

# A career in IP

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# Agenda

- **A change from lab research to IP profession**
  - **Why would a scientist/engineer end up in the legal services?**
  - **What is IP**
  - **How do you become a patent attorney?**
  - **Pros and cons of the profession**
- **A day in the office**
- **What employers look for in candidates**
  - **Skills to have**
  - **Tips for interviews**
- **Questions**

# My career to date



ZIENTZIA  
ETA TEKNOLOGIA  
FAKULTATEA  
FACULTAD  
DE CIENCIA  
Y TECNOLOGÍA



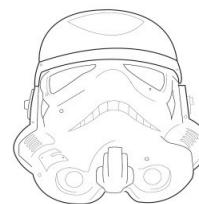
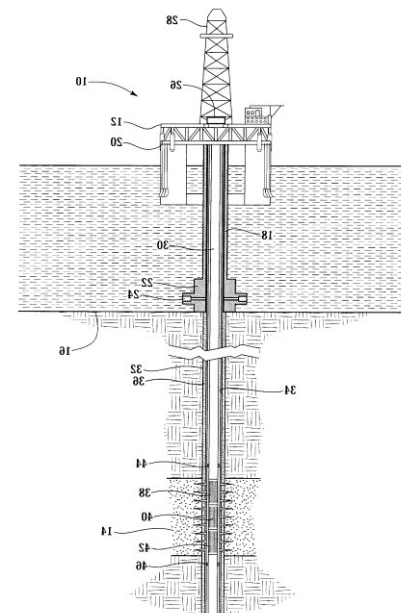
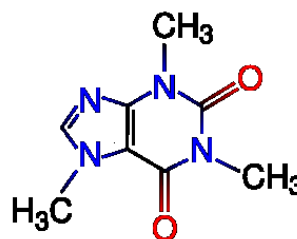
McGill



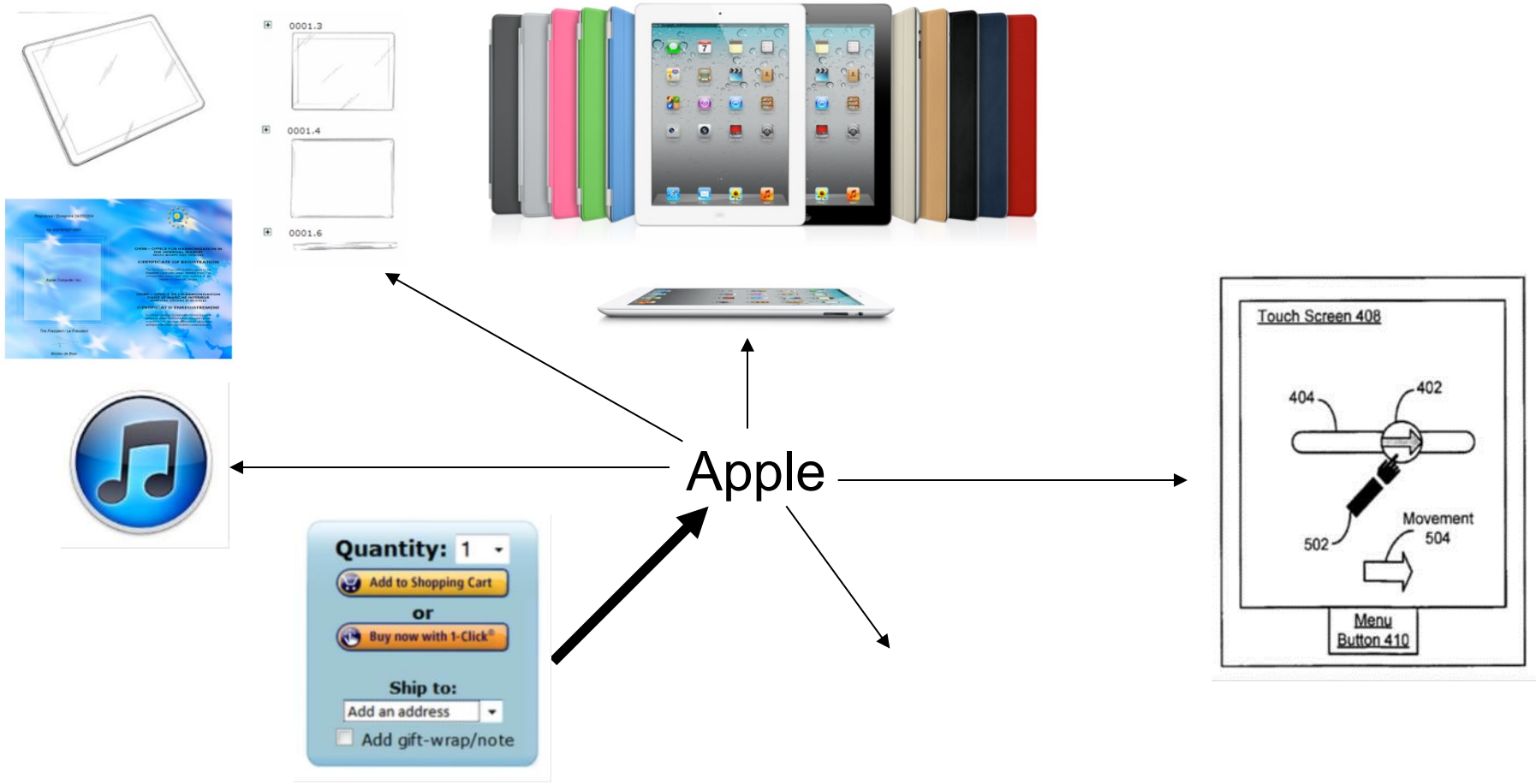
- 2004-2008
  - MSc in Chemistry
- 2008-2009
  - Erasmus program – final year of MSc
  - Obtained BSc in Chemistry with Analytical Chemistry
- 2009-2013
  - PhD in Materials Chemistry
- 2012
  - Exchange in Montreal
- 2013-Present
  - European Patent Attorney

