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Building the Patent and Trademark Infrastructure of Tomorrow

Anatomy of the Machine That Trades Silence for Teaching

Aiman JoeHanz

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Contents

IntroductionIntroduction

Chapter 1: The Receiving Desk — Where an Invention Is FiledChapter 1: The Receiving

Chapter 2: The Search Room — Where Prior Art LivesChapter 2: The Search Room — Wh

Chapter 3: The Examination Chamber — Where the Claim Is TestedChapter 3: The Exam

Chapter 4: The Grant Registry — Where the Bargain Is SealedChapter 4: The Grant Regi

Chapter 5: The Opposition Window — Where the Public ObjectsChapter 5: The Oppositio

Chapter 6: The Trademark Registry — Where Names Are OwnedChapter 6: The Tradem

Chapter 7: The Renewal Desk — Where Rights Are Kept Alive HonestlyChapter 7: The Re

Chapter 8: The Border Bureau — Where Fakes Meet the FrontierChapter 8: The Border B

Chapter 9: The Appeal Board — Where Refusals Are DefendedChapter 9: The Appeal Bo

Chapter 10: The Policy Desk — Where the Bargain Is RebalancedChapter 10: The Policy

IntroductionIntroduction

Every machine in this catalog has asked the country for something: money, land, obedience, attention. This volume dismantles the one machine whose whole trade is a swap. The inventor arrives carrying a secret, the recipe for a catalyst, the geometry of a hinge, the way a lens is ground, and the state offers a deal older than the railways: tell everyone how it works, publish the recipe in the office's own gazette, and for twenty years the country will punish anyone who uses it without your leave. The trademark makes the mirror-image promise to the merchant: paint your name on the goods, keep it honest, and the country will punish anyone who borrows the name to deceive. Two registers, two bargains, and behind them ten organs that do the daily work of keeping both honest: the desk that receives the secret, the room that searches the past, the chamber that tests the claim, the registry that seals the bargain, the window where the public objects, the registry that keeps the names, the desk that renews or lets die, the bureau that stops the fake at the frontier, the board that hears the refused, and the desk that rebalances the whole bargain when the public's need outweighs the private's term.

The method is the catalog's method. The machine is dismantled organ by organ, each chapter a physical place with counters, forms, ledgers and a keeper whose week the reader follows, and the book's composite country supplies the whole stage: an invented Patent and Trademark Office of a nation of around ten million inhabitants occupying a hundred-odd thousand square kilometres, one national office built around an examination wing and a registry wing, about four thousand patent applications and nine thousand trademark applications arriving a year, about sixty thousand live patents and one hundred forty thousand live marks on the books. No real nation, company, invention or mark appears, and every number is a teaching number, chosen round where the argument wants roundness and honest about being invented everywhere else.

The week the reader will follow is a hard one, because hard weeks teach. On the Monday a foreign pharmaceutical firm refuses the country's compulsory-licence demand on a medicine the public health system says it cannot afford. On the Tuesday an opposition lands against a new mark that strays too near a well-known foreign name. On the Wednesday a consignment of mislabelled engine parts is stopped at the frontier under the office's customs recordal. On the Thursday a small workshop asks for its lapsed patent back, pleading a missed payment and a honest mistake. On the Friday the annual gazette goes to the printers with every grant, refusal, lapse and seizure

of the year inside, and the office's ten organs close their ledgers on a week that tested each of them once.

The reader who completes all ten organs will carry away the kit this catalog always hands over: the papers to ask for, the registers to read, the arithmetic to check, and the one question worth asking of any real country's office, which is not whether its monopolies are kind but whether its bargains are kept, its terms published, its refusals reasoned and its expiries honest. The machine's founders thought twenty years of monopoly a cheap price for a secret taught to the whole country, and the whole of this book is the working out of whether they were right, organ by organ, in public, on paper.

