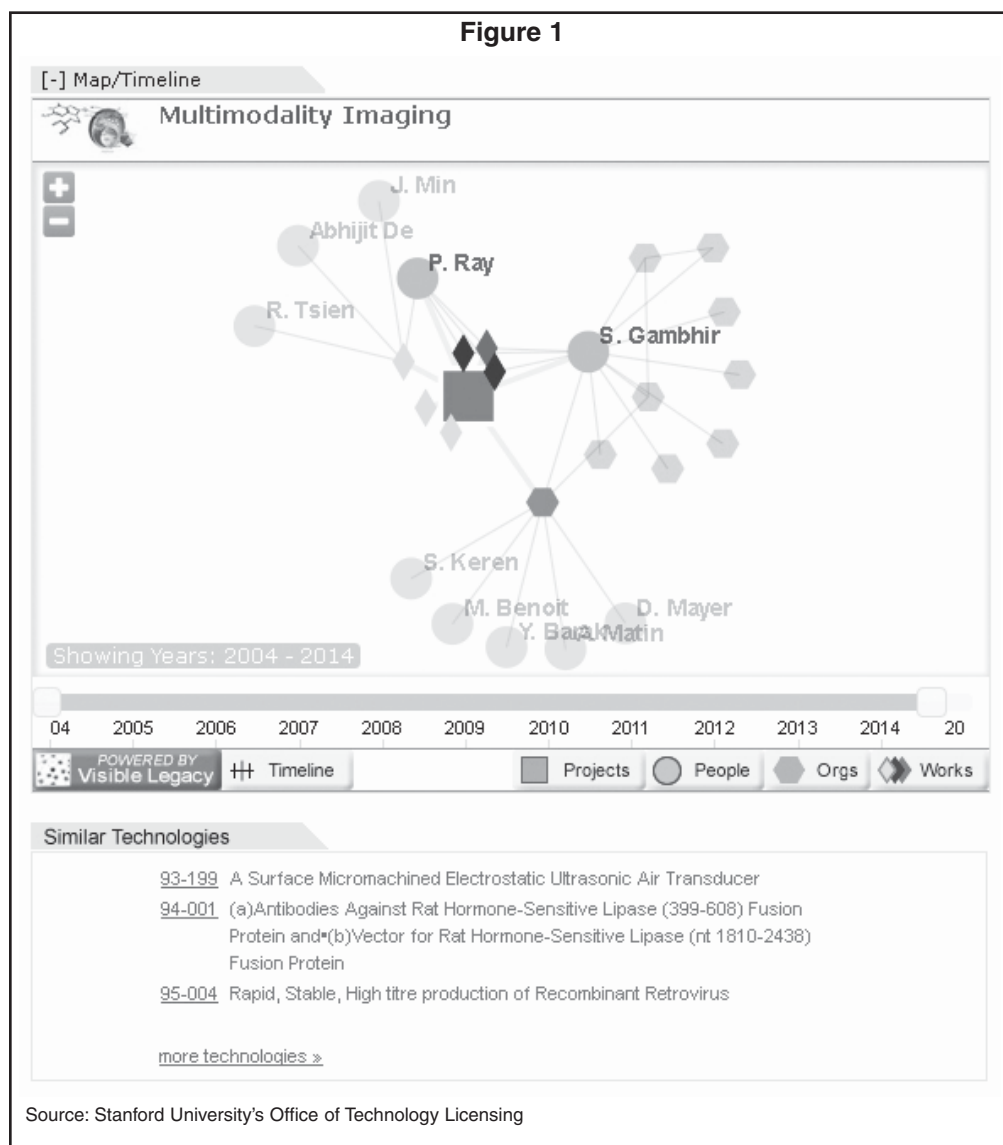# Stanford adds widgets on website that map IP and research connections

Stanford University's Office of Technology Licensing (OTL) has introduced a new feature on TechFinder, its online technology transfer portal: embedded widgets that visually illustrate the connections between researchers, technologies, projects, publications, and patents. The widgets, developed by Visible Legacy, use exclusive algorithms to map relationships and enhance user interaction and collaboration.

