

Patenting Mother Nature: Thomson Reuters World IP Today Report Reveals Wind Technology Leading Alternative Energy Field

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Intellectual property analysis tracks patenting activity in wind, solar and marine power globally; smaller, niche companies are the most active

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 28 /PRNewswire/ -- The IP Solutions business of Thomson Reuters, Legal, announced today the release of its most recent World IP Today research report: *Alternative Energy Powers Up*. This comprehensive patent study shows that wind technology has taken precedence in the alternative energy space recently, particularly spurred by high invention activity in Japan, but that solar power has stronger recent activity in China, and continues to have high R&D investment. The report also reveals that small companies are extremely active innovators and that patent protection is being sought heavily in China, Japan and the United States.

The study, which analyzes global patent activity from January 1998 through March 2009, finds that although inventive activity in alternative power has increased over the last several years, single leading players are not the pattern. While many companies and regions of the world are amassing large amounts of alternative energy patents, the landscape is currently populated by smaller companies carving out niches.

"Given the current global focus and economic investment of billions of dollars in finding alternative energy sources, we decided to analyze patent activity to uncover key trends and issues," said Susan Cullen, IP consulting services director, Thomson Reuters IP Solutions, and author of the report. "Our research indicates there is a real opportunity for niche players in this field to collaborate and partner with larger companies that have deeper resources. In turn, the larger companies benefit by accessing novel technology that will drive down cost. The future is bright for all the companies able to seize the opportunity before them."

Key findings from the study include:

- Small Companies Lead in Alternative Energy Space: Small commercial entities provide the lion's share of the inventions in alternative energy when compared with large companies and academic institutions.
- Wind Power Growing Fastest: Approximately 50 percent of alternative energy patents granted between 2006 and March 2009 were focused on wind power. Japan is the leading country for wind power technologies; wind research currently exceeds solar research there.
- Most Alternative Energy Patents Filed in Japan, U.S. and China: Regardless of where the inventions originate, patent protection is being sought most frequently in China, Japan and the United States. A disproportionately high number of patents are also being filed in Australia. The high volume of patent filings in these geographies indicates they could be target markets for alternative energy commercialization.

The report analyzes data compiled from the Thomson Reuters Derwent World Patents Index (DWPI) database and tracks unique inventions in published applications and granted patents in the areas of wind, solar and marine.

To view the full report, visit <http://ip.thomsonreuters.com/media/pdfs/altenergy.pdf>.

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