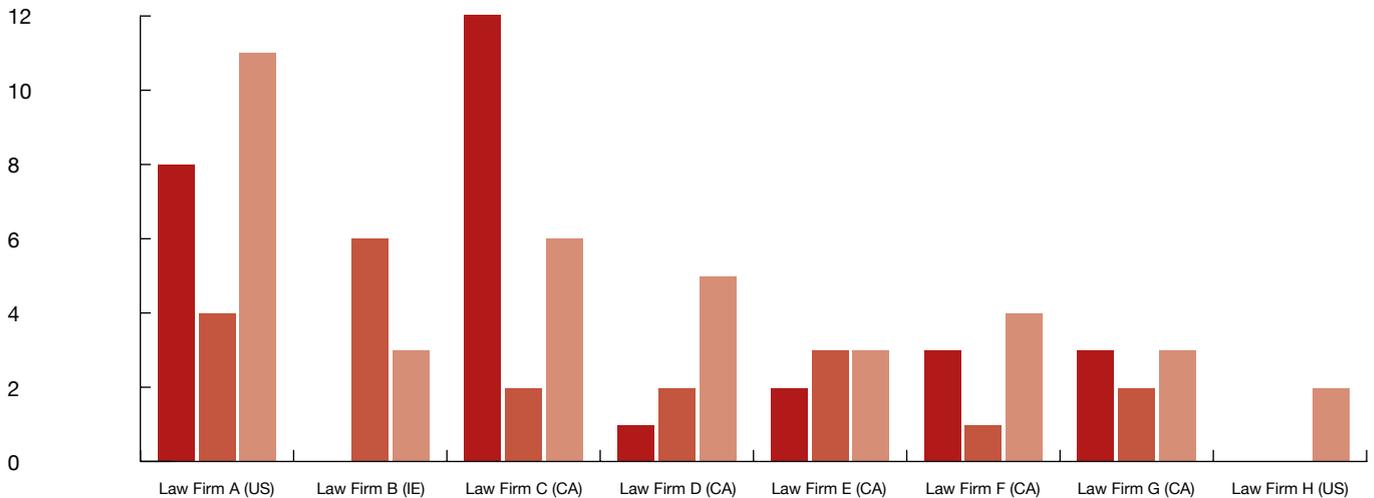
BlackBerry recently announced that it will begin outsourcing the licensing of a large chunk of its giant patent portfolio to the Marconi Group programme, Telety, which specialises in patent licensing across a broad spectrum of technologies. Along with this outsourcing, BlackBerry will operate its own licensing programme independent from Telety's rights.

Although it seems that some key personnel exits from BlackBerry's licensing team may have had some impact on this new setup, one can also speculate that perhaps the new setup was also partly fuelled by BlackBerry's earning expectations from its IP licensing. John Chen, CEO of BlackBerry, recently stated that they expect over \$100 million in Q2 earnings.

It seems that this target is achievable for them. The Telety team contains some of the most experienced patent licensing experts in the communications sector.

Experts that include Kasim Alfalahi, former IP officer of Ericsson; Kirk Dailey, former head of Google and Motorola mobility licensing programs; and former Qualcomm Technology licensing programme manager, Eric Reifschneider, among others. The portfolio is also strong too.

BlackBerry has a strong global representation in terms of its relations with law firms and its application flow. The figure below gives a glimpse into a part of its representation.



ii - 'Filing Analytics' - Case Flow of BlackBerry as an Applicant - <https://filinganalytics.io>

The portfolio also has a strong application and publication flow, a glimpse of which in terms of PCT applications can be seen in the image above.

The most important aspect, however, is not that the portfolio is growing and well-represented, (although that's a great sign), the key aspect is that the portfolio is being cited in a high number of new applications from some of the biggest players in the telecommunications, electronic manufacturing, and allied technology areas.

Some of the most recent applications citing BlackBerry patents as 'Highly Relevant' relate to:

- Relay association in wireless communication
- Resolution of collision deadlocks
- Transmitting physical downlink control channel and uplink data
- Wireless network scheduling
- Providing information about time zone of a wireless communication device
- Establishing a connection between the user equipment and a wireless network
- Fast channel probing
- Improving cell-handover speed

- Identification of a wireless docking station
- Content transfer within and beyond cellular networks
- Reminder for emails marked for follow-up
- Moving ad-hoc network for small cell relay handover
- Seamless Data transmission during handover

A glance through this list tells us that these are ground-level innovations and therefore highly coveted when it comes to licensing.

Just in the last six months, BlackBerry patents were cited by examiners as 'Highly Relevant (X)' prior art for 70 patent filings from heavy hitters such as Qualcomm, Intel, Ericsson, and even Samsung, among others.

This is part of the total 200 'Highly Relevant' citation cases for the portfolio over the last year.

The larger list of citation cases also includes companies such as Apple, Gemalto, Sony, Google, Bose, and many more.

Of course, lead identification is just a small part of licensing, but this is a good indicator of why this portfolio has merit, and why the IP licensing revenue expectation of \$100 million can not only be met but perhaps even exceeded. **IPPro**

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Doris Spielthener, general manager at Practice Insight