**Prior Patent Search Guide**

| Step | Factor | Action | Tool/Example |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Understand Idea | Break idea into parts, list keywords | Smart Dustbin → Sensor, Lid |
| 2 | Keyword Selection | Use synonyms & variations | "Auto bin" OR "Sensor trash can" |
| 3 | Boolean Search | Use AND, OR, "", - for smart search | "Smart bin" AND sensor -Bluetooth |
| 4 | Classification Codes | Use CPC/IPC codes from similar patents | Google Patents, USPTO |
| 5 | Search Databases | Search in multiple free platforms | Google Patents, Espacenet, WIPO |
| 6 | Non-Patent Literature | Explore research papers, blogs, reports | Google Scholar, ResearchGate |
| 7 | Study Existing Patents | Focus on claims, working, diagrams | Claims & Abstract section |
| 8 | Check Patent Status | Active or Expired patents | Patent Legal Status Tab |
| 9 | Analyze & Compare | Compare, modify, avoid exact copy | Innovate better design |