are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined “negligible impact” in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines “harassment” as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which: (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

On January 19, 2021, we issued a final rule with regulations to govern the unintentional taking of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activities conducted by oil and gas industry operators, and those persons authorized to conduct activities on their behalf (collectively “industry operators”). In U.S. waters of the GOM over the course of 5 years (86 FR 5322, January 19, 2021). The rule was based on our findings that the total taking from the specified activities over the 5-year period will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks for subsistence uses. The rule became effective on April 19, 2021.

Our regulations at 50 CFR 217.180 et seq. allow for the issuance of LOAs to industry operators for the incidental take of marine mammals during geophysical survey activities and prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other means of affecting the least practicable adverse impact on marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat (often referred to as mitigation), as well as requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Under 50 CFR 217.180(e), issuance of an LOA shall be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations and a determination that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers.

NMFS issued an LOA to CGG on March 24, 2023, for the take of marine mammals incidental to a three-dimensional (3D) ocean bottom node (OBN) survey over approximately 200 lease blocks in the Walker Ridge and Green Canyon areas of the central GOM, effective May 1 through December 31, 2023. Please see the Federal Register notice of issuance (88 FR 17819, March 24, 2023) for additional detail regarding the LOA and the survey activity.

CGG initially anticipated that the activity would occur at some point between May 1 and December 31, 2023. CGG requested an initial modification to the expiration date on August 17, 2023, upon which basis NMFS modified the expiration date of the originally issued LOA by extending it to April 7, 2024 (88 FR 70935, October 13, 2023). CGG subsequently informed NMFS that the survey would be further delayed, and requested a second modification to the expiration date of the LOA (from December 31, 2023 to October 17, 2024) to accommodate the delays. There are no other changes to CGG’s planned activity. Since issuance of the LOA, no survey work has occurred.

Authorization

NMFS has changed the expiration date of the LOA from April 7, 2024 to October 17, 2024. There are no other changes to the LOA as described in the March 24, 2023, Federal Register notice of issuance (88 FR 17819): the specified survey activity; estimated take by incidental harassment; and small numbers analysis and determination remain unchanged and are incorporated here by reference.


Catherine Marzin,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2023–25434 Filed 11–16–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P
electronic image per se or a computer-generated electronic image shown on a display panel (e.g., computer screen, monitor, computer display system, mobile phone screen, virtual reality/augmented reality goggles), or a portion thereof, satisfies the article of manufacture requirement in 35 U.S.C. 171. This guidance supplements the guidance provided in section 1504.01(a), subsection (I) of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) (9th ed., Rev. 07.2022, February 2023).

This guidance does not constitute substantive rulemaking and therefore does not have the force and effect of law. It has been developed as a matter of internal USPTO management and is not intended to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party against the USPTO. Rejections will continue to be based on the substantive law, and it is these rejections that are appealable. Consequently, any failure by USPTO personnel to follow the guidance is neither appealable nor petitionable. This guidance is not intended to announce any new USPTO practice or procedure, and is meant to be consistent with current USPTO policy. However, if any earlier guidance from the USPTO, including any section of the current MPEP, is inconsistent with the guidance set forth in this notice, USPTO personnel are to follow this guidance. This guidance will be incorporated into the MPEP in due course.

I. Background


The USPTO appreciates the feedback the public provided. MPEP section 1504.01(a)(I) offers guidelines for the examination of design patent applications for computer-generated icons (also referred to as “computer icons”) that has also been used during the examination of design patent applications related to graphical user interfaces (GUIs). In response to the feedback received, the USPTO has determined that the public would benefit from further clarifications to MPEP section 1504.01(a)(I). Such clarifications would also advance the mission of the USPTO to issue and maintain robust and reliable patents. For example, the USPTO has determined that the public would benefit from additional clarity that the guidance in MPEP section 1504.01(a)(I) does not permit design patent protection for a mere image on a screen. Thus, the USPTO is issuing this notice to supplement the guidance in MPEP section 1504.01(a)(I). This supplemental guidance does not change the current guidance but provides important clarifications. The USPTO welcomes public feedback on this supplemental guidance. Instructions for submitting feedback are provided in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

This supplemental guidance will raise awareness regarding how to file for protection for subject matter related to computer-generated electronic images, if appropriate, including the proper claim language and title to use when seeking such protection. Publishing these guidelines will also promote consistent analysis by USPTO personnel of design patent applications and reexamination proceedings and by the Patent Trial and Appeal Board in both ex parte appeals and post-patent issuance proceedings. Thus, this notice supports the USPTO’s mission of promoting an efficient, effective, and fair intellectual property ecosystem.