The result is a highly interactive and automatically updated site where users can view and navigate the many research relationships comprising Stanford's 2,300 active dockets.

"Incorporating Visible Legacy widgets and inclusion into an existing site such as our TechFinder adds visual presentation of information, enhances site navigation, disambiguates topics, and makes the site more 'sticky' by encouraging users to explore related projects and identify additional relevant researchers and innovations," says **Mary Albertson**, OTL senior associate who manages TechFinder.

Visible Legacy, a company started by two Stanford alumni in 2010, provides visual information navigation services via embedded widgets. Co-founder **Will Snow** explains that the service uses a website's publicly

Figure 1

[-] Map/Timeline

Multimodality Imaging

J. Min
Abhijit De
P. Ray
R. Tsien
S. Gambhir
S. Keren
M. Benoit
D. Mayer
Y. Baran / A.Matin

Showing Years: 2004 - 2014

04 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 20

POWERED BY Visible Legacy | +++ Timeline | ☐ Projects | ◯ People | ⬡ Orgs | ◇ Works

Similar Technologies

93-199 A Surface Micromachined Electrostatic Ultrasonic Air Transducer

94-001 (a)Antibodies Against Rat Hormone-Sensitive Lipase (399-608) Fusion Protein and•(b)Vector for Rat Hormone-Sensitive Lipase (nt 1810-2438) Fusion Protein

95-004 Rapid, Stable, High titre production of Recombinant Retrovirus

more technologies »

Source: Stanford University's Office of Technology Licensing

available information -- lists of people, of projects, and of publications -- to connect the dots of people, projects, and papers that are relevant to a patent.

With $2 billion of annual research funding, Stanford's OTL has "been a pacesetter in promoting university research for industry and other kinds of collaborative connections with university innovations," says Snow. It was a natural move for Visible Legacy, which had already digitally mapped the research work and careers of Stanford's faculty, to create a smaller version of the mapping technology and embed it into the OTL site. "[Giving] potential licensees a better picture of other things that are going on in the university beyond just a specific technology … to see relationships, labs, and other inventors in a graphic way, made a lot of sense," Albertson explains.

Giving users a broader view

TechFinder had already been sending e-mail alerts to notify registered users when technologies matching their chosen keywords are added to the site. These messages contained links to specific technologies, based on keywords assigned to each invention. But Albertson says the OTL wanted to offer users a broader view of available discoveries.

With the addition of the widgets to TechFinder, e-mail links lead to docket pages that now include an interactive graphic. "The challenge was getting the potential licensee [or sponsor] to look at other things that might be related. … They spend more time on the website, they find maybe other technologies that are also a good fit for their application, and maybe are led to new areas that they weren't familiar with," says Snow.

On each technology's TechFinder page, the projects, people, organizations, and

works involved in the discovery process are represented in different shapes and colors (see **Figure 1**). These elements appear as layers on the map and can be displayed or hidden based on a user's preferences. A timeline can be adjusted by year to illustrate the different stages of research (see **Figure 2**).

Individual components of the graphics provide links to related items. For example, a potential partner who is interested in a specific project can click on the name of its primary researcher and be presented with direct connections to other projects that individual has contributed to, and the names of other researchers who worked on those projects and who likely are linked to similar technologies of interest to the company.

