

Electronic Management and Tracking

Sandeep J. Agarwal

Sandeep J. Agarwal is a licensing associate at IPVALUE Management Inc. in Palo Alto, California.

As the number of universities and colleges involved in intellectual property (IP) management, technology transfer, and commercialization increases, so does the need for additional resources to perform these activities.

A recent *AUTM Licensing Survey*TM survey¹ noted that, over the past fifteen years, the total research expenditures for U.S. universities, hospitals, and research institutes increased threefold. As a result, the number and variety of documents (invention disclosures, patent applications, legal correspondence, patent files, licenses, and various types of agreements) handled by technology transfer offices has exploded. Furthermore, the number of stakeholders has grown and the need for timely decision making and/or the harmful consequences of not doing so has amplified. All of this has helped fuel the demand for bigger and better electronic management and tracking systems (EMTSs). In response, suppliers have developed systems ranging from simple, off-the-shelf, standalone products for database management to sophisticated, customized, state-of-the-art network solutions to serve almost every need. Several vendors are taking advantage of the Internet and offer subscription-based services on the Web. An increasing number of small- to medium-sized offices are replacing their spreadsheets and flat-file databases that they have used in the past for data keeping and management with systems based on a relational database, using complex algorithms and expert rules. Today's systems offer almost any service for a technology transfer office: automated document generation, document tracking, assistance with decision making, automatic reminders, computerized filing, and much more.