Sharing innovative and best-practice approaches for   
teaching Intellectual Property Management:   
A workshop report

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**Background**

Intellectual property (IP) assets and intellectual property rights (IPRs) are central for many firms’ competitiveness, especially in technology-based businesses but also in other types of businesses. It is therefore of key importance to equip future technology and business leaders (i.e., the students of today) with knowledge about how to manage IP and IPRs, which has been acknowledged in an increasing number of courses and programs on IP management worldwide (including at Queen Mary University of London and at Chalmers University of Technology).

However, IP management is a challenging subject to teach, especially due to its interdisciplinary character. IP management teaching often needs to combine knowledge from different areas on studies, including management, economics, law, and technology. The fact that it is a fairly new subject in its own right also makes it challenging since there is a lack of well-developed course materials and course designs.

**Workshop**

To meet this challenge the Institute for Manufacturing hosted an IP management teaching workshop at the University of Cambridge, Institute for Manufacturing on September 16, 2016.[[1]](#footnote-1) The workshop was aimed at academics and industrial colleagues who primarily teach IP management to a non-lawyer audience, i.e. engineering and business students or R&D engineers and managers. The event was kindly sponsored by the European Patent Office (EPO), supported by the UK intellectual property office (UKIPO) and endorsed by the European Institute for Technology and Innovation Management (EITIM).

During the process of identifying and inviting participants we realized that there was a large interest and demand for such workshop, and the list of participants grew and filled fast. The workshop brought together a distinguished group of 25 senior academics and industrial colleagues who are involved in the teaching and training of IP management with a focus on innovation processes, either to primarily engineering and business students at universities or to R&D engineers and managers of manufacturing companies.

**Content**

The program included several sessions related to different themes. During the initial session participants presented and discussed how they attempt to raise interest in the topic, for example through case examples and videos (e.g. from popular blockbuster movies or the European Inventor of the Year award). In the second session Prof. Yann Meniere, currently Chief Economist of the EPO, gave a talk on future industrial and IP related trends and challenges, and related that to the need for IP management teaching. During the third session participants discussed how to engage with practice in IP management courses. One participant presented an exercise where start-ups from the university and region are matched with student teams, who help those to develop IP strategies. The fourth and fifth session focused on possibilities to utilize teaching games and larger exercises lasting from half a day to a couple of days, including software-based online games. Examples of these teaching exercises include multi-team licensing and negotiation challenges, but also foresight and technology intelligence exercises using patent analytics. The two final sessions explored other innovative approaches to teach IP management as well as what to include in syllabuses of future courses. A big area for discussion was how to integrate the different areas of studies and students with different backgrounds within one coherent course, but also how to best adopt innovative didactical approaches.

The group agreed to continue to collaborate and share best-practice approaches for teaching IP management to non-lawyer audiences. If you would like to contribute to the community, please feel free to join our subsequently launched LinkedIn group available at [www.linkedin.com/groups/8572318](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/8572318).

1. Workshop details available at www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/events/eitim/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)