

WALK TO WORK SYSTEM – PATENT INVALIDATION CASE STUDY



OVERVIEW

The invalidation search concerns a walk to work system facilitating the transfer of personnel and/or equipment between a ship and a wind turbine. This system features both a gangway and an elevator system. The gangway system incorporates a height-adjustable pedestal connected to the gangway, while the elevator system includes a height-adjustable elevator.

CHALLENGES FACED

The invalidation search aimed to uncover evidence challenging the novelty of the subject invention. During the search, we encountered a challenge in locating prior art, including both a height-adjustable pedestal and a height-adjustable elevator.



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SEARCH METHODOLOGY

We extensively researched gangway systems to develop a thorough understanding of the subject invention. After fully understanding of the patent, we started analyzing the prior arts. We conducted the search on patent databases such as Orbit, Patseer, Google Patents, Espacenet, CNIPA, and KIPRIS, as well as non-patent databases such as Google, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and IEEE. Our search strategies include keyword and class searches, assignee and inventor searches, and citation analysis.

APPROACH TO FINDING THE ANTICIPATORY REFERENCE:

Phase 1

During the invalidation search, we encountered references that disclosed a height-adjustable pedestal with an integrated passenger/equipment lifting device. However, these prior arts did not feature an adjustable elevator alongside the pedestal, and conversely, prior arts showcasing the height-adjustable elevator lacked an adjustable pedestal. Despite conducting both narrow and broad searches in both patent and non-patent fields, we could not find relevant information.

Phase 2

After a team discussion, we decided to explore other application fields related to gangway systems. Our search revealed that gangway systems with elevators could be utilized in large industries or construction sites to transfer equipment between locations. We then began exploring prior art related to these applications. After reviewing videos related to these fields, we came across one that disclosed a height-adjustable tower and a lift connected to a bridge.

REPORT

- ▶ We incorporated this reference that detailed a height-adjustable tower with a lift mechanism connected to a bridge. This particular reference was highly relevant, as it disclosed all the key claim elements of the subject invention. After compiling the report, we sent it to the client for review.
- ▶ Upon reviewing the report, the client responded with positive feedback, expressing satisfaction with the relevance and accuracy of the reference we provided. They appreciated how well the reference aligned with the key features of the invention.

CONCLUSION

Our extensive research into gangway systems and related inventions involved thorough analysis of both patent and non-patent literature using various databases and search strategies.

Despite encountering references disclosing height-adjustable pedestals with integrated lifting devices and height-adjustable elevators separately, we found no prior art combining both features into a single system. Thus, we expanded our exploration to other application fields led us to discover potential applications in industries and construction sites.

This broader perspective prompted us to delve into related prior art, ultimately leading to the identification of a video disclosing a height-adjustable tower and lift connected to a bridge, offering valuable insights for further development and innovation in gangway systems.

PRO TIP

When dealing with complex and challenging inventions, don't restrict your search to the specific field outlined in the patent. Instead, explore alternative technology applications if the evidence is difficult to obtain.

Expert

She holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering and 4.5 years of expertise in patent research. Her specialized areas include aviation, turbine technology, and the automotive industry. She has successfully completed projects in novelty/ patentability search, invalidation search, freedom-to-operate search, state-of-the-art search, landscape analysis, and portfolio analysis.

