

IP Inclusive: LEO's report 2Q 2020



IP INCLUSIVE

Working for diversity and inclusion in IP

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1 General

The Covid-19 crisis has inevitably caused some adjustment of our 2020 priorities. We have focused more on mental health and wellbeing, and on providing support and a sense of community. Evidence from various informal (virtual) get-togethers suggests that IP Inclusive has been a source of much-appreciated peer support, especially through the communities and regional networks, who are working together more now than ever.

2 Progress on 2020 priorities

2.1 Extending our reach

Persuade more people of the importance of diversity and inclusion (D&I) to the IP professions

- Communities and regional networks collaborating on projects to encourage and support diversity “allies”:
 - June: Women in IP’s first ever “Men in IP coffee date”, discussing work-life balance and parenting, in particular in view of the lockdown. I chaired but all other participants were men, from a good range of IP roles and career levels. The event was really enjoyable and seemed to be well received. Key outcomes were published in a website News & Features post.
 - June: diversity breakfast (with CIPA and CITMA) revamped as a virtual event, including talks and a “fireside chat” with Daniel Winterfeldt, founder and chair of InterLaw Diversity Forum, and Parminder Lally, another diversity champion, on the topic “Allies and intersectionality”.
 - Planning to record Parminder’s and Daniel’s main talks, for publication to the wider IP Inclusive community in July, possibly also adding recorded interviews with other people on the “intersectionality” theme.
 - June: panel discussion and workshop on “Allies and supporters”, a collaboration between the North of England and Midlands networks and involving all five communities. Originally intended as an 8-location event in March but rescheduled in a virtual format. This event attracted 150 registrants, including from senior roles.
 - Hoping to work with the communities in 3Q 2020 to establish “quick wins” for supporting the groups they represent.
- May: webinar with CIPA on workplace harassment, to help improve our offering for business support professionals.
- June: event on the importance of D&I to staff recruitment and retention, again targeted at business support professionals. Panellists included specialist IP recruitment consultants and a senior HR professional from the IPO.
 - Report of the key outcomes published on our website Resources page: it emphasises the business case for D&I, and provides recommendations for both individual organisations and the sector as a whole to make the most of the post-lockdown opportunities and drive positive change.
- Shortly to send out invitations to a round-table/think-tank to engage senior leaders in the patent and trade mark professions. This is a joint project with CIPA and CITMA, being led by CIPA’s Honorary Secretary Gwilym Roberts and me.
 - Still hoping to involve Simon Fanshawe (journalist, presenter, Stonewall co-founder, diversity champion and business consultant) in this project, post-lockdown when a live event becomes feasible.
 - Desired outcomes: high-level commitments; new and more influential “champions”.

- Where possible, we're encouraging event attendees to invite someone along who has not been involved with IP Inclusive before.
- Generally, lockdown has led to more remote access events, which have been easier to organise and helped us reach more people.

2.2 Disability confidence

Through IP Ability, encourage and support disability confidence in the IP professions

- Plans progressing for a webinar on invisible disabilities.
- Intending to provide a session on disability awareness for CIPA Congress in September, the new virtual format being particularly helpful for some IP Ability committee members.
- Social media activity for Global Accessibility Awareness Day (21 May) and generally around issues relating to the lockdown and working from home (wfh).
- Feature article published to mark Carers Week (8-14 June), interviewing IP professionals with caring responsibilities and sharing tips for employees and employers.
- New Facebook group set up (though not yet widely used).
- Resources being compiled about accessibility, in particular of technology used by IP professionals (eg websites, online training resources, virtual meetings and their registration procedures). I will work with IP Ability later in the year to ascertain how the IP Inclusive website can be made more accessible for disabled people.
- Continuing to collaborate with appropriate external organisations, including the disability support network PurpleSpace who helped with our July 2019 webinar on disability confidence.
- Working with CIPA and a number of IP professionals on issues to do with accessibility of the European patent qualifying exams:
 - On hold somewhat following cancellation of the 2020 EQEs and associated fall-out.
 - May soon attempt a survey with IP Futures to determine the extent of the problem.