Two warnings belong in the doorway, because the catalog's readers have earned them by now. The first is the antiquity warning: this machine's founders were arguing its ethics before the railway machines of other volumes existed, and the reader will meet sentences in these chapters that have been quoted at each other for two centuries, the monopoly as tyranny, the disclosure as light, and the composite country's position, which the book takes as its own working method rather than its creed, is that both sides are right and the trade is worth keeping only while it is kept public, which is a maintenance question, and maintenance questions have machinery, and machinery can be read. The second warning is the glamour warning: this is the office that grants monopolies, and every reader arrives with an opinion about the firm that owns the medicine or the badge on their engine oil, and the book's discipline is to hold the opinion and read the machine anyway, because the infrastructure question is never whether the bargains are popular, it is whether the desk dates honestly, the search admits its misses, the chamber writes its chains, the register prints its failures, the window hears the public, the clock expires on time, the frontier holds rather than burns, the board teaches the losers, and the desk prices its overrides in daylight, and a country whose office does all nine of those things is getting a good bargain even from patents it hates, and the country whose office does none of them is being robbed even by patents it loves.

Chapter 1: The Receiving Desk — Where an Invention Is FiledChapter 1: The Receiving Desk — Where an Invention Is Filed

The desk is a counter like any counter in this catalog, but what crosses it is unusual: the last day of a secret. A filing is a deliberate unburdening. The applicant, an engineer, a workshop, a firm's counsel, hands over a specification, the teaching document, and the state stamps it with a date and number, and from that hour the secret has a public birthday. The desk's first discipline is the date, because the whole bargain is anchored to it: the priority that follows the applicant across borders, the novelty measured against everything published after it, the term's clock that starts ticking on it. The clerk who stamps the wrong date steals twenty years or gives them away, so the desk's stamp is treated like a court's seal, logged, witnessed, and readable in the register by the afternoon. The second discipline is completeness, because a half-filed secret is a public gift with no bargain attached: the teaching must be full enough that a competent stranger could work the invention from it, and the claims, the sentences that draw the fence around what will be owned, must be present, numbered and plain, and the fee must be paid, because the office is not free and its honest rule is that the applicant, not the taxpayer, feeds the machine that serves the applicant.

The desk's keeper is a receiving clerk, and the composite country's week begins at her counter on the Monday morning with a small drama that will echo all week: a solo inventor arrives with a hinge mechanism in a cloth bag and asks, in front of the queue, whether he should file or keep it secret, and the clerk does what the office trains her to do, which is to refuse the advice and give the brochure, because the choice between secrecy and disclosure is the applicant's own private wager, not the state's. She takes his fee, stamps his date, enters his number, and hands him the receipt that says, in the office's oldest sentence, that what he has given the country will be examined, and that the examination will be honest, and that he will be told the reasons for whatever happens. The hinge goes into the pipeline, and the clerk's ledger closes the day with eleven filings, nine from firms and two from solos, and the office's working number, about sixteen filings a working day, holds.

An organ this small needs a chapter because the catalog's doctrine is that the first counter decides the machine's character. A receiving desk that loses dates teaches the country to distrust the register; a desk that demands forms nobody can fill teaches inventors to stay secret; a desk that waves incomplete

filings through teaches everyone that the examination is theatre. The composite country's desk does none of these, and the reader should ask, in any real country, for the three papers that prove it: the filing receipt, the register entry, and the office's published guidance, and if all three agree within a day, the machine's first organ is honest, and if they do not, the whole bargain is leaning before it is even sealed.

The desk's treaty with its neighbours is short and worth stating here. It borrows the identity row from the civil registry, the applicant is a person or a firm the company register already knows. It borrows the fee ledger from the treasury's ordinary machinery, and the money goes to the office's own budget, which is the office's independence. It sends its daily list to the gazette's printers, because publication is not a courtesy but the bargain's second half, and the printers' Friday run is this book's Friday business. And it treats the research system as its excluded neighbour: the laboratory keeps the discovery, the desk keeps the disclosure, and the two machines meet only at the counter, where the researcher decides, alone, whether the next decade is a secret or a term.

