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Blog: Hearing Wednesday for IBM exec as PTO head

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SAN JOSE, Calif. — Is IBM's head of intellectual property the right person to dig the U.S. patent office out of its [historic backlog](#)? You can [watch online](#) the confirmation hearings of David J. Kappos for the job of Undersecretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and head of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office this Wednesday at 10 a.m. EST and answer the question for yourself.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on the Kappos confirmation hearings, so dial in and then leave a comment below or drop me a note at rmerritt@techinsights.com. I'll be on vacation Wednesday (doncha hate conflicts!) but hope to dial in anyway and write a story about the hearings Thursday morning.

Here's a virtual briefing dossier for you:

The Senate Judiciary Committee has made available online [some background materials](#) on Kappos. They include [a paper](#) he co-authored proposing what's called deferred examination as one way to reduce the backlog at the PTO. I'd love to hear what you think about this proposal.

You can read [here](#) a recent report on the state of the PTO by the committee that oversees the patent office. You also can read about the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's prescription for the PTO [here](#).

I gathered opinions about the need for reforming the patent office in [a cover story](#) earlier this year, and opinions about the choice of Kappos in [a June story](#).

It's interesting [to note](#) Kappos was trained as an electronic engineer, but then went right on the law school and has spent his entire 20 year career climbing the corporate ladder in IBM patent department. IBM is consistently [the biggest winner](#) of U.S. patents every year, which raises the question of the extent to which Big Blue participates in the patent madness of quantity over quality in applications.

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