

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

HUGHES NETWORK SYSTEMS, LLC and
HUGHES COMMUNICATIONS, INC.,
Petitioner,

v.

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,
Patent Owner.

Case IPR2015-00059
Patent 7,916,781 B2

Before KALYAN K. DESHPANDE, GLENN J. PERRY, and
TREVOR M. JEFFERSON, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

PERRY, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION ON MOTION
Denying Petitioner's Motion for Additional Discovery
37 C.F.R. § 42.51(b)(2)

INTRODUCTION

On October 14, 2014, Hughes Network Systems, LLC and Hughes Communications, Inc. (collectively “Hughes”) filed a Petition for *inter partes* review of the ’781 patent. Paper 1. It filed a Corrected Petition (Paper 4, “Pet.”) on October 30, 2014. Patent Owner California Institute of Technology (“CIT”) filed a Preliminary Response on January 29, 2015 (Paper 13, “Prelim. Resp.”) challenging Divsalar as a publication available as prior art against the ’781 patent. Prelim. Resp. 19–23. We instituted trial on April 27, 2015 (Paper 18, “DI”) including challenges based on the Divsalar reference. CIT filed its formal response on July 28, 2015 (Paper 24, “Resp.”). Patent Owner’s formal response argues that Petitioner has not met its burden in establishing that Divsalar is a publication available as a prior art reference as of the critical date, the same position it took in its Preliminary Response.

Pursuant to our authorization on September 4, 2015, Petitioner (“Hughes”) filed a Motion (Paper 25, “Mot.”) pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 42.51 and 42.52 seeking document discovery and testimony from Dr. Dariush Divsalar and Dr. Robert McEliece regarding the fact of publication of their paper (Ex. 1011): “Coding Theorems for ‘Turbo-Like’ Codes,” (the “Divsalar Reference”). CIT opposes (Paper 28, “Opp.”). The documents Hughes seeks include: 1) all documents reflecting or referring to submission of the Divsalar Reference for publication, 2) all documents reflecting or referring to availability of the Divsalar reference to members of the public, and 3) all documents reflecting or referring to publication of the Divsalar Reference. For reasons stated below, Hughes’ request for discovery is DENIED.

DISCUSSION

Legal Principles

Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), a person is entitled to a patent unless “the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country . . . more than one year prior to the date of the application for patent in the United States.” Whether a document qualifies as a printed publication under § 102 is a legal conclusion based on underlying factual determinations. *SRI Int’l, Inc. v. Internet Sec. Sys., Inc.*, 511 F.3d 1186, 1192 (Fed.Cir.2008) (citation omitted). “Public accessibility” has been called the touchstone in determining whether a reference constitutes a printed publication bar under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). *Id.* at 1194. A reference is publicly accessible upon a satisfactory showing that it has been disseminated or otherwise made available to the extent that persons interested and ordinarily skilled in the subject matter or art exercising reasonable diligence, can locate it. *Bruckelmyer v. Ground Heaters, Inc.*, 445 F.3d 1374, 1378 (Fed. Cir. 2006); *see also In re Cronyn*, 890 F.2d 1158, 1160 (Fed. Cir. 1989) (“The statutory phrase ‘printed publication’ has been interpreted to mean that before the critical date the reference must have been sufficiently accessible to the public interested in the art; dissemination and public accessibility are the keys to the legal determination whether a prior art reference was ‘published.’”) (quoting *Constant v. Advanced Micro-Devices, Inc.*, 848 F.2d 1560, 1568 (Fed.Cir.1988)).

In *In re Klopfenstein*, 380 F.3d 1345 (Fed. Cir. 2004), our reviewing court rejected an argument that “distribution and/or indexing” are the key components to a “printed publication” inquiry because that argument “fails to properly reflect what our [Federal Circuit] precedent stands for,”

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explaining that “printed publication” means reasonably accessible through generally available media that serve to disseminate information. *Id.* at 1348. A printed publication need not be easily searchable after publication if it was sufficiently disseminated at the time of its publication. *Suffolk Technologies, LLC v. AOL Inc.*, 752 F.3d 1358, 1364 (Fed. Cir. 2014).¹

Threshold Showing of Publication

We have required only a “threshold showing” of public availability in order to institute trial. *See Apple, Inc. v. DSS Tech. Mgmt., Inc.*, Case IPR2015-00369, slip op. at 5 (PTAB Aug. 12, 2015) (Paper 14). When petitioners have not come forward with any credible evidence establishing a key aspect of public availability, we have denied institution. *See id.* at 5–6 (no evidence thesis was indexed, cataloged, and shelved); *Actavis, Inc. v. Research Corp. Techs., Inc.*, Case IPR2014-01126, slip op. at 10–13 (PTAB Jan. 9, 2015) (Paper 21) (same); *Cisco Systems, Inc. v. Constellation Techs., LLC*, Case IPR2014-01085, slip op. at 7–9 (PTAB Jan. 9, 2015) (Paper 11) (noting “naked assertion,” unsupported by record, that reference was published).

The fact that we institute an *inter partes* review is not dispositive of the issue of whether a particular reference document qualifies as a publication reference. CIT had an opportunity in its response to produce evidence that Divsalar is not a publication reference. In this case, CIT has not come forward with evidence to establish that Divsalar is not available as

¹ As explained in *Klopfenstein*, the word “disseminate” is not used in its literal sense, i.e. “make widespread” or “to foster general knowledge of” and does not require distribution of reproductions or photocopies. *In re Klopfenstein*, 380 F.2d. at 1352, n. 3.

a publication reference. Rather, it challenges the sufficiency of Petitioner's evidence with respect to publication of Divsalar prior to the critical date.

Routine Discovery

Hughes frames the discovery sought as "routine discovery" that should have already should have been provided by CIT pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 42.51(b)(1)(iii) because the information sought is inconsistent with a position advanced by CIT in its response (Paper 24). Mot. 2. The alleged "position" advanced by CIT is that Hughes' evidence² "fail[s] to establish the availability of Divsalar as 102(b) prior art." Paper 25.

Hughes argues that our Decision to Institute (Paper 18) noted that Divsalar is identified as a cited reference on the face of the '781 patent (Ex. 1005). Page 2 of the '781 patent is reproduced below.

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² Declaration testimony of Robin Fradenburgh (Ex. 1064).

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