The people of the desk deserve their portrait, because the catalog has learned that a machine's honesty is a staffing question long before it is a legal one. The senior receiving clerk is a woman of twenty-two years' service who can date a filing by its typography and who trains new officers with a single exercise, reading a receipt aloud until the class can hear the difference between a promise and a comfort. Beside her sits the clerk who handles the solos, the inventors without counsel, and his craft is patience with brackets, translating a workshop's sentence into a claim's sentence without ever writing a word the inventor did not mean, because a misdrafted claim is a fence built on the neighbour's ground. The desk's third figure is the records assistant, hired from the national library, whose whole trade is the day-list, and whose quiet pride is that no filing has ever been lost between the stamp and the ledger, a sentence she will not claim as heroism but as procedure, which in this catalog is the higher compliment.

The organ's origins decide its character, and the composite country's founding story is the machine's whole idea told once. The office was born from a scandal, as this catalog's machines so often are: in the composite country's founding decade, a state that granted monopolies by petition and favour had granted a decade's exclusive right on salted fish to one courtier, and the price of the staple doubled, and the parliament that resulted enacted a single

sentence the office still keeps framed in its entrance hall, that monopolies are granted by petition only, and never again. The modern desk descends from that sentence's cleanest child, the statute that invited every artificer to buy a term by teaching the country, and the desk's founders chose the hardest rule first, the date, because the founding scandal had been a dateless favour, a monopoly with no public birthday. The reader who knows the founding scandal can see the whole organ's design in it: the stamp, the receipt and the ledger are the scandal's antidotes, and the clerk's refusal to advise secrecy is the statute's own refusal of favour, kept at a counter.

A field guide belongs at the counter, because the counter is where strangers meet the machine. The visitor's walk through the composite country's receiving hall takes eleven minutes and passes four stations in order, and the catalog's guide lists them as a walk. First the board, today's filed numbers by the hour, because the desk's honesty starts with a public count. Second the fee schedule, printed and unbracketed, because a desk that surprises on price teaches applicants to arrive surprised. Third the sample file, a granted specification in a glass case, claims and drawings and the amendment history, because the best teacher of what to file is a real filing. Fourth the queue itself, and the guide's instruction to the visitor is to watch the clerks refuse advice with equal courtesy to the solo and the firm, because that refusal, evenly administered, is the desk's whole character. The guide closes with the practical pages the catalog always appends: the fee, the hours, the forms by name and number, and the one sentence of local knowledge that saves a stranger a week, which is that the desk closes its list at four but stamps until six, and the stamp is the day's last argument.

The organ's future is the catalog's long view, and the desk's is already arriving. The filing of the next decades will cross the counter as bytes, the specification, the drawings, even the hinge's cadence as a model file, and the desk's founders' heirs are designing now for the change the catalog has watched other machines survive: the stamp becomes a timestamp, but the timestamp must keep the old stamp's two virtues, witnessed and findable, and the office that lets the timestamp float free on a vendor's server has rebuilt the founding scandal in silicon. The second future change is the queue itself: the composite country's filings will grow, and the desk's honest response is published pendency rather than quiet rationing, because a desk that hides its waiting list teaches inventors to file abroad first. The chapter's long view closes on the solo: the guide, the tutorial and the no-advice rule must all survive the digitisation, because the counter's refusal to advise is the

machine's fairness, and the machine's designers' test for every new system is the founder's own, does the solo without counsel still get his date, his number and his reasons.

The hand-offs decide whether the machine is one machine or ten counters, and this chapter's inventory is short and strict. The desk hands the filed specification to the search room within a working day, with the classification's first guess attached, and the search room owns the file from that hour. It hands the applicant's identity row to the civil registry, read-only, and the registry hands back the person or firm the register already knows, and neither machine may overwrite the other's row. It hands the fee to the treasury's ledger the same afternoon, and the treasury hands back the receipt that funds the office's own budget, and the desk's rule is the catalog's: money moves same-day or the date's honesty is compromised. It hands the day-list to the gazette's printers by six, and the printers' acknowledgment is filed, because the bargain's publication is a duty with a paper trail. The inward hands are two: the applicant hands the desk the specification and the fee, and the research system hands the desk nothing at all, which is the treaty this volume keeps with its excluded neighbour, the laboratory keeps the discovery and the disclosure crosses only when its owner decides, alone, at the counter.