2.3 Ethnic diversity

Through IP & ME, understand more about, and begin to address, the current low levels of ethnic diversity in the IP professions

- Survey for World Day for Cultural Diversity (21 May), to understand more about what "culture" means to different people; results reported in the form of "word clouds".
- Inspired by the June #BlackLivesMatter campaigns, we published statements in support of the BAME community, on behalf of IP Inclusive as a whole and also from the individual communities expressing their solidarity with IP & ME.

- Round-table/think-tank meeting scheduled for July, to tackle BAME representation in the IP professions, partly in response to our November 2019 benchmarking survey and spurred on by the #BlackLivesMatter campaign.
 - Will involve IP & ME members and other high-level invited representatives from IP sector organisations.
 - Tim Moss (IPO Chief Executive) will address the meeting and endorse its objectives.
 - Likely discussion topics: increasing BAME levels on recruitment into the sector; improving BAME visibility within the sector; supporting BAME professionals; tackling unconscious bias; improving our evidence base.
 - Desired outcomes: practical measures (both systemic and local) to improve ethnic diversity and inclusion; ideas for future research or discussion.
- Beginning work on a BAME speakers' directory, to help improve visibility of BAME professionals in the IP sector.
- Further discussion event being planned for later in the year.

2.4 Careers in Ideas (CinI)

Continue to raise awareness of, and improve access to, IP-related professions, focusing on currently under-represented groups; develop the existing Careers in Ideas resources

- CinI “task force” (initially established March 2019) met again in May:
 - Individual working groups continue to progress specific projects.
 - Next plenary catch-up scheduled for July.
- Within the comms working group:
 - Regular posts on the new LinkedIn group, Twitter and the website news page (in particular a series of blog posts with IP Out and iPride, to mark Pride Month).
 - Website upgraded to allow more editing at our end; in particular we can now post our own new resources and sponsor names.
 - New email account set up and being regularly monitored again.
- The project to develop the existing CinI resources (to create targeted resources for school years 10 and 12 and an updated “careers pathways guide”) has been put on hold due to lack of volunteer time and potential difficulties raising sponsorship during these difficult economic times.
- Further working groups continue to collate information on our contact with educational establishments (including universities offering business and/or law courses), careers advisers, charities and other relevant organisations.
- One group will take part in an online careers talk for the Leeds-based University of Law in early July, showcasing Careers in Ideas and a range of different IP-related careers.
- Task force members also continue to share ideas and experiences based on their own outreach activities, which will be useful in developing our resource packs and guidance for IP professionals' outreach activities.

- Collaborating with IP Federation on projects to do with socio-economic mobility and access to the IP professions: this has been on hold due to the impact of lockdown on the IP Federation’s centenary plans, but recently revived and will probably begin with a virtual round-table/think tank in the autumn.
- Still planning a “Careers in Ideas Week”, 16-22 November 2020 (a replacement for IP Inclusive Week this year), but will have to be limited to virtual events and activities, eg careers talks, vlogs, work experience “taster” sessions, webinars or workshops on job application or workplace skills.

2.5 The EDI Charter

Encourage and support greater involvement from Charter signatories, and fulfilment of the Charter commitments

- Regional networks’ committees still meet, virtually, and have organised virtual events such as the Midlands coffee morning for Mental Health Awareness Week (see 4 below) and the joint North of England and Midlands event on “allies and supporters” (2.1 above).
- South West network quieter recently due to its key committee members’ professional and domestic workloads; if necessary I can step in here during 3Q 2020 as we’ve a few potential mental health-related events that could be run from the South West.
- Plenty of regional involvement in the Women in IP coffee mornings, each of which consists of a series of separately-hosted meetings based around the country (Murgitroyd’s offices have been particularly helpful, thanks to their Laurence Cheney who leads the Scotland network).
- The North of England network ran a social media campaign to mark Mental Health Awareness Week in May; in time for this it set up its own dedicated gmail address and LinkedIn group.
- Northern Ireland network in gestation, again with Murgitroyd’s help and following a successful Women in IP coffee morning hosted from Belfast.
- We’ve acquired 3 new Charter signatories since 31 March 2020. We lost one through a merger with an existing signatory, and a second due to the withdrawal of contact details for their designated EDI Officer and their failure to respond to our subsequent emails.
- Planning to run a survey of Charter signatories in the summer, seeking their views on the proposed new CIC structure and their willingness to contribute to its funding.