II. General Principles Governing Compliance With the Article of Manufacture Requirement

35 U.S.C. 171 provides that “[w]hoever invents any new, original and ornamental design for an article of manufacture may obtain a patent therefor” (emphasis added). The language “new, original and ornamental design for an article of manufacture” set forth in 35 U.S.C. 171 has been interpreted to include at least three kinds of designs: (1) a design for an ornament, impression, print, or picture that is applied to or embodied in an article of manufacture (surface indicia); (2) a design for the shape or configuration of an article of manufacture; and (3) a combination of the first two categories. See In re Schnell, 46 F.2d 203, 8 USPQ 19 (CCPA 1931); Ex parte Donaldson, 26 USPQ2d 1250 (Bd. Pat. App. & Int. 1992). See also MPEP section 1504.01.

As discussed in MPEP section 1502, a “[d]esign is inseparable from the article to which it is applied and cannot exist alone merely as a scheme of surface ornamentation.” See Curver Luxemburg GmbH & Co. KG v. Home Expressions, Inc., 938 F.3d 1334, 1340, 2019 USPQ2d 341902 (Fed. Cir. 2019) (noting “that long-standing precedent, unchallenged regulation, and agency practice all consistently support the view that design patents are granted only for a design applied to an article of manufacture, and not a design per se”). Further, as discussed in MPEP section 1504.01, “a picture standing alone is not patentable under 35 U.S.C. 171. The factor which distinguishes statutory design subject matter from mere picture or ornamentation, per se (i.e., abstract design), is the embodiment of the design in an article of manufacture. Consistent with 35 U.S.C. 171, case law and USPTO practice, the design must be shown as applied to or embodied in an article of manufacture.” See also Ex parte Strijland, 26 USPQ2d 1259 (Bd. Pat. App. & Int. 1992).

III. Background Regarding MPEP Section 1504.0(a), Computer-Generated Icons

In 1992, the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks (the agency’s principal at that time) and Deputy Commissioner sitting in an expanded panel of the USPTO Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences reviewed In re Schnell, 46 F.2d 203, 8 USPQ 19 (CCPA 1931) and In re Zahn, 617 F.2d 261, 204 USPQ 988 (CCPA 1980) and determined that “a picture standing alone is not protectable by a design patent,” and “[t]he factor which distinguishes statutory design subject matter from mere picture or surface ornamentation per se (i.e., abstract designs) is the embodiment of the design in an article of manufacture.” Ex parte Strijland, 26 USPQ2d at 1262.

Applying prevailing case law to a new technology of presenting a picture on a computer screen, the expanded Board panel in Strijland explained that: “[i]t should be noted, however, we do not think that merely illustrating a picture displayed on the screen of a computer or other display device, such as a television or movie screen, is sufficient, alone, to convert a picture into a design for an article of manufacture. Mere display of a picture on a screen is not significantly different, in our view, from the display of a picture on a piece of paper. Only the medium of display is different.” Strijland, 26 USPQ2d at 1263. The panel also noted that appellants “provided declaration evidence demonstrating that the icon is an integral part of the operation of a programmed computer” and that “[t]he declarations indicate that the intended design is not merely a displayed picture, but an integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer display.” Id. Thus, the expanded Board panel explained that such an icon, “if
properly presented and claimed would have constituted statutory subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 171."

Following the agency’s decision in *Ex parte Strijland*, the USPTO issued a notice of hearings and request for public comments. Public Hearings and Request for Comments on Patent Protection for Software-Related Inventions, 58 FR 66347 (December 20, 1993). Among other questions, the USPTO sought public feedback on the language in *Ex parte Strijland*, specifically asking whether “a description in a specification indicating how a displayed image is an ‘integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design’ provide[s] a workable line between statutory and non-statutory design subject matter.” *Id.* at 66352. The notice made clear that images displayed on a computer screen standing alone were treated the same as mere pictures and did not qualify as computer icons, which the agency had defined as integral and active components in the operation of a computer—i.e., embodied in and/or applied to—a programmed computer displaying the design. *Id.* Thus, images merely displayed on a computer screen were not considered eligible under 35 U.S.C. 171.

