Companies and Intellectual Property Commission

a member of **the dti** group

TRADE MARKS AI IMAGE SEARCH
USER GUIDE

Contents

Training guide: Trade Marks AI image search
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1. Purpose

This step-by-step guide is designed for both existing CIPC customers and new users who intend to access and utilise the variable image and associated search functions on IP Online. The relevance of this guide is associated with the Acsepto version 11 upgrade and the extension of the AI image search to IP Online. The screenshots in the guide is simplified to assist existing and new users to consume the variable search features for Trade Marks.
The objective is to:

1. Allow ease of access to IP Online search features associated with Trade Mark registrations
2. Provide a simplified and improved user experience for first time as well as frequent users of the portal
3. Extend CIPC's smart AI search and machine learning features to its clients for improved collaboration
4. Attract users across various diversified stakeholder groups to consume the functions and encourage communities to protect their intellectual property with ease
5. Enable professional law firms to utilise the commercial searches more proficiently and consume full functionality of the AI and machine learning capability associated with the incorporated feature additions

Expected benefits with this optimisation and deployment of the AI features are to attract more users from various social and commercial background to access the CIPC IP online portal and extend social computing to all communities and demographics of South Africa and abroad.

The guide is simplified with search tool-tips depicted delineated as follows:

Unit 1: The Free Search Option covers the following steps:

- Step 1: Access the portal and access IP online as a customer: Login
- Step 2: User login: by entering their registered user credentials (customer detail)
- Step 3: Confirmation of Login credential
- Step 4: Choosing the relevant search option from the drop-down menu
- Step 5: Image search selection
- Step 6: User image (or logo) upload from a device (any image may be searched) or simple question where relevant
- Step 7: Image search and result retrieval
- Step 8 & 9: Selecting a Nice class and entering the on-screen secure Captcha.

Unit 2 : Commercial Search (Paid Searches)

- Step 1: Choosing the commercial search option from the drop-down menu
- Step 2: Image search selection
- Step 3: User image (or logo) upload from a device (any image may be searched)
- Step 4 & 5: Selecting Nice class(es)
- Step 6: Search billing confirmation
- Step 7: Application register page.

2. Training Outcomes

The effectiveness of this training guide will be evaluated based on the successful completion of the outlined steps. Upon completing the training guide, CIPC external users will be able to:

- Navigate the IP Online portal to access Free and Commercial AI Image Search
- Perform an image-based trademark search using uploaded logos
- Select relevant Nice class(es) for search refinement
- Complete commercial searches, including payment confirmation and result printing.

3. Prerequisites

- Registered IP Online account with login credentials (CIPC customer code)
- Access to a desktop
- Internet connection and access to uploaded image files.
- (For Unit 2) Payment method linked to IP Online account.

