Do You Think You Have An Invention?

The inventive process is fluid and dynamic. Sometimes, inventions, and their value, are obvious. Other times, it takes more investigation and research to determine what next steps to take. For this reason, we encourage you to contact the Office of Technology Transfer at any time during the discovery process to ensure you are aware of the options available to develop the commercial potential related to your research. The staff in the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT), who are all highly knowledgeable about intellectual property (IP), can help answer questions related to patentability; marketability; licensing options; UA policies and procedures; and more. Our collaborative approach means we work for you, and legal and business experts, to clarify exactly what exists, and what next steps can (or should) be pursued.

What is an invention?
While abstract “ideas” and natural phenomena are not patentable, inventions can take many forms, from products or processes, to compositions of matter, software (including mobile applications), and content. If something is created here at UA, and has possible value to others, OTT can work with the inventions’ creators to determine what next steps should be taken.

When should you contact OTT?
An invention with commercial applicability can occur anytime during the research process. Researchers are encouraged to reach out to OTT anytime they have questions or concerns. However, one of the most important considerations is publication and/or verbal disclosure. Anytime a publication is either being considered or readied for submission or the invention will be discussed in a public setting such as a conference, seminar or industry meeting, it’s a good idea to consult with the experts in OTT to ensure that valuable intellectual property is protected prior to being made public.

Why should you submit an invention disclosure?
Although it is the responsibility of every inventor to report inventions, either to OTT or to the federal government on close-out reports, there are substantial benefits to reporting inventions, as well. The goal of technology transfer, in general, is to move the inventions made at universities into public use. Inventors also share directly in the rewards of licensing inventions through the University’s Royalty Distribution Policy.

When should you submit an invention disclosure?
An invention disclosure is simply the formal process of reporting a new invention to the Office of Technology Transfer. The form, http://ott.arizona.edu/sites/ott/files/invention_disclosure_form_o.doc, is designed to be relatively easy to fill out and submit. However, while an invention disclosure form can be filled out and submitted at any time, we recommend you contact the office to discuss your invention first.
What Happens After Disclosure?

After formal disclosure to OTT, the project is assigned to the appropriate Licensing Manager. That Licensing Manager will in short order contact the named lead inventor to discuss the invention and explain the entire process related to assessment, protection, marketing, and licensing to a new or an existing company.

Who to call with questions:

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