Over the next few years, the USPTO engaged with the public in a process that resulted in the examination guidelines currently in MPEP section 1504.01(a), subsection (I) in which computer icons (as opposed to mere computer-generated images) are considered by the USPTO to comply with the article of manufacture requirement of 35 U.S.C. 171 because they are integral and active components in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design. These guidelines have also been used in the examination of design patent applications related to GUIs in which GUIs are considered by the USPTO to be integral and active components in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design. Therefore, if properly presented and claimed, a display panel with a computer icon or a GUI—are integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design—constitutes statutory subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 171.

IV. Supplemental Guidelines for Examination of Design Patent Applications Related to Computer-Generated Electronic Images

In view of the above, the mere display of a computer-generated electronic image that is not a computer icon or a GUI (i.e., that is not an integral and active component in the operation of a computer) shown on a display panel does not constitute statutory subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 171. However, the USPTO considers a computer icon or a GUI shown on a display panel, or a portion thereof, to be more than a mere display of a picture on a screen because a computer icon or a GUI is an integral and active component in the operation of—a computer—i.e., embodied in and/or applied to—a programmed computer displaying the computer icon or the GUI. Therefore, a computer icon or a GUI is eligible under 35 U.S.C. 171, if properly presented and claimed (e.g., the drawing(s) fully discloses the design as embodied in the article of manufacture).

Office personnel must consider the complete disclosure when evaluating whether a design claim that includes a computer-generated electronic image complies with the article of manufacture requirement. More specifically, USPTO personnel must read the disclosure to determine what is claimed as the design and whether the design is embodied in an article of manufacture. USPTO personnel must:

a. Review the title and claim language to determine whether the title and claim adequately describe a design for an article of manufacture under 35 U.S.C. 171. USPTO personnel must also consider the following and, where appropriate, make the noted objections and rejections.

1. A computer-generated electronic image shown on a display panel that is not a computer icon or a GUI (i.e., that is not an integral and active component in the operation of a computer) is a mere illustration of a picture displayed electronically. Therefore, a claim to the image per se, to a display panel (or a portion thereof) with the image, or to the image for display on a display panel, will not satisfy the article of manufacture requirement, and such a claim should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 171 for failing to comply with the article of manufacture requirement.

2. The USPTO considers computer icons or GUIs to be two-dimensional images which standing alone are surface ornamentation (i.e., an ornament, impression, print, or picture). See MPEP section 1504.01(a)(I). Therefore, the title and the claim should not be for a computer icon or a GUI alone, but must be for an article of manufacture, for example, a “display panel with computer icon.”

3. When a design claim is to a display panel with a computer-generated image, the USPTO considers the term “icon” or “GUI” in the claim to be indicating that the image on the display panel is not merely a displayed picture, but an integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the image. See *Ex parte Strijland*, 26 USPQ2d at 1263. Therefore, a claim and title directed to a display screen with an icon or a GUI adequately describes a design for an article of manufacture under 35 U.S.C. 171. (Note that though the underlying article of manufacture for an icon or a GUI has functional properties, the design of the icon or the GUI itself is not functional, and thus this subsection is not in tension with, nor does it contradict, the functionality doctrine, which requires that design patent protection extend only to the "ornamental design" of an article of manufacture. See 35 U.S.C. 171(a); MPEP section 1504.01(c), subsection (I)).

4. The following are examples of claim language and titles that do NOT adequately describe a design for an article of manufacture under 35 U.S.C. 171: "display screen with virtual image," "computer screen with an icon," and "icon for computer screen." This list of examples is not exhaustive. These types of claims and titles should be objected to under 37 CFR 1.153(a) for failing to designate a particular article of manufacture, and the objection should be maintained until the title and the claim language are appropriately amended. See MPEP section 707.07(e). Note that a determination must be made as to whether a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 171 is appropriate (e.g., the application fails to provide support for an icon or a GUI). See paragraph (i) above; see also section (b) and example 3 below.