3.1 Unit 1 : Free AI Image Search

3.1.1 How to Perform a Free AI Image Search Using IP Online.
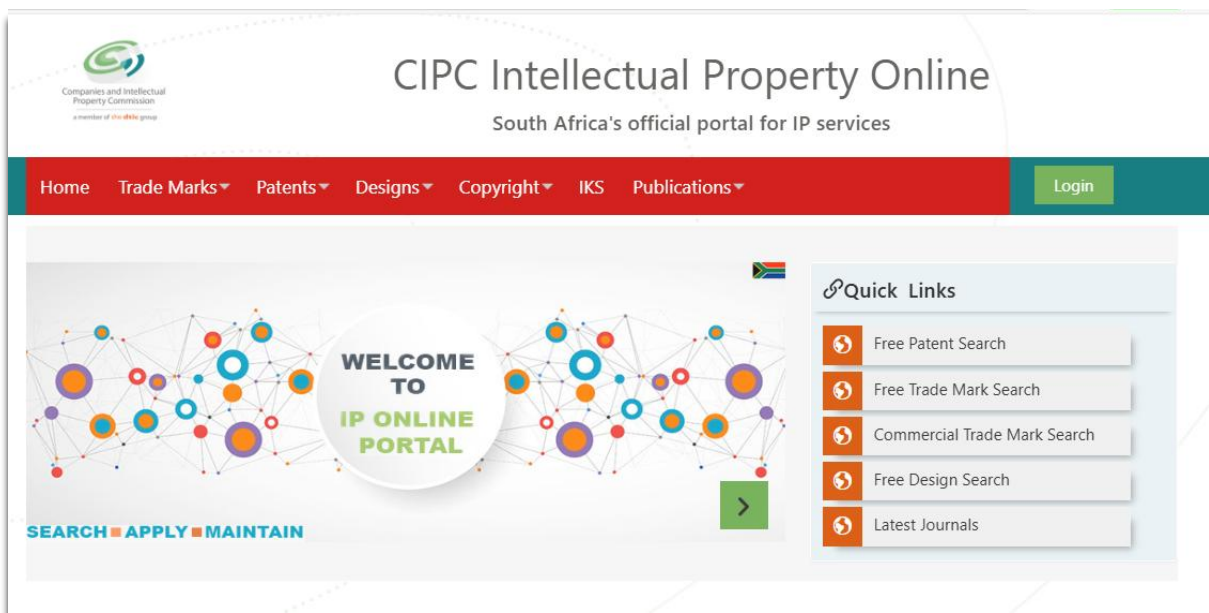
Figure 1: Homepage

The user need to access the portal using the URL "https://iponline.cipc.co.za" to gain access to IP Online

Figure 2: *Login Page*

Step 1: To log in, the user should click the "**Login**" button. This action will open the login page, where the user can enter their credentials to access the system. Step 2: Insert username and password. Step 3: Select login to access your IP space.

Figure 3: *My IP space*

From the previous login page **existing IP users** will have the My IP space page displayed. This page will reflect most recent collaboration on the portal. Proceed by hovering over the Trade Marks "tab" and select Trade Marks.

Figure 4: *Trademark Tab*

Hovering over the Trademark tab as in, Step 4: depicted above, the user should select for example   the Free Search feature to proceed.

Figure 5: *Trademark Free Searches*.

Step 5: This step provides two options "**Simple Question**" or "**AI image search**". The Simple Question search uses the application number and verbal mark as the primary search criteria where known, users may chooses that option. **Step 5**: is focused on the image search as shown in the screen example, the user should proceed by selecting AI Image Search to continue.

Figure 6: *AI Image Search.*

Step 6: to proceed with image search select **choose file** and **select a logo** from a **device** (computer, laptop, photo gallery, etc). This is an upload feature driven by smart drag and drop from any reputable digital location for search purposes. Using a **device** the button will redirect the user to the selected device and associated location. upload the image of choice for search purposes. Using this option the button will redirect the user to the selected location to upload the image of choice.

Figure 7: *Upload Image page.*

On completion of **step 6** on screen it reflects the name of the file that will be displayed. **Step 7**: the user should now select **Upload image** button for requisite result to display.
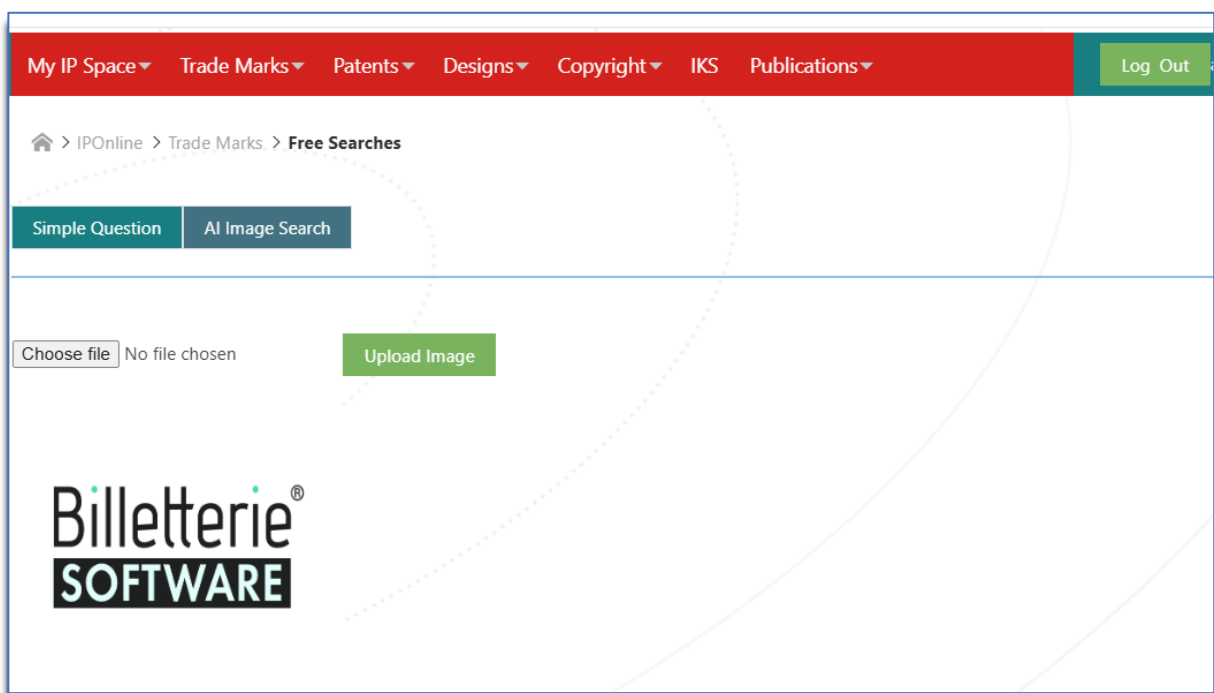
Figure 8: *Image displayed.*

