

U.S. Patent Applications Decrease Dramatically One Year After Reaching Record High, Falling 9%

NEW HAVEN, CT, UNITED STATES, January 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- 2025 Rankings Highlight Strong Focus on Sustainability in R&D: Half of the Patent Areas on the Top 10 Fastest Growing Technologies Relate to Batteries. Recovering Usable Material From Waste Also Figures Prominently, According to Annual Patent Study by IFI CLAIMS



IFI CLAIMS Patent Services - A Digital Science solution

After seven years of growth, U.S. patent applications headed sharply downward, dropping 9% from 2024, the lowest level since 2019. Other 2025 results show a slight decline in the number of U.S. patents granted, down less than 1% from 324,064 in 2024 to 323,272 in 2025. Samsung retained the top spot for the fourth year, according to [IFI CLAIMS Patent Services](#), the world's most trusted patent data source.

IFI CLAIMS Patent Services is a [Digital Science](#) company that compiles and tracks data from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and other patent-issuing agencies around the globe. IFI translates its world-leading data into an annual [U.S. Top 50](#) and Top 10 Fastest Growing Technologies (<https://www.ificlaims.com/rankings/tech-growth-2025/>) patent ranking, providing valuable insights (<https://www.ificlaims.com/rankings/trends-2025/>) into companies' R&D activity.

Samsung, TSMC, and Qualcomm all retain the same top three standings from the previous year. IBM slipped another three rungs, falling out of the Top 10 and settling into eleventh. Big Blue held top billing for a record 29 consecutive years, but the company intentionally implemented a more selective patenting policy and was displaced by Samsung three years ago. Chinese tech giant Huawei moved up a spot into fourth place, according to the 2025 U.S. Top 50 ranking (<https://www.ificlaims.com/rankings/top-50-2025/>). Apple moved down two positions to sixth place.

"It's very interesting to see patent applications take such a dive after a long climb upward," said

Lily Iacurci, Marketing Manager, IFI CLAIMS Patent Services. “We will be watching the data to see if a trend develops. Right now, we’re wondering if other companies are quietly adopting patent strategies similar to the one IBM announced a few years ago. Are R&D departments relying more on trade secrets to protect IP? Or is it a lingering impact from COVID?”

How Companies With Patents Stacked Up

Samsung maintained its lead (<https://www.ificclaims.com/rankings/top-50-2025/>) with 7,054 patent grants in 2025, more than two percent of all patents granted in the U.S. last year. That’s up from 6,377 grants in 2024, an advance of 11% year over year. TSMC earned 4,194 grants compared to 3,989 patents the previous year, 5% higher. Qualcomm won 3,749 patents in 2025, up from 3,422 in 2024, but still below the company’s highpoint of 3,854 two years ago. Apple, a Magnificent 7 company, took home fewer grants in 2025: 2,722, down from 3,082 the previous year, a 12% slide. So did Google and Amazon, which descended the ranking by four and two places, respectively. Microsoft held steady. As for Tesla, Nvidia, and Meta, none of them collected enough grants to make Top 50 grade. The biggest climber on the ranking: South Korean battery technology company LG Energy Solution, jumping 22 positions.

A number of car manufacturers overtook other companies on the list. Toyota raced ahead six places on the ranking, coming in eighth. Honda passed by others and rose seven places. Kia, Hyundai, and GM also moved up. Ford, on the other hand, got lapped, falling 12 positions.

Patents Continue Rising in the East, While U.S. Sees Decline

Parsing the Top 50 by continent: Asia takes up 60% of the patent pie today, compared to 48% in 2016, a long-term shift from west to east. When looking beyond the Top 50 to include the total number of grants awarded at the country level, American companies secured the highest number of patents (136,131), by far. But that number doesn’t tell the entire story. More than half of U.S. patents were protected by companies outside of the U.S. Companies from Japan received 42,971 grants, followed by China (30,913), South Korea (26,147) and Germany (14,150). Six of the top 10 countries increased their number of grants in 2025. Taiwan rose by more than 12%, while China rose by more than 9% and South Korea by more than 8%. The U.S. was the biggest decliner, falling by 5% last year.

For more analysis, see our 2025 U.S. Trends and Insights (<https://www.ificclaims.com/rankings/trends-2025/>).

Fastest Growing Technologies Point to Sustainability

For the second year in a row, the fastest growing technology is “operating or servicing of cells,” which rose by more than 23% from 2021-2025. Advancements in this area relate to electrolysis, which is important to the production of green hydrogen. In fact, five of the 10 technologies this year feature batteries or the electrolytic processes around them, which are important for

diversifying energy sources away from fossil fuel. Other technologies revolve around the need to reduce waste.

Recovery of waste materials makes its second appearance this year (CAGR 20.4%), as does reclaiming non-ferrous metals from scrap (CAGR 18.2%). Refinement and reuse of metals also plays a part in two other fast-growing technologies: pretreatment of ores or scrap and hydrometallurgy. Both of these areas of invention attempt to mitigate damage to the environment. Just one technology on the list falls outside of the theme of a circular economy: Bioinformatics, the combination of computing with biological data to improve health outcomes.

IFI's fastest growing technology ranking is based on USPTO patent applications. Applications are a better proxy than grants for technologies that are current hotbeds because the lag time is significantly shorter.

"Applications are an important indicator for investors to watch," said Iacurci. "In our previous fastest growing technology rankings, the indications of the current AI revolution were present. Today, the applications are signaling toward ways to increase energy diversification and decrease strain on the environment."

To view the report, visit the 2025 Top 10 Fastest Growing Technologies (<https://www.ificlaims.com/rankings/tech-growth-2025/>).

Patent activity provides valuable insight into companies' R&D activity for researchers, analysts, and investors. It speaks to productivity, technological efficiency and IP strategy, and frequently reveals technology trends and the competitive landscape within various industries. Often the true value of a company lies with its intellectual properties, so examining patent assets is a key tool in gauging the intangible assets of publicly traded companies.

About IFI CLAIMS Patent Services

IFI CLAIMS Patent Services uses proprietary data architecture to produce the industry's most accurate global patent database. The CLAIMS Direct platform allows for the easy integration of applications, other data sets, and analysis software. IFI CLAIMS is part of Digital Science, a digital research technology company based in London. For more information, visit www.ificlaims.com and follow IFI on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ifi-claims-patent-services/>).

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