

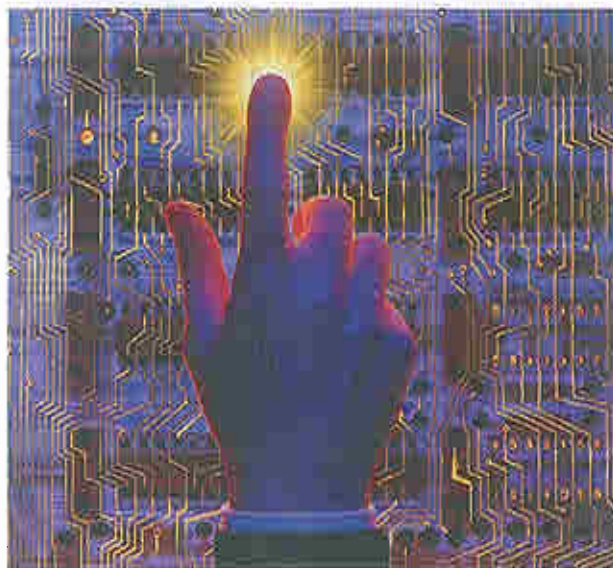
DO-IT-YOURSELF PATENT PROTECTION

Entrepreneurs wishing to file their own provisional patents can draw on a new tool that will help them avoid common mistakes made by individuals trying to tackle the patent system alone.

e-Learning development company Trydian Interactive has partnered Smit & Van Wyk Patent Attorneys to produce a step-by-step guide to do-it-yourself patenting.

Called the Patent Toolkit, it will provide inventors with everything they need to file provisional patent applications themselves and ensure that their ideas and intellectual property are properly protected.

Typically, people filing provisional patent applica-



tions have two options. They can hire patent attorneys to draft their applications at a very high

cost or they can file their applications on their own without any guidance.

"Filing applications is a

technical exercise," says attorney Wessel van Wyk.

"If it is not done correctly it results in inadequate protection and the loss of the inventors' rights to their inventions."

The Patent Toolkit, which is being launched this month, will provide an affordable solution to inventors who want to "do it themselves".

It will contain an introductory course on drafting patent specifications and many examples of best practice and common mistakes, as well as the forms necessary for filing an application. It will also include the template used by patent attorneys when drawing up a client's patent specification.

Innovations Getting the GAS down

A product invented by small Gauteng company Shield Technologies has been credited with saving water-heating equipment manufacturer Kwikot more than R1m/year on industrial gas. Known as the Shielding Gas Economiser, the device was installed on all of Kwikot's welding machines at its Benoni plant, which is a 24-hour operation. This has led to a 50% saving in gas consumption, says Kwikot production director Michael Davel.

The product reduces gas consumption by lowering the pressure in gas hoses. "Most conven-

tional welding processes consume two to three times the volume of gas they should," explains the inventor, and MD of Shield Surface Technologies, Wayne Holt.

The Shielding Gas Economiser, he says, is designed to restrict gas flow surge at the start of a weld by reducing the pressure and volume in the hose.

"The small pressure drop in the Shielding Gas Economiser hose and the smaller volume can reduce gas wastage by up to 80%," says Holt.

The company is no stranger to innovation and has developed other

technologies that improve productivity and cost-efficiency in welding operations. The company's Spatter Guard range of patented welding spatter-release chemicals has previously won the Southern African Stainless Steel

Development Association award in the welding category. Spatter Guard reduces cleaning costs and improves quality by preventing weld spatter from sticking to the workpiece and welding equipment.