A teaching note for the classroom, because this machine is a syllabus in waiting. The exercise that works at the receiving desk is the date trial: give a class two identical filings, one stamped Tuesday and one lost to a Friday afternoon, and let them price the difference through the whole book, the priority lost abroad, the novelty destroyed by a rival's intervening publication, the term's clock starting late, and the class learns in one arithmetic why the desk's stamp is guarded like a seal of state. The second exercise is the completeness drill, and it teaches the bargain's cruelest edge: hand the class a specification with the teaching paragraph removed and ask what the country got for its twenty years, and the honest answer, nothing usable, is the office's whole reason for demanding fullness at the counter, before the clock starts, in the applicant's own words. The tutorial question the catalog appends is the solo's question from the week: file or keep secret, and the classroom rule is the clerk's, that the answer is a wager the student must price themselves, secrecy's guards against the term's fence, and the numbers that price it are the invention's imitability, the market's speed and the country's courts, and the student who can argue all three has understood the receiving desk better than most applicants do.

A doctrine card closes the organ, the catalog's pocket summary of what the chapter keeps. RECEIVING DESK: The bargain begins when the secret stops. Keeps: the filing date, the completeness of the teaching, the claims as drafted by the applicant and nobody else, the fee ledger, the day-list's public count. Refuses: advice on secrecy or filing, because the wager is the applicant's own; incomplete filings, because a half-taught country pays full term for half a lesson; quiet amendments of dates, because the scandal the office was founded on was a dateless favour. Fails when: the stamp floats free of the ledger, the fee surprises, or the solo without counsel leaves with less than the firm would have. Neighbours: the civil registry supplies the identity row, the treasury takes the fee same-day, the gazette prints the list by six, the laboratory keeps its discovery and sends nothing.

The organ's arithmetic deserves its own paragraph, because the desk's numbers are the office's whole scale. Four thousand patent filings a year over about two hundred and sixty working days is about sixteen filings a day, and the desk's staffing arithmetic follows from it: at eleven minutes a filing, honest pace, one clerk handles about forty a week, and the desk's five clerks carry the load with slack for the Tuesday peak, and the reader can audit any real office's desk the same way, filings divided by clerks, minutes per filing timed by watching the queue. The fee arithmetic is the second scale: the composite country's filing fee covers roughly a third of the office's cost per application, deliberately, because the founders wanted the applicant to feel the machine's price without pricing the solo out of it, and the examination fee at grant covers the second third, and the annuities cover the rest, so the office is paid for by the rights it actually keeps alive, which is the machine's tidiest incentive: an office funded only by grants is tempted to grant, and an office funded by annuities wants its register honest.

The desk's week ledger keeps the catalog's promise of a lived week, and the entries are the counter's own. Monday: eleven filings, the hinge among them, the solo's question refused with a brochure and answered by his own nerve, and the day-list posted at six. Tuesday: thirteen filings, two from the same firm in the same hour, which the clerk logs without comment and the examiner will later read as a family, and the famous mark's opposition lands upstairs and the desk feels the week shift. Wednesday: nine filings and the bureau's seizure notice arrives in the internal post, which the desk does not need and files anyway, because the office's rule is that every organ's week appears in one archive. Thursday: the restoration plea's paperwork crosses the counter in the morning and the hinge's grant recommendation comes down at noon, and the

clerk stamps both with the same date and the day's ledger shuts with the week's symmetry inked in the margin, a death and a birth on one page. Friday: seven filings, the gazette's proofs downstairs, and the desk's week closes on a thinner queue and a warm stamp.

The reconciliation question for the desk is the catalog's test of every organ: what does this counter count, and who checks the count. The desk counts filings, and its check is public arithmetic, the day-list against the ledger against the fees the treasury received, and the three must agree to the entry and do, in the composite country, monthly, in a reconciliation the office publishes as a line in its annual accounts. The desk's deeper reconciliation is against the office's own promise: the published pendency tables start at the counter's numbers, and a desk that quietly loses filings to keep its queue short will surface in the chamber's tail within a quarter, which is the machine's internal tripwire, each organ's honesty checked by the next organ's arithmetic, and the reader who distrusts any real office's filing numbers should ask the only question that catches the fraud, show me the fees.

