



CIVITERA WHITE PAPER · WP-03

Claim Architecture for AI Systems

A discipline for constructing patent estates that endure, support continuation, and resist design-around.

4 design principles	1 coherent estate	N continuation paths
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Scope. This note describes a general methodology at the level of principle. It is educational and does not disclose the specific claim language, strategies, or technical detail of any individual CIVITERA filing, which remain confidential.

ABSTRACT

In one paragraph

A patent estate is only as valuable as the architecture of its claims. Filing many applications is not the same as building a defensible position; an estate can be voluminous and still be fragile if its claims are narrow, brittle, or easily designed around. This note sets out the discipline CIVITERA applies when constructing claim architecture for AI systems: four principles that aim to produce estates which endure under scrutiny, evolve with the technology through continuation, resist design-around, and cohere as a portfolio rather than a pile. It is written at the level of method, not mechanism.

01

Why architecture, not volume

There is a persistent assumption that a strong patent position is a function of count, more filings, more protection. In practice, count is a weak proxy. A hundred narrow claims on easily-substituted implementations can be worth less than a handful of well-constructed claims at an essential layer.

The reason is that value comes from unavailability and durability, not quantity. A claim creates value when practicing the technology requires it, and when it is constructed to survive challenge. Neither property follows from volume. Both follow from architecture.

The reframing. The right question is not "how many applications have we filed?" but "if someone wanted to build this technology and avoid our claims, could they, and at what cost?"

02

Principle one: anchor at the essential layer

The first principle is to anchor claims at the layer the technology cannot avoid. For AI systems, this means distinguishing between the specific implementation of a capability and the architectural necessity beneath it.

An implementation can almost always be substituted; a different model, a different algorithm, a different vendor. The architectural layer, how the system is governed, how authority is exercised, how accountability is preserved, is far harder to route around because it reflects a requirement rather than a choice. Anchoring claims there is what converts a patent from a nuisance into a foundation.

03

Principle two: construct for continuation

The second principle is to construct each filing so that it can evolve. AI technology moves quickly; a claim architecture frozen at the moment of first filing will be overtaken. The discipline is to file in a way that preserves the ability to pursue continuation and continuation-in-part as the technology and the market

develop.

This means establishing a strong, well-supported foundation early, with sufficient disclosure to support claims that will matter later, even if they are not the claims that matter today. An estate built this way grows coherently over time rather than requiring a fresh start with each advance.

Why this matters for licensees. An estate built for continuation signals durability. It tells a prospective licensee that the position will track the technology forward, not lapse into irrelevance as the field advances.

04

Principle three: resist design-around

The third principle is to anticipate the design-around and construct against it. For every claim, the relevant question is how a competent engineer would attempt to achieve the same result without practicing it, and whether the claim architecture closes that path.

This is partly a matter of claim breadth and partly a matter of constructing complementary claims that cover the plausible alternatives. A single claim invites a workaround; a well-architected set of claims covering the essential approaches makes the workaround as costly as the licensed path, which is precisely when licensing becomes the rational choice.

05

Principle four: cohere as an estate

The fourth principle is coherence. Individual strong patents are valuable; a coherent estate is more valuable than the sum of its parts. When filings are constructed to reinforce one another, covering adjacent layers, complementary mechanisms, and the connections between them, they create a position that is far harder to circumvent than any single claim.

CIVITERA organizes its estate so that filings across defense, governance, orchestration, and related layers compound. A builder cannot license one essential layer while avoiding the others if the architecture is genuinely integrated, because the layers are connected by design, mirroring how the underlying technology actually fits together.

The compounding effect. Coherence is what turns a portfolio into infrastructure. Each well-placed claim raises the cost of avoiding the estate as a whole, which is the source of durable licensing power.

06

Conclusion

Claim architecture is the difference between a patent estate that looks impressive and one that is genuinely defensible. The discipline is not to file more, but to file well: to anchor claims at the essential layer, construct them for continuation, architect them against design-around, and assemble them into a coherent whole. Applied consistently, these principles produce an estate that endures under scrutiny, evolves with the technology, and compounds in strategic



value. That discipline is the foundation of everything CIVITERA builds.

About this paper

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