Upon successful upload, the image will be displayed on the screen. Users may also select Nice class(es) following the steps below:
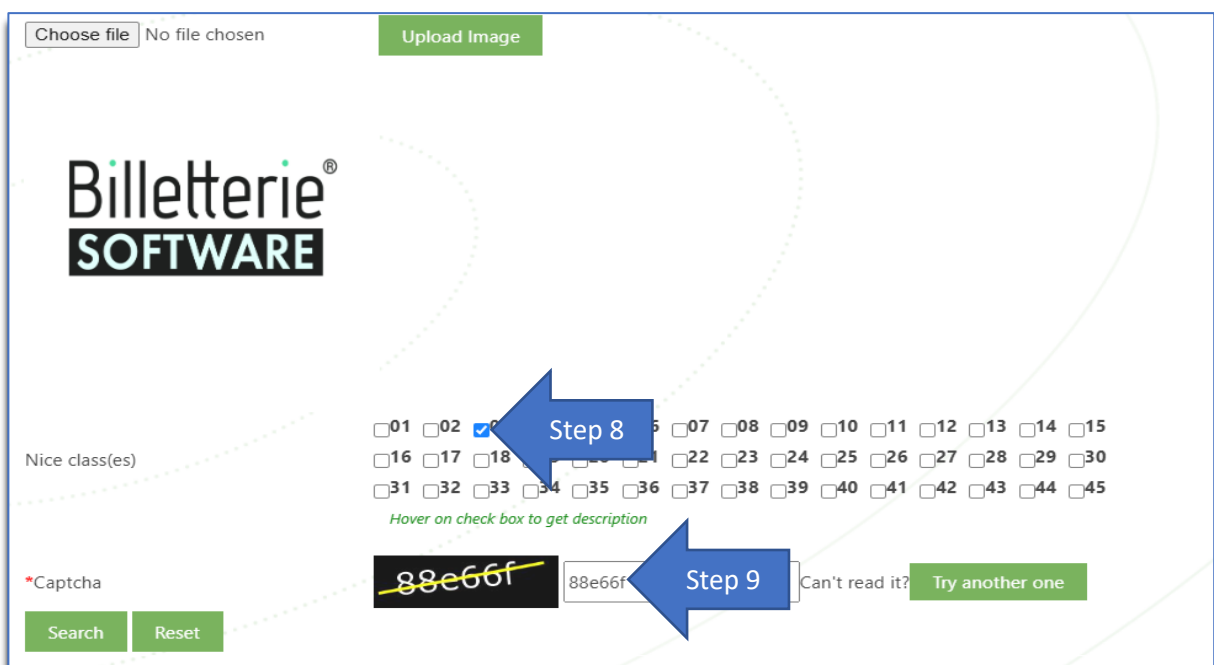

