Patent Visualization Tool
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http://lancet.mit.edu/viz

You will need a username and password. For the class, you will use your username in ALL CAPS as your password. This is not for security but rather as a way for me to record transcripts of your sessions.

WARNING: Unfortunately, this program will not run on Netscape. You will need to run this program on Internet Explorer 4.0 or better.
Important: You also have to change your Java Security settings to unrestricted access.

Changing Java Security settings:

For Windows machines:
Internet Explorer 4.0 or 5.0

1   Find 'Internet Options…' under the Edit menu (version 4.0) or Tools menu (version 5.0)
2   Click on the 'Security' tab.
3   For the internet zone, select 'custom' level.
4   Click on 'custom…' button.
5   Scroll down until you see Java.
6   Click 'custom', this creates a button below called 'Java Custom Settings…'
7   Click on this button.
8   Click on 'Edit permissions' tab.
9   Select 'Enable' under Run Unsigned Content.
10 Click multiple OK's to close the options dialog.

For Macs
Internet Explorer 4.0

1   Find 'Preferences…' under the Edit menu.
2   In left menu, under Web Browser, select Java.
3   In the bottom right security options box, select 'unrestricted access' for the Network access.
4   Hit OK.

Instructions for Tool:
1   Click on US Patent Database Visualization link.
2   Enter username and password when prompted.
3   Please be patient as it will take time for the applet to load.
4   Enter username in applet, this will allow you to use the tool.
5   Enter 1 or more patent numbers (no commas, typically 7 digits).
6   Press 'Get patent' button.
7   If you see "unable to access patents.uspto.gov", this means that your Java Security settings are not set for unrestricted access. Change the settings and start over.
8   If you see a date/time stamp, you're on your way.
9   Again, you must be patient for the patent information to be retrieved from the database. It is equivalent for waiting for a web page and depending on the network, it can be slow.
10 When all citations and referred patents are retrieved, an image will be displayed on screen.
11 You can rotate this image. Click in the black window and drag.
12 You can manipulate this image in several ways. For items 13-19, check the option you want first and then go to the image in the window. Items 20-26 happen immediately.

13 Zoom: click and drag right to make the image larger. Drag left to make it smaller.
14 Translate: click and drag.
15 Move a node: click on a node and drag. In temporal mode, the node is constrained to it's time plane (constant z).
16 Expand a node: click on a node and the program will retrieve the related patents and add them to the display.
17 Remove node: click on node and it will be removed. Any nodes linked to it will also disappear if they are not linked to other nodes.
18 Add a label: type in a label, click on a node
19 Family tree: set the number of levels, forward, backward and indirect links. Click on node. Shades of red are parents (older patents), shades of blue are children (newer patents)
20 Show directions: toggle this setting on and off. Links "point" in the direction of old to new
21 Show labels: toggle this setting on and off.
22 Temporal View: any patents with dates will be shown in this view. Rotate until the z-axis is pointing up. Time is more recent as z increases.
23 Relax: finds energy minimum of structure. Will stop moving by itself.
24 Fit in window: exactly as it sounds
25 Reset: will re-scramble the nodes and relax them.
26 The pull down menu a the top left lets you access patents in the image directly: showing family trees, removing nodes, and highlighting nodes in normal mode.
27 If you want to start a new session, reload the page.
28 Have fun with it.
29 Let me know how it goes.

Send questions, comments, and suggestions to jayang@mit.edu