# What is IP

- Patents
  - products, apparatus, manufacturing methods, processes
- Trade marks
  - company name, logo, product name
- Designs
  - Shape/ornamentation
- Copyright
  - software, drawings, operation manuals, website, marketing literature
- Know how and Confidential Information
  - new inventions, staff knowledge, manufacturing methods, products



# How can IP work for companies?

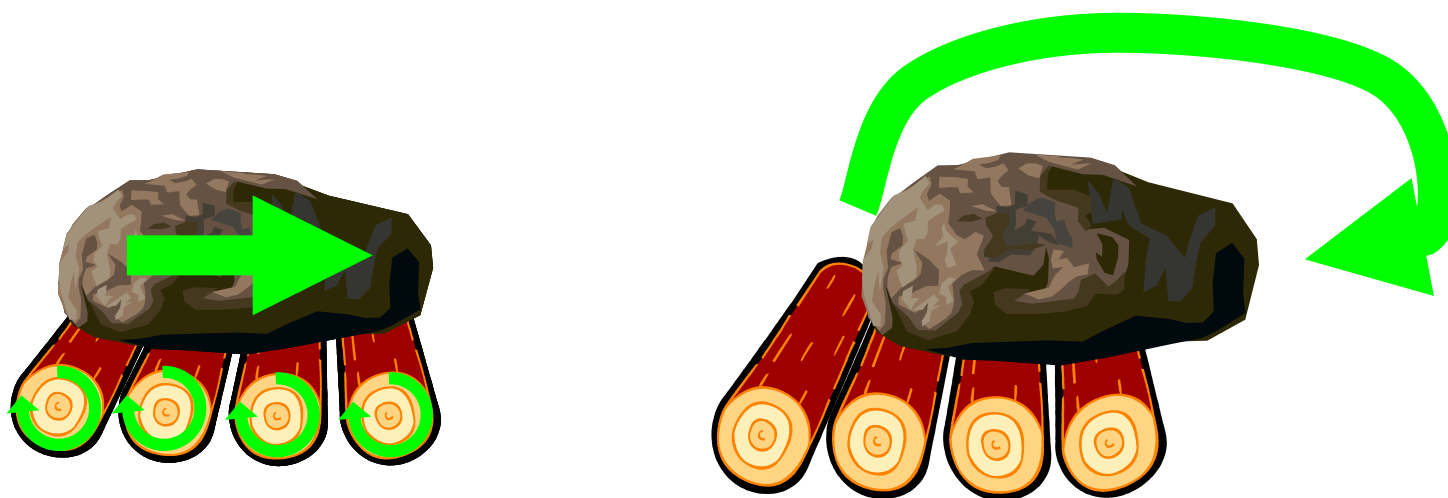


## The value of IP

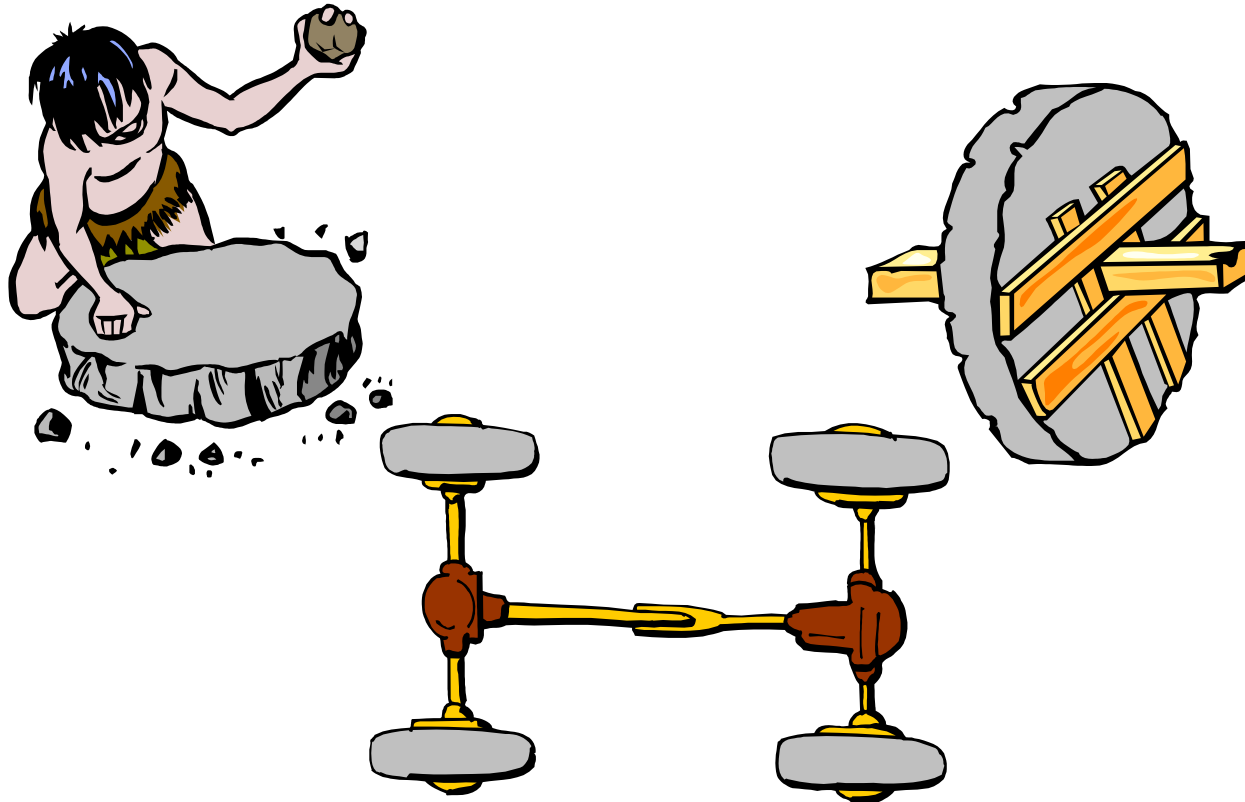
- Preferable to confidentiality agreement for approaching parties for commercialisation: shows confidence in invention; avoids inventorship disputes
- Secure your place in the market
- **Stop competitors**
- Build a reputation
- Protect your reputation
- Investors won't fund without
- Licensing revenue

## The value of IP – a prehistorical example

- Ug, the caveman, moves his rocks on log rollers
- As the rock moves, he shifts the back log to the front
- It's hard work!