Figure 9: *Image displayed.*

Nice class(es) as in the screen i.e. **Step 8**: Select a relevant Nice class or a few classes and, **Step 9**: enter the "Captcha" onscreen as displayed if correctly applied the user may proceed and select "search" to proceed. The results of the search will be displayed.
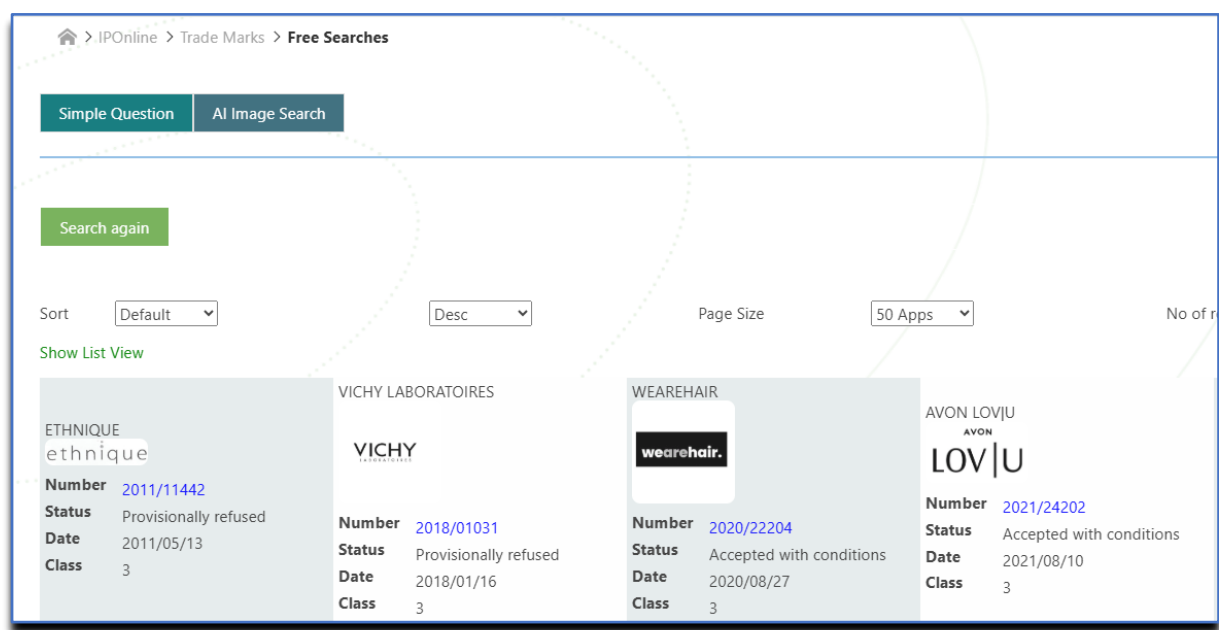
Figure 10: *Image search results.*

The results of the search will be displayed.

3.2 Unit 2: Commercial (Paid) Search

This section is a commercialised function and is subjected to payment depending on the number of Nice class selection. Users may select one or multiple Nice class(es) per search, ranging from a single class up to all 45 classes and will be subsequently be billed in line with the CIPC pricing structures.

3.2.1 How to Perform a Commercial AI Image Search Using IP Online.

Figure 1: *Commercial search Tab*

Once Unit 1: Free Search has been successfully completed, the user should proceed to **Unit 2:** Commercial Search. To do this, hover over the Trade Marks tab as shown in **Step 1** above, and then select Commercial Search from the dropdown menu, **Step 2**: select AI Image Search feature to proceed.

Figure 2: *AI Image Search page*

Step 3: On the upload screen, the user should click the "**Choose File**" button to select a logo from their device. This feature supports smart drag-and-drop functionality, allowing users to upload images from any trusted location for search purposes. Upon clicking the button it will open the file browser, enabling the user to navigate to the desired location and upload the selected image**.**

Figure 3: *Upload Image*

On completion of **step 3** On screen reflects the name of the file that will be displayed. **Step 4:** the user should now select Upload image button for requisite result to display.