3 The five communities

The communities have been a key focus for the supportive community IP Inclusive has become during lockdown. Their committees have been doing amazing work to keep the communities alive and active despite everything else going on.

In May I chaired a virtual get-together of the community and regional network leads, which all seemed to find useful. It was a chance to get to know one another, to share ideas and inspire and co-ordinate plans, and also for me to express my gratitude and support. Ben Buchanan and Julia Florence joined the meeting to represent IPIM. I'm hoping to organise a similar event later this year.

The killing of George Floyd in late May, and the subsequent #BlackLivesMatter campaign, brought all five communities together in condemning racial injustice and committing to IP Inclusive's work for a more equal and inclusive IP sector. IP Ability, IP Futures, IP Out and Women in IP all published statements in support of IP & ME and of BAME members of the IP professions.

- **IP & ME**
 - See 2.3 above
- **IP Ability**
 - See 2.2 above
- **IP Futures**
 - Virtual coffee morning in May (with breakout rooms to allow more people to contribute to discussions)
 - Virtual pub quiz evening in June
- **IP Out**
 - Blog posts to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia (17 May) and Pride Month (June)
 - Collaboration with Careers in Ideas and the IPO's iPride network on a series of posts on the CinI website for Pride Month, with personal stories about being "out" at work
 - Social event in June combining a virtual LGBTQ+ history tour of Soho with "networking roulette"
 - July event planned: "An introduction to non-binary identities"
- **Women in IP**
 - Virtual coffee mornings in April and June:
 - Regional hubs were used to create a series of smaller meetings.
 - Both series had a theme, largely around the impact of lockdown; collated discussion points were reported on the website News & Features page.
 - These events have proved very popular; the next series is planned for mid-July, as a "lunch date" instead of early morning.
 - Coffee mornings also attracting interest from overseas; see 7 below.
 - First "Men in IP" informal coffee morning in June, on the theme of "Work-life balance and the 21st Century father".
 - Webinar on "How to say no", with career coach Jo Maughan, in June – our first attempt at a webinar hosted on the IP Inclusive (ie my) Zoom account; worked OK, with well over 60 participants.
 - E-newsletter circulated to mailing list subscribers in May; an archive of previous newsletters is now available on the website.

- Survey in May (also via the Women in IP mailing list) on preferred event timings, both during lockdown and to suit “normal” working arrangements. Results showed a wide spread of preferences and will inform future scheduling; we will provide a range of event timings so as to reach more people.
- The committee continues to meet monthly to ensure a focused pipeline of events and activities.

4 Mental health & wellbeing

- Continued to work with LawCare and Jonathan’s Voice on mental health-related issues, including through my role as a LawCare “Champion”; provided input into Jonathan’s Voice guidance booklets for patent and trade mark professionals (including a version for leaders and managers).
- April: ran three webinars with CIPA, LawCare and Jonathan’s Voice:
 - Stress, burn-out and addiction.
 - The mental health impact of wfh (organised in a hurry as part of our response to the lockdown).
 - Support for mental health first aiders.
- May: Ben Buchanan and I took part in CIPA’s “Two IPs in a Pod” podcast about mental health and lockdown.
- May: Mental Health Awareness Week (theme changed from “sleep” to “kindness” in light of Covid-19):
 - North of England network published collated comments from IP professionals about adjusting to life in lockdown.
 - Midlands network virtual coffee morning discussed what “kindness” looks like, in particular during lockdown.
 - IP & ME survey for World Cultural Diversity Day included the question “How can people be kind to others who do not have the same cultural beliefs as them?”
 - Various other posts, on the website News & Features page and the communities’ LinkedIn groups, featured contributions from around the IP community and also links to relevant third party content and resources.
- June: set up a support network for mental health first aiders in the IP professions:
 - A small group of enthusiasts has established private LinkedIn and WhatsApp groups, which MHFAers can apply to join, with a rota for checking and refreshing LinkedIn content every 3 days.
 - This is to provide peer support, allow the sharing of ideas and experiences, and link to useful resources elsewhere; it will not provide advice or counselling.
- LawCare survey on mental wellbeing in the legal sector (instead of our annual Mental Health Awareness Week survey; we will have access to IP sector-specific data) – postponed till the autumn.