5. The following are examples of claim language and titles that DO adequately describe a design for an article of manufacture under 35 U.S.C. 171: "computer screen with an icon," "display panel with GUI," "display screen or portion thereof with icon," "portion of a computer screen with an icon," "portion of a display panel with icon," and "portion of a monitor displayed with an icon." This list of examples is not exhaustive.

b. Review the drawing to determine whether a display panel, or a portion thereof, is shown in sufficient views to fully disclose the design as embodied in the article. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 FR 53132, 53164 (October 10, 1997). USPTO personnel must also consider the following and, where appropriate, make the noted rejections.

1. If the drawing does not depict a computer icon or a GUI embodied in a display panel, or a portion thereof, in
either solid or broken lines, USPTO personnel must reject the claimed design under 35 U.S.C. 171 for failing to comply with the article of manufacture requirement. See MPEP section 1504(a), subsection (I)[B].

i. If the disclosure as a whole does not suggest or describe the claimed subject matter as a computer icon or a GUI embodied in a display panel, or a portion thereof, USPTO personnel must indicate that:
   A. The claim is fatally defective under 35 U.S.C. 171; and
   B. Amendments to the written description, drawings, and/or claim attempting to overcome a non-final rejection will ordinarily be entered; however, any new matter will be required to be canceled from the written description, drawings, and/or claims. If new matter is added, the claim should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112(a).

ii. If the disclosure as a whole suggests or describes the claimed subject matter as a computer icon or a GUI embodied in a display panel, or a portion thereof, USPTO personnel must indicate that:
   - The claim is moot under 35 U.S.C. 171; and
   - Any new matter will be required to be canceled from the written description, drawings, and/or claims. If new matter is added, the claim should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112(a).

V. Examples

Example 1

**Title:** Animated Icon

**Description:** Figure 1 is a front view showing a first image in a sequence for an animated icon showing a new design. Figure 2 is a second image thereof. The appearance of the animated image sequentially transitions between the images shown in Figs. 1–2. The process or period on which one image transitions to another image forms no part of the claimed design. The broken lines showing a portion of a computer display screen form no part of the claimed design.

**Claim:** The ornamental design for an animated Icon as shown and described.

As presented, the title and claim should be objected to under 37 CFR 1.153(a) for failing to designate a particular article of manufacture. However, as presented, the claimed design in this example complies with 35 U.S.C. 171 because:

1. The USPTO considers a computer icon or a GUI on a display panel to be an integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design and more than a displayed picture; and
2. The application fully discloses the design as embodied in an article of manufacture, as the drawing depicts the design embodied in a computer display screen in broken lines and the description (i.e., the broken line statement) describes a portion of a computer display screen.

Example 2

**Title:** Computer display screen with icon

**Description:** The figure is a front view of a computer display screen with icon, showing the new design. The broken lines showing a portion of the computer display screen form no part of the claimed design.

**Claim:** The ornamental design for computer display screen with icon as shown and described.

As presented, the claimed design in this example complies with 35 U.S.C. 171 because:

1. The USPTO considers a computer icon or a GUI on a display panel to be an integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design and more than a displayed picture; and
2. The application fully discloses the design as embodied in an article of manufacture, as the drawing depicts the design embodied in a computer display screen in broken lines.

Example 3

**Title:** Virtual paper stack

**Description:** The figure is a front view of a computer display screen with a virtual paper stack showing the new design. The broken lines showing a portion of the computer display screen form no part of the claimed design.

**Claim:** The ornamental design for a computer display screen with a virtual paper stack as shown and described.

As presented, the claimed design in this example does not comply with 35 U.S.C. 171. The image is merely a picture displayed on a computer display...
screen. Because the original disclosure does not provide support for amending the claim to include a computer icon, the claim is fatally defective under 35 U.S.C. 171 and should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 171, as set forth in MPEP section 1504.01(a), subsection (I)(B). In addition, the title and claim should be objected to under 37 CFR 1.153(a) for failing to designate a particular article of manufacture.

Example 4

**Title:** Paper stack icon for use on a mobile device screen.

**Description:** The figure is a front view of a paper stack icon showing the new design.

**Claim:** The ornamental design for a paper stack icon for use on a mobile device screen as shown and described.

As presented, the claimed design in this example would not comply with 35 U.S.C. 171 because the drawing does not depict an article of manufacture (e.g., a display panel) in either solid or broken lines. Therefore, the claim should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 171, as set forth in MPEP section 1504.01(a), subsection (I)(B). In addition, the title and claim should be objected to under 37 CFR 1.153(a) for failing to designate a particular article of manufacture.