Figure 4: *Upload Image button*

Upon successful upload, the image will be displayed. Users may also search Nice classes following the steps below:

Figure 5: *Select Nice classes*

Step 4: The user selects the relevant Nice class(s) and, **Step 5**: select "**search**" to proceed.
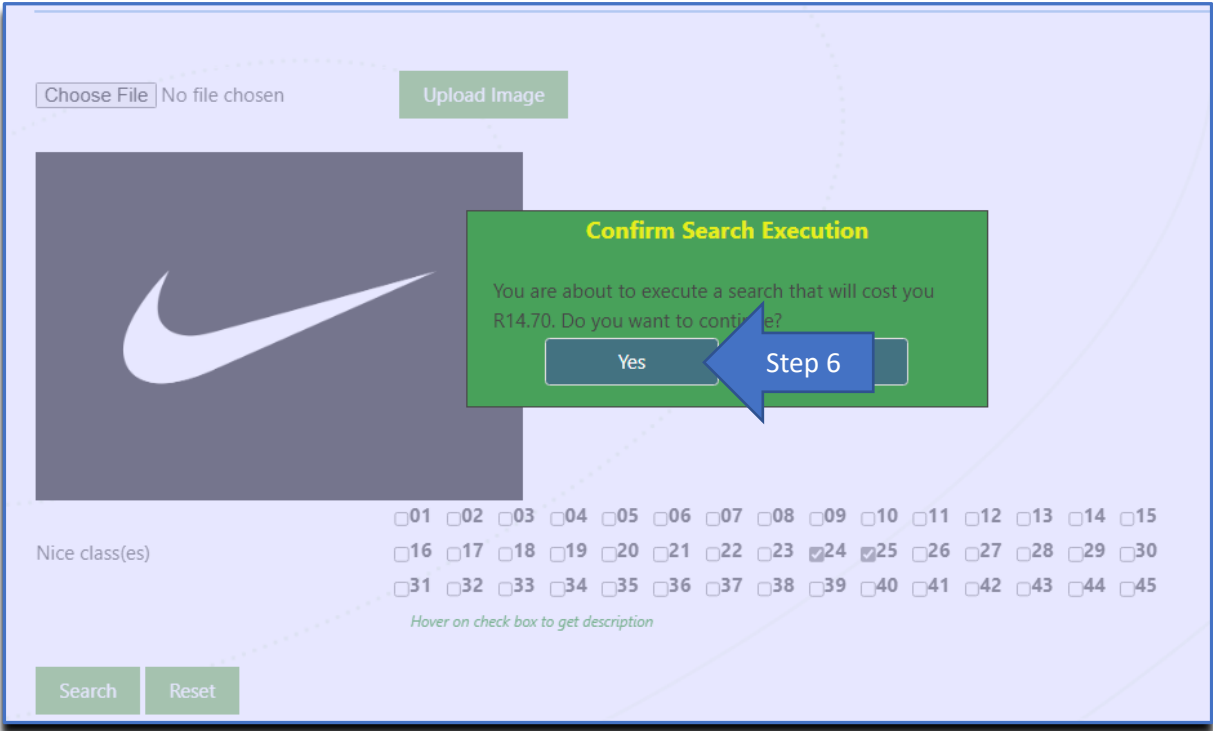
Figure 6: *Billing page*

On completion of Step 5, on screen billing confirmation of the search will be displayed. **Step 6:** The user should select "Yes" to confirm the search execution and to display the search results, or select "No" to cancel the search execution.