- Ug invents something better





- The rock truck!



- Ug describes his invention

**A device for carrying rocks in a basket supported on two wooden rods with stone discs at both ends of each rod.**



- ...but Ug decides he should get some professional advice...

- Ug's friend writes a new description

Apparatus for the transport of a load in a chosen direction, comprising a base on which the load is to be situated, and a rotatable ground engaging member which supports the base, wherein the ground engaging member is mounted for rotation with respect to the base and for movement with the base in said chosen direction.

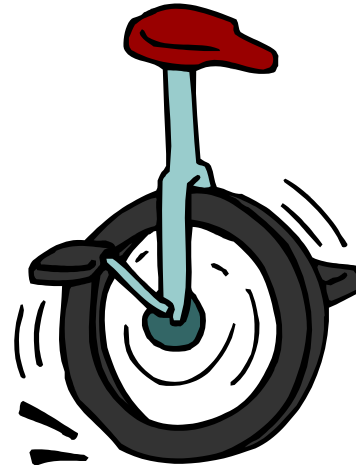
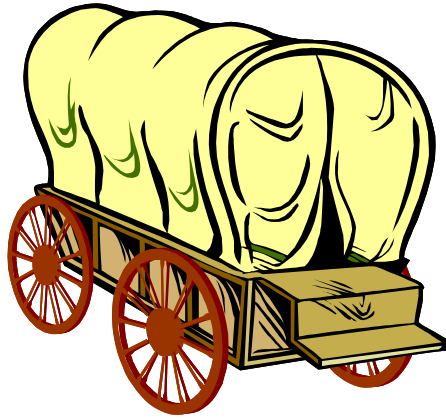


- Ug is impressed
- His friend has captured the essence of the difference between his system and the use of logs.
- But there is better to come.
- Ug's friend concentrates on a key feature that allows Ug to replace the logs with wheels.

- Ug's friend writes a further description

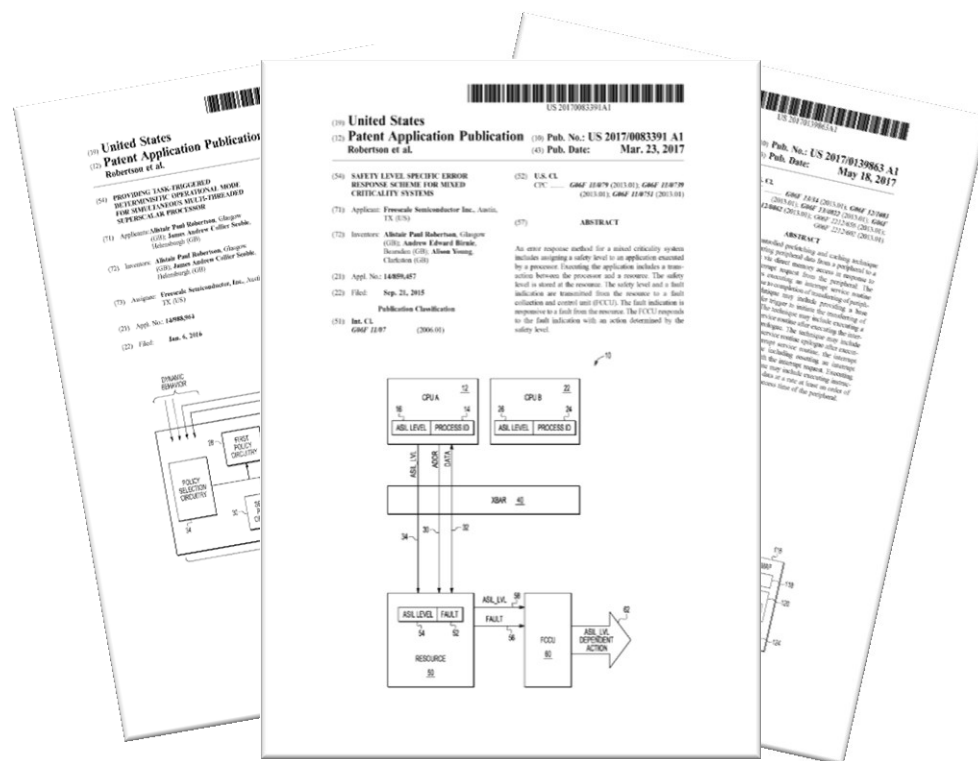
Apparatus comprising a rotatable member mounted to a base member, wherein the rotatable member is mounted for rotation relative to the base member.