The echo trace closes the organ, because the catalog's machine is one machine and the week showed it. The desk's date echoed all week: the hinge's stamp decided the search's record, the record tested the claim, the claim drew the fence, the fence set the gazette's page, and the desk's Tuesday in the first chapter became every other organ's Tuesday in the rest, which is this machine's architecture visible in a single trace, the counter's clock is the bargain's clock. The desk's second echo ran the other way: the policy desk's compulsory licence began with a filing the counter took years ago, a date the clerk who stamped it never saw the end of, and the desk's honest pride is that the trace runs both directions without a break, the oldest files in the machine still carrying the newest day's numbers. The reader's trace exercise is the book's last habit for this organ: follow any real filing's number through its office's public papers, and the number that appears in every paper without bending is the machine's spine.

The solo's Monday deserves its close-up, because the catalog's reader learns machines from faces better than from flowcharts. The inventor arrived at half past nine with the hinge in a cloth bag and his specification written by hand, and the queue behind him shifted while he asked the question the clerk answers a hundred times a year, and the scene is worth printing in full because it is the office's whole philosophy staged at a counter. Should I file it or keep it, he asked, and the clerk said the brochure's answer kindly, that the

choice was his wager, and then she did the three things the office allows: she showed him the fee schedule plainly, she told him the eighteen-month timetable without a hedge, and she stamped his filing when he decided, and the decision took him four minutes and the stamp took her eleven seconds, and the reader should note which of the two was the state's business. He left with a receipt and a smaller bag, the hinge still in it, because the machine takes the teaching and not the object, and the clerk's log closes the scene with the office's own arithmetic, one filing, one date, one brochure, and the wager, as always, the applicant's own.

The closing inventory lists what the reader now holds from this organ, and the catalog keeps it short enough to memorize. The filing date and how to keep it. The receipt and why it matters more than the idea. The teaching-completeness rule, that a specification a stranger cannot work from buys nothing. The fee schedule read before the wager is made. The brochure's honest refusal of advice, understood now as fairness rather than coldness. And the day-list's public count, the habit of asking any real office what it did today. The reader who carries these six things to a real counter will file better than most applicants and audit better than most citizens, which is the whole trade this book teaches, one counter at a time.

A dusk note ends the organ, the catalog's habit of seeing machines at their day's end. The receiving hall at six is a room of light on empty counters, the queue long gone, and the clerk's last act is the day-list's arithmetic, eleven filings, and the list goes to the gazette's printers and the archive in the same envelope, and the hall's lights go off in the order the founders set, desk first, board last, and anyone who has toured the whole office by now knows the order is the machine's own self-portrait, the promise lit longest. The hinge's file sleeps in the search room's tray tonight, and by Thursday it will be a fence, and by Friday a page, and the catalog's dusk habit is to notice that every monument in this series, the bridge, the ledger, the register, was once a paper that crossed a counter at six minutes to closing, stamped by somebody who wanted their tea, and the machine's whole honesty lives in that stamp's evenness, Friday and Monday, solo and firm, the same date, the same pressure, forever.

The chapter's close belongs to the clerk's own rulebook, one page long and read aloud to every new officer: the desk serves the applicant and the public at once, it can be kind in manner and never in law, and the date is the whole trade, so guard the stamp. The reader who takes one habit from this counter

should take that one: in any real office, ask for the date and the register entry and keep them together, because the patent machine's entire honesty is anchored to a receipt, and a receipt is a promise the state has to be able to find again.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author writes the anatomy of the machines that hold daily life together, one organ at a time. This series and its companion volumes have taken apart the systems that govern, feed, trade, police, heal, remember, defend, welcome, and mourn; the present book turns to the machine that trades twenty years of silence for a full teaching, and to the craft of the counter clerks, searchers, examiners, register keepers, hearing officers, registrars, renewal heads, border analysts, appeal chairs, and policy directors who keep the country's oldest bargain honest, one stamped date, one published failure, one public royalty at a time.