

### Building e-Business

OHIM's e-Business system is covered by the accessibility head of the service charter and there have been a number of important developments in this area over the past 12 months. Perhaps the most visible change was the launch of a new-look website on July 1 this year. The site is designed to make the tools needed to register trademarks and designs more accessible to professional users, while also providing a user-friendly environment for newcomers. The website includes new communication tools such as online discussions, email alerts and polling. OHIM plans to introduce advanced multimedia services progressively over the coming years to open up a wide range of meetings to virtual participation.

The new site was the result of lengthy consultation with users and is part of OHIM's commitment to improving user experience, and making greater use of the Internet for consultation and cooperation. The changes have been very well received by users. "Everybody at our firm is happy with it," says Graham "It's far more user-friendly than the previous website and it's now much easier to access the relevant forms." Graulund agrees, noting that the site has a good feel and a modern look. "It's interesting to see how visible the service charter is at the moment on the front page," she says. "I also think that the prominent position of the 'Quality' tab, which links through to a detailed breakdown of OHIM's initiatives for improvement, is a particularly positive move."

This commitment to continuous improvement also extends to other areas of the e-Business system, which will be welcome news to

### Top 10 filers of CTM applications in Spain between April 1 2007 and March 31 2008

Position	Representative name	CTM filings
1	Elzaburu	481
2	Clarke Modet y Cia SL	467
3	Ungria López	449
4	Udapi & Asociados	387
5	Herrero & Asociados	355
6	Pons Patentes y Marcas Internacional SL	347
7	J Isern Patentes y Marcas	319
8	Abril Abogados	204
9	Ipamark Patentes y Marcas	128
10	Henson & Co	124

many users. "The e-Filing system, for example, is an excellent tool, but it is often a real source of frustration," says Prat. As some of the heaviest users of the system, as indicated by our table on page 34, practitioners at Marks & Clerk share that view. "Our main criticism of OHIM relates to the speed and reliability of the e-Filing system," says Graham. "It appears to be very temperamental and regularly crashes when we are in the middle of the filing process. We have ensured that the problem is not at our end and when one looks at the enormous surplus that has been built up, I think it is strange that nothing has been done to remedy this extremely serious problem more quickly."

The improvements may not be coming as soon as some users would like, but Miranda de Sousa asserts that they are on the way. "We are aware that some users continue to experience difficulties with the e-Business tools and we have shadow users in place to assess how the system is performing at any given location at a particular time. We have clear indicators as to where the main problems are occurring and we are working hard to improve things."

Miranda de Sousa adds that users can expect, by the end of this year and the beginning of next, an enhanced system for e-Filing for both the CTM and the RCD. The e-Filing system is being overhauled to eradicate some common problems. The change to the design filing process is of particular importance as there are technical limitations within OHIM's system. Applicants need to file attachments with their design applications, which are often very large files. The present e-Filing system struggles to cope with such files, but OHIM hopes these problems will be resolved by the turn of the year.

In parallel, OHIM expects to extend its e-Communication programme, allowing users to monitor different stages of trademark applications. There are still a couple of areas which are not fully electronic. Once an application is filed electronically the applicant receives an email, but interaction after that is typically by fax. By the end of 2008, the e-Communication system will allow all correspondence between the office and users to be entirely via the Internet. Under the new system, documents, replies and briefs can be sent and processed electronically. "This means that we are



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### Continued Growth for Boulton Wade Tennant's Trade Mark Practice

Boulton Wade Tennant's Trade Mark and Domain Name Group is one of the largest practices in the UK and we continue to increase our annual OHIM filings. In 2007 the firm achieved top rankings in *The Legal 500* (for patents, trade marks and regional offices) and was also awarded "UK Patent and Trade Mark firm of the year" in the Global IP Awards 2007 run by *Managing Intellectual Property* magazine. In 2008 we are the only UK firm to be in the top tier for both patents and trademarks.

Our attorneys are experienced in the management and development of substantial trade mark portfolios and have extensive expertise in the conduct and resolution of trade mark disputes. This includes submitting CTM applications on behalf of several major brands.

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### Top 10 filers of CTM applications in the United Kingdom between April 1 2007 and March 31 2008

Position	Representative name	CTM filings
1	Marks & Clerk	1,075
2	Field Fisher Waterhouse LLP	535
3	Lovells	473
4	Murgitroyd & Company	451
5	Boulton Wade Tennant	431
6	Kilburn & Strode	362
7	Jeffrey Parker and Company	348
8	RGC Jenkins & Co	335
9	Withers & Rogers LLP	334
10	Gill Jennings & Every LLP	309