

The U.S. Patent Office Issues Patent Number 12,000,000

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Last week, on June 4, 2024, the US Patent Office issued US Patent Number 12,000,000 (yep - patent number twelve million). When I first started practicing in 1989, we were in the high 4 millions. Thus, over 7 million patents have issued since I started practicing. What has fascinated me is the ever increasing rate at which patents have been issuing. The very first patent was issued on July 31, 1790. However, those patents were not originally numbered.

Our current numbering system began on July 13, 1836 with the issuance of US Pat. No. 1. Seventy-five years later, Patent Number 1,000,000 was issued. The time to pass through the next millionth patent has been steadily shrinking, as shown in the graph and chart. It took one third the time to get to patent number 2,000,000 as it did to get to Patent Number 1,000,000. From the 1970's-1990's it took about 14-15 years to grant one million patents. But in this century, the time to grant one million patents has dropped to just three years. One wonders how much more quickly the rate to issue one million patents can get.