Specifically, the language “for use on a mobile device” does not adequately designate a particular article of manufacture. However, because the original disclosure provides support for a mobile device screen, the application could be amended as follows:

**Title:** Mobile device screen with a paper Paper stack icon for use on mobile device.

**Claim:** The ornamental design for a mobile device screen with a paper stack icon for use on a mobile device as shown and described.

**Description:** The figure is a front view of a mobile device with a virtual paper stack icon showing the new design. The broken lines showing a portion of the mobile device screen form no part of the claimed design.

Note that a replacement figure showing the portion of a mobile device screen in either solid or broken lines must not introduce new matter. The replacement figure shown represents a best practice for applicants as it is the most likely amendment to be supported by the original disclosure.

**Replacement Figure:**

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**Example 5**

**Title:** Icon for computer display screen

**Description:** The figure is a front view of a computer display screen with icon showing the new design. The broken lines showing a portion of the computer display screen form no part of the claimed design.

**Claim:** The ornamental design for an icon for computer display screen as shown and described.

As presented, the title and claim should be objected to under 37 CFR 1.153(a) for failing to designate a particular article of manufacture. In particular, the language “for computer display screen” does not adequately designate a particular article of manufacture.

However, as presented, the claimed design in this example complies with 35 U.S.C. 171 because:

1. The USPTO considers a computer icon or a GUI on a display panel to be an integral and active component in the operation of a programmed computer displaying the design and more than a displayed picture; and
2. The application fully discloses the design as embodied in an article of manufacture, as the description and drawing depict the design embodied in a computer display screen in broken lines and the description (i.e., the broken line statement) describes a portion of a computer display screen.

To address the objections to the title and claim, the application could be amended as follows:

**Title:** Icon for computer display screen with Icon

**Katherine Kelly Vidal,** Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2023–25473 Filed 11–16–23; 8:45 am]

**BILING CODE** 3510–16–P

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**COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED**

**Procurement List; Proposed Deletions**

**AGENCY:** Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

**ACTION:** Proposed Deletions from the Procurement List.

**SUMMARY:** The Committee is proposing to delete product(s) and service(s) from the Procurement List that were furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before: December 17, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, 355 E Street SW, Suite 325, Washington, DC 20024.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information or to submit comments contact: Michael R. Jurkowski, Telephone: (703) 785–6404, or email CMTEFedReg@AbilityOne.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice is published pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 8503 (a)(2) and 41 CFR 51–2.3. Its purpose is to provide interested persons an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed actions.

**Deletions**

The following product(s) and service(s) are proposed for deletion from the Procurement List:

**Product(s)**

**NSN(s)—Product Name(s):**

7530–01–463–2324—Folder, File, ¼ Cut Tab Classification, Pressboard, 2 Dividers, 6 Part, Earth Red, Legal
7530–01–463–2326—Folder, File, ¼ Cut Tab Classification, Pressboard, 2 Dividers, 6 Part, Blue, Legal
7530–01–463–2330—Folder, File, ¼ Cut Tab Classification, Pressboard, 1 Divider, 4 Part, Light Green, Letter
7530–01–517–1781—Folder, File, ¼ Cut Tab Classification, Pressboard, 2 Dividers, 6 Part, Green, Legal
7530–01–523–4594—Folder, File, ¼ Cut Tab Classification, Pressboard, 1 Divider, 4 Part, Earth Red, Letter

**Contracting Activity:** GSA/FAS ADMIN

**Supercyberics ACQUISITION BR(2, NEW YORK, NY)**

**Proposed Deletions from the Procurement List:**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>NSN(s)</th>
<th>Product Name(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>8455–00–NIB–0139—Name Tape, Embroidered, USAF, Tigerstripe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8455–00–NIB–0140—Service Tape, Embroidered, USAF, Tigerstripe</td>
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**Mandatory Source of Supply:** LIONS INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND, INC., Kinston, NC

**Contracting Activity:** FA8016 502 CONS CL

**JAUSA, FORT SAM HOUSTON, TX**