

Unce Upon A Technology Partnerships Office

1. Noun
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There is a Noun nestled at the NASA Ames Research Center devoted to actively transferring the technology developed to support American missions in aeronautics and space exploration into industry, academia and other government agencies for public benefit. Here they make the most of taxpayers' R&D investment by maximizing the use of cutting-edge technologies across the Agency and--in some cases--patenting the intellectual property (IP) and pursuing commercialization. By creating new products and services we can stimulate job growth, and increase U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace. But not everyone knows this.

One such talented engineer came to Ames with dreams in her heart of doing work that would benefit not only NASA, but also society. Although as a child she grew up wishing to be many things, she most longed to be an inventor! Yet she long ago had set aside her notebook of invention sketches and now dedicated herself to research focusing entirely on lab notebooks, formulas, and equations. After years of dedicated work in the laboratory the time came for her to compose a final technical report explaining her findings under this mission-funded project.

To her surprise, she received a response to this final technical report - she was told she had made a technical improvement and had "New Technology" to report and that she would need to disclose this innovation by completing a New Technology Report or "NTR" for short! She did just that, and a few months later was notified that to protect the intellectual property of this technology, it would be patented! She found herself in even greater disbelief

to learn that a small business was interested in licensing this now patented technology. Later, in a NASA Tech Briefs article, the engineer excitedly read how the company was able to grow and flourish as a result of licensing her technology and how the commercialized product was able to make a positive impact by improving the quality of life in human health, public safety, and the environment.

It didn't completely sink in to the engineer that she had fulfilled her childhood dream of becoming an inventor until she found her technology winning the prestigious NASA Government Invention of the Year Award. By then she realized the difference that every new technology has the potential to make. Through technology transfer we can expand our work to make these benefits a reality to both NASA and society as a whole.