Figure 7: *Search Results Display Page*

Upon successful completion of step 6: the search results will be displayed as depicted above.
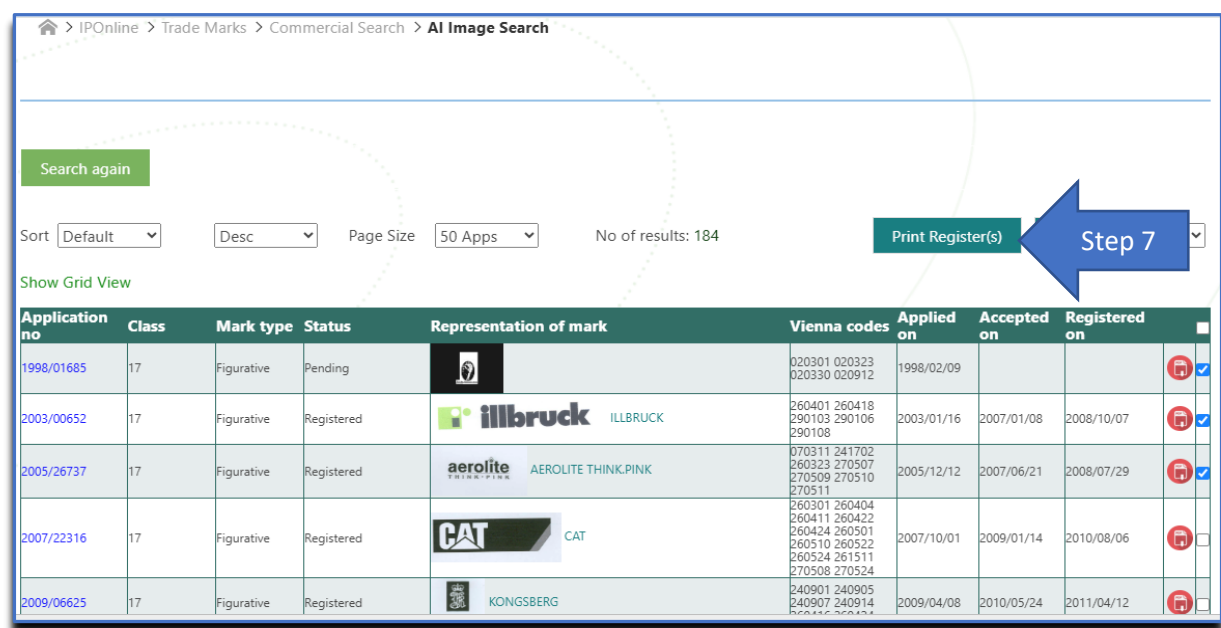
Figure 8: *Search results selection page*

Once the search results are displayed, the user should select the relevant applications by ticking the corresponding checkboxes. To print the register page for the selected applications, proceed to **Step 7** and click on the "**Print Register**" button.
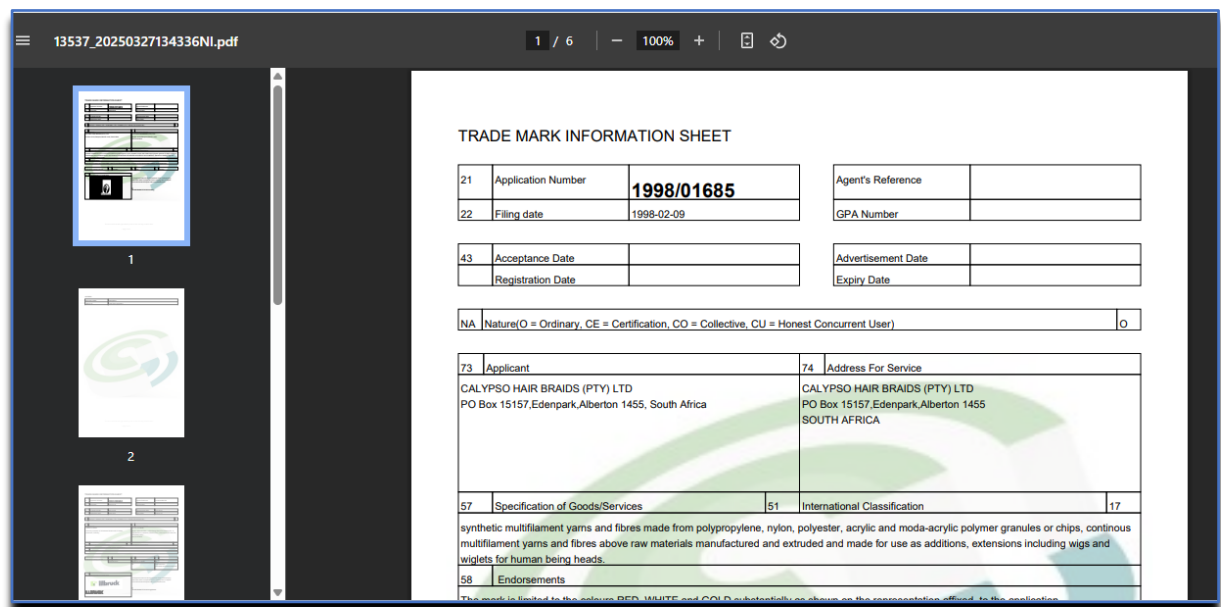

Figure 9: *Register display*

This guide is supported by the CIPC regulations and support services and is aligned with the requisite communications and practice note published by The CIPC Trade Marks business unit in August 2025. *All queries may be directed through the CIPC support channel*.