5 Covid-19 response

- As mentioned at 1 above, lockdown has caused mental health to assume a higher priority than originally intended; that's been feasible because I've been able to combine my voluntary work as a LawCare champion with additional voluntary work for IP Inclusive.
- It's also become very important for IP Inclusive to bring people together, keep conversations going in a range of forums, strengthen support networks, provide reassurance and signpost other forms of support.
- On the whole our communities and regional networks have adapted well to the new virtual working arrangements, and we've continued to offer a range of IP Inclusive events, both training/awareness-raising and social/networking.
 - If anything, virtual working methods have made it easier and quicker for us to organise meetings and to allow more people access, especially since Zoom meetings can be recorded.
- Bringing the community and regional network leads together for the May meeting mentioned at 3 above was a well-timed opportunity to catch up, celebrate and coordinate; it seemed to inspire people to reinvigorate their efforts.
- We've continued to stimulate and host conversations, and to signpost resources, through our website and other social media outlets.
 - 18 of our News & Features posts this quarter related in some way to the Covid-19 lockdown: topics covered included leadership, anxiety, isolation, practical tips for wfh, and LawCare's Covid-19 resources.
 - There appear to be more conversations going on in our LinkedIn groups, and more comments on our News & Features posts, than pre-lockdown.
- Our April webinar with CIPA and others (see 4 above) addressed the mental health implications of wfh.
- Other events have woven the theme in, looking at the impact of lockdown on for example stress and burn-out (April webinar); the mental health first aider's role (April webinar); managing workplace behaviour and in particular harassment (May webinar); kindness and mental health (May activities for Mental Health Awareness Week); staff recruitment and retention (June round-table); the role of allies (June panel discussion); and various coffee dates for Women in IP, Men in IP and IP Futures.

6 Operational

6.1 Websites

- 29 News & Features posts on the IP Inclusive website since 31 March 2020, including IP Inclusive news, event reports, guest blogs and comment.
- 6 News posts on the Careers in Ideas website during the same period.

- See 2.4 above re Careers in Ideas website upgrades.
- CIPA kindly agreed to renew our Careers in Ideas domain name registrations in June.

6.2 Other

- The Zoom account (set up in my name but intended largely for IP Inclusive's use) is proving its worth – we've organised many meetings, including simple planning calls, round-table discussions, pseudo-webinars and social gatherings. Breakout rooms have proved useful for more interactive discussions. IP Futures have also used the account for some of their own events.
 - I recommend that IP Inclusive adopt this account when renewed in March 2021.
- We've avoided upgrading the Mailchimp account to a paid version this quarter, by "archiving" some of our older contact lists, but upgrade will almost certainly be needed in 3Q 2020 if current sign-up rates continue. IPReg's 2020 funding covers this.
- Proposals presented to IPIM for conversion of IP Inclusive into a Community Interest Company (CIC), with initial thoughts around funding models and on a stakeholder survey to canvass views on the proposals.
 - Aiming to run the survey in mid-July and work on more detailed proposals in time for the 2021 AGM and an associated consultation period.
- I attended IPIM meetings on 4 May and 16 June 2020.

7 Miscellaneous

- We've had interest from IP professionals overseas in setting up or attending IP Inclusive events. Thus far, with IPIM's approval, we've taken the line that IP Inclusive is for UK-based IP professionals only, but that groups in other countries may if they wish run events that are "inspired by" – or in cases where we have better contact "associated with" – IP Inclusive.
 - The Women in IP coffee mornings have generated the most interest from overseas, forging particularly close links with Ireland where two "associated" events have been run alongside ours and promoted via our website.
- In June I was named in *World Intellectual Property Review's* list of "Influential Women in IP 2020". This helps to raise the IP Inclusive profile, and positions us better to catalyse positive changes in the IP professions.

ARB
14.7.20