Easy implementation

The implementation process was largely auto-

Figure 2

Source: Stanford University's Office of Technology Licensing
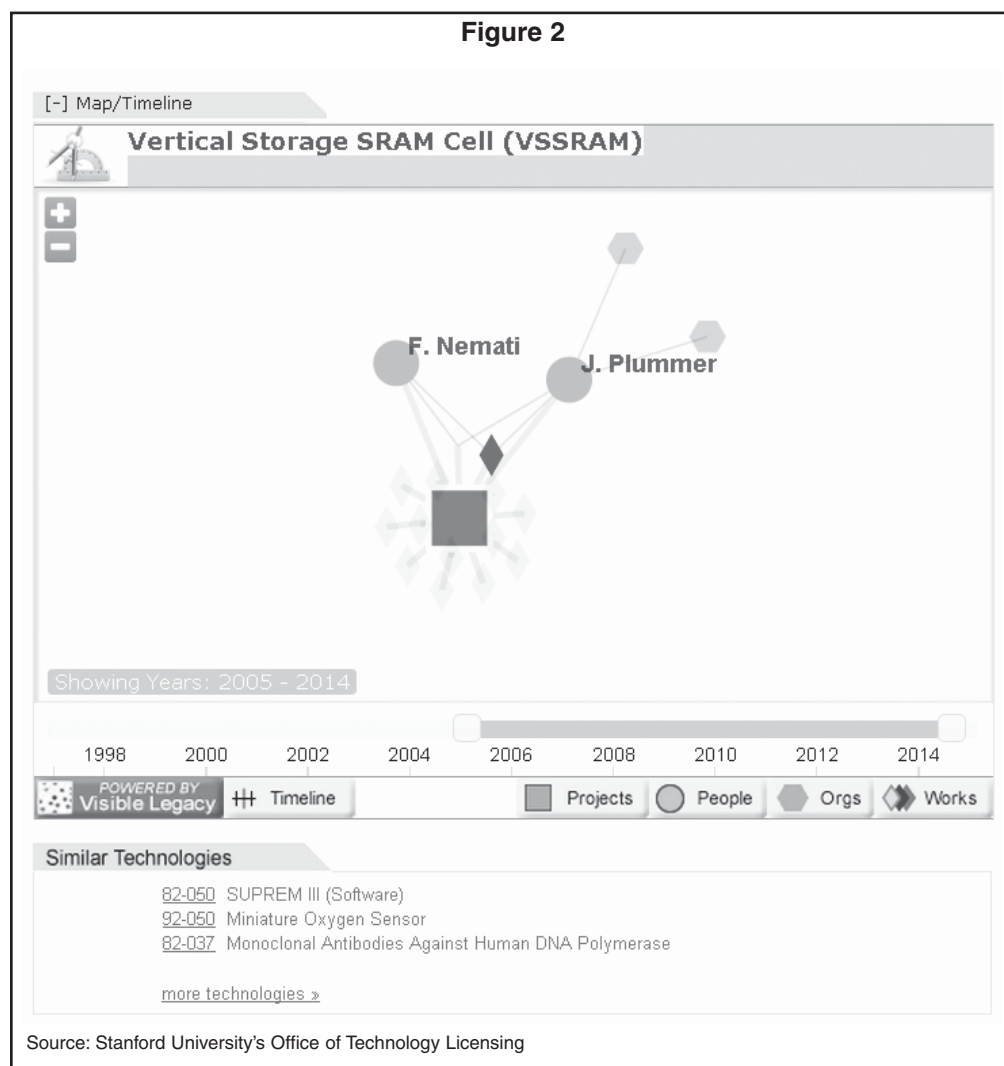
mated and created minimal distraction for Stanford's busy faculty and staff. Visible Legacy provided a line of code that was inserted into the TechFinder site. The automated widgets update on TechFinder within minutes of any changes made at Stanford OTL, ensuring up-to-date content.

Funding for the TechFinder project came from Visible Legacy's sponsors, who keep the service free for users. Snow says Visible Legacy's business model is unique for Silicon Valley, as technology is promoted in a way that's beneficial to both the research organization and to the sponsors who support the effort. With visual rep-resentations of research collaborations, donors can follow their investment money and directly see the impact of their contributions.

Visible Legacy aims to add one or two universities per quarter. "We are approaching foundations who are known for funding translational research, with the idea that small marketing-style budgets could be applied to us to build these maps for the participating universities that they've put money into," Snow says.

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