- Now Ug can prevent others from making...



# How do you become a patent attorney?

- STEM degree
- Get a job in an IP firm – experience in the job
- Exams (3-4 years average)
  - 5 x UK foundation exams
  - 4 x UK final diplomas
  - 1 x Litigation exam
  - 1 x European ‘pre’ exam
  - 4 x European final diplomas
- Not for the fainthearted...but worth the effort!



## Some pros and cons of the career

- It is a small profession and it is not easy to get into it
  - Once you qualify, it is easy to get jobs (employers and recruiters look for your skills!)
- The exams are really hard and it is difficult to manage work, life and studying after work
  - It is only a few years and then it is worth it
- Working hours are usually good... unless you receive last minute instructions
- The job is very varied, you deal with different technologies and tasks in a day
- You need to know and apply the law...but it is a technical job and you do apply science
- It can be a bit “unsociable” at times, but there is client interaction and is good to discuss things with your colleagues (work and otherwise)
- It is well paid when you qualify



## A day in the office

- 9:00 – Deal with emails and manage deadlines, plan the day
- 9:30 – Report new communications to clients providing advice
- 10:00 – Work on a response to an examination report
- 12:00 – Meeting with a client: Discuss the invention, provide advice on patentability, discuss an action plan for protection of IP, follow up with a summary email
- 14:00 – Contact examiner at patent office to discuss a matter
- 14:30 – Prepare instructions to a foreign attorney for filing a response on another case
- 16:00 – Start reviewing new disclosure for drafting a new patent application

OR

- Draft a patent application all day
- Prepare an IP audit
- Prepare a Freedom to Operate opinion

OR

- Attend Oral Proceedings/Opposition in Munich

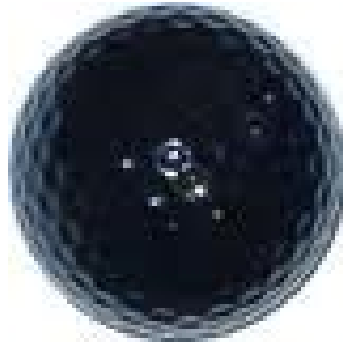
# What do employers look for?

- Attention to detail – check for typos in CV, cover letter
- Good managerial and organisation skills – You need to deal with loads of deadlines constantly
- General understanding of how things around you work – and interest in science and technology
- Good language skills
- Any foreign language?
- Industrial experience, PhD, other soft skills – Not a must but can get you to the interview stage

## Tips for applying and interviews

- Enhance your managerial skills (deadlines!) & attention to detail in your CV/cover letter
  - Check for typos
  - Organised letter, not too long sentences, clear
- Look for a couple of examples of patents to familiarise yourself with the jargon and structure
  - Nobody expects you to know how to write a claim, but you'll need to show basic understanding – practical exercise
- Check “How stuff works” <https://home.howstuffworks.com/> - there'll be questions
- Think of words that have a similar meaning but subtle differences in English. They'll ask, and also possibly a punctuation exercise
- Inside Careers provide good insights into the profession <https://www.insidecareers.co.uk/>

## An example of an invention



# Questions?

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