

# COCHLEAR BRINGS MUSIC TO ITS CUSTOMERS' EARS

Case Study

THOMSON INNOVATION AND CUSTOM FIELDS



## SUMMARY

**Competition and innovation in the hearing industry is constant and fast-paced. Cochlear Limited is recognized and respected as the world's leading implantable hearing company. To remain on the cutting edge and achieve sustainable competitive advantage, Cochlear needed a reliable solution for searching, protecting and asserting its inventions in a globally expeditious manner. The IP intelligence and collaboration platform Thomson Innovation® provided just this: global patent data, tools for incorporating and flagging proprietary data, and collaboration capabilities for a geographically dispersed team.**

Cochlear provides a number of implantable hearing solutions for different types of hearing loss. Cochlear had pioneered this industry and continues to lead the way, with much credit due to the organization's commitment to innovation, R&D and the protection of its intellectual property rights.

"Cochlear continues to build on its strong patent portfolio protecting its investment in innovation," said Derek Minihane, Cochlear's Head of IP Strategy. "We're vigilant about understanding where the white space is, tracking competitor and industry activity, and keeping an eye on licensing possibilities. Thomson Innovation and its Custom Fields allow us to do these activities accurately, collaboratively and seamlessly."

Custom Fields give Cochlear the flexibility to integrate business-essential information with industry wide patent portfolio data, and search and analyze this data for a holistic view of its holdings and how they compare to others.



Derek Minihane  
Head of IP Strategy

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*- Derek Minihane, Head of IP Strategy  
Cochlear Limited*

"Thomson Innovation and Custom Fields are excellent resources," said Mr. Minihane. "And, we've had the added bonus of stellar service from our regional representative and the Thomson Innovation Professional Services team."



Cochlear's commitment to building a first-class IP organization is a core element in the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage, but the road to such success was not without some bumps along the way.

Cochlear is a global organization with research groups in several locations including Australia, Europe and the United States. Several years ago, Cochlear's IP group, headquartered in Australia, used manual processes to collate information from various and disparate tools. The company needed to find a global, scalable solution that would enable it to monitor the patent landscape in an accurate and automated manner, and to disseminate the information in a useable, condensed format internally.

In search of the best patent monitoring and research solution, Mr. Minihane began looking at various tools from around the world, including those originating in Australia, Europe and the United States. After a thorough search, he found that Thomson Reuters offered the necessary support, commitment to innovation, history, flexibility and customization.

Mr. Minihane worked closely with the Thomson Innovation Professional Services team and his regional manager to prioritize Cochlear's IP objectives, evaluate its workflow and identify more effective solutions for accomplishing its goals. "It was extremely useful to have the Thomson Innovation Professional Services team as our sounding board, and to leverage their experience and guidance as we identified and implemented our workflow," said Mr. Minihane.

It wasn't long before Thomson Innovation and Custom Fields entered the discussion. They enabled Cochlear to address both technology development and patentability needs. And, they enabled the company to make prudent IP-investment decisions. Cochlear now has its own IP normalization system based on Custom Fields, so it can track, assess and act on the evolving IP landscape.

Today, Cochlear's IP and R&D teams use Thomson Innovation and Custom Fields to assess prior art, determine patentability, monitor the IP landscape and identify potential licensing opportunities. Cochlear's IP organization has been transformed, as it helps to sustain the company's global competitive advantage.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### Less is not always more – sometimes more is more.

Through the collaborative efforts of Mr. Minihane, his account representative, the Thomson Innovation Professional Services team, and the commitment to IP from Cochlear's Board of Directors and its management team, this group was able to source and find the best solution for patent watching, clearance, competitive analysis and evaluating its IP opportunities. Mr. Minihane and the Thomson Innovation team worked closely to outline and evaluate needs and current workflows before any solutions were discussed.

### Do your homework.

Mr. Minihane did his homework in studying, outlining and assessing the IP workflow process and needs at Cochlear. This "IP audit" of sorts enabled him to report back to his organization with a recommended solution that would enable his company to achieve the goal of having sustainable competitive advantage. This preparatory process made the subsequent decisions easier and clearer, as everything was mapped out and identified with his Thomson Innovation Professional Services representative in advance.

### Research IP on your own terms.

By incorporating its proprietary IP data in the Custom Fields with the global patent data in Thomson Innovation, Cochlear attorneys and R&D staff are empowered to make better, more informed decisions about their IP portfolio and strategy. The Custom Field capabilities within Thomson Innovation also enhance collaboration across Cochlear teams by streamlining their workflow and improving operational efficiency.

To learn more, visit [thomsoninnovation.com](http://thomsoninnovation.com).

"Cochlear's commitment to IP at the highest levels of the organization and its desire to gain broader competitive advantage means the company is ideally positioned to leverage the full potential of the IP offerings from Thomson Reuters," said Jeroen Prinsen, Senior Director of Australian operations, Thomson Reuters.

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