

Reliability of Patent Searches Based on Title or Abstract

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Abstract

Many scientific studies rely on patent search strategies limited to the titles and abstracts of patent documents. While titles and abstracts in scientific articles typically contain a high density of relevant information, this is often not the case for patents. This limitation arises from the intrinsic legal and strategic nature of patent documents, as well as from drafting conventions that differ substantially from those used in scientific publications. Patent titles are frequently intentionally broad, and abstracts may not fully capture the technical scope or the key inventive aspects of the disclosure. Moreover, patent regulations and drafting practices may discourage or restrict the use of specific terminology and formulations that would otherwise facilitate retrieval in scientific literature. In some cases, patent drafters may also fail to comply fully with recommended drafting standards, further reducing the informational value of titles and abstracts. Consequently, search strategies restricted to these sections may fail to retrieve relevant patents and introduce systematic biases into patent analytics. Such biases can, in turn, compromise the reliability of technological mapping, trend analyses, and assessments of innovation activity.