

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE U.S PATENT SYSTEM

By 1885, America's per capita patenting rate was 4x that of Britain's. Americans patented five times as many inventions each year as the British. Here's how it happened:

COST

First, it was cheap. The first patent law in 1790 set patent fees to a level any ordinary citizen could afford —less than 5 percent of the rate in Britain. This was meant to ensure that all citizens could participate in the developing industrial revolution, and it worked.

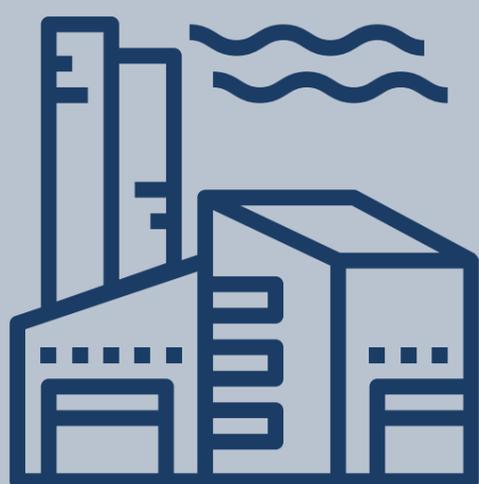


SIMPLE APPLICATIONS

Second, application procedures were simplified. In Britain, applicants had to get approval from seven different offices, and then get the signature of the King — twice! In contrast, in the U.S., you only needed the approval of a single patent office.

REDUCED UNCERTAINTY

Third, America created the world's first examination system to ensure the novelty, non-obviousness, and utility of patents. This reduced uncertainty about the validity of patents, and helped attract investors to fund new startup businesses.



PROHIBITED WORKING REQUIREMENTS

Fourth, our system prohibited “working requirements”, meaning that you didn't have to own a factory and produce or sell products to get a patent. It also facilitated the sale or licensing of patent rights, so you could earn a living as a full-time inventor rather than a manufacturer.

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