Technology Transfer from the University of Oxford
Intellectual Property Policy (from October 2000)

• University claims ownership of all employees’ and students’ IP rights resulting from University research activities

• The University **assists** those researchers **who wish to** commercialise their research
  • by patenting, licences, spinout companies & consultancy

• Researchers share the benefits
  • Royalty shares from licences
  • Equity in spinout companies
  • Income from personal consultancy

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Transfer of Intellectual Property

Assignment of intellectual property rights

Inside the University

Research funding source

Government

Charities

Industry

Research Services

& IP Rights Management Team

72 Staff
85% Graduates
33% Post grad degrees

Outside the University

Isis Innovation

62 staff
75% Graduates
50% Science doctorates

Route to market

Spin-outs

Consulting

Licences

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IP Protection

- **Patenting not always possible for software...**
  - Article 52 – Excluded matter
    - Method for doing business
    - Program for a computer
    - Method for performing a mental act
  - **...Or desirable**
    - Value of patent to licensees
      - What is the industry norm? Open source/patents/trade secrets?
    - Value to Isis/Oxford
      - Enforceable? Could the Oxford contribution be written-out?
- **Other IP protection may be relevant**
  - Copyright and Design protection
  - Database right
  - Trade marks
What is a Patent?

• Protects technical innovation (an *Invention*) and requires a formal application process

• Gives the owner the right for a limited period to stop others from making, selling or using the invention without the permission of the owner (on a geographical basis)

• Bargain between the State and the owner/inventor offering a short term monopoly (20 years) in return for a full description of the invention, which is published (after 18 months)
What is an Invention?

- **Novel**: never been disclosed or made public before the application (priority) date

- **Inventive**: involve an inventive step (not obvious to somebody skilled in the art)

- **Applicable**: capable of industrial application

- **Enabling**: sufficiently describes the invention for others to be able to practise it (it teaches)
Benefits of Patenting

• Stops others using the invention

• Can choose to let others use under agreed terms and can take legal action against infringers

• Prevents unlicensed manufacture, use, importation and sale

• Gives breathing space to develop a business based on an invention

• Society in general benefits from improved and better made products
Steps to Commercialisation

Disclosure meeting

Market research

IP forms & Invention record

IP protection
Patents, copyright, database right

Research Services
Due diligence

University assigns IP to Isis

Type of deal?
Negotiate terms
Legals
Finalise deal!

Commercial interest

Yes?

No?

Understand why:
more research needed?
reposition

Marketing

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Keeps your ideas confidential

• Talk to your supervisor first

• Don’t disclose your idea to anyone else

• Think about what is valuable: protectable ideas with a market

• Then talk to Isis Innovation

• Let’s commercialise your ideas together

• Don’t want to turn down the Beatles or carbon fibre again
"Isis delivers a positive return on investment to the University each year; this year transferring £4.5m to the University and its researchers"


Isis Innovation is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the University of Oxford, founded to exploit know-how arising out of research at one of the world's premier research institutions.