

JSPS Kakenhi European Grantees: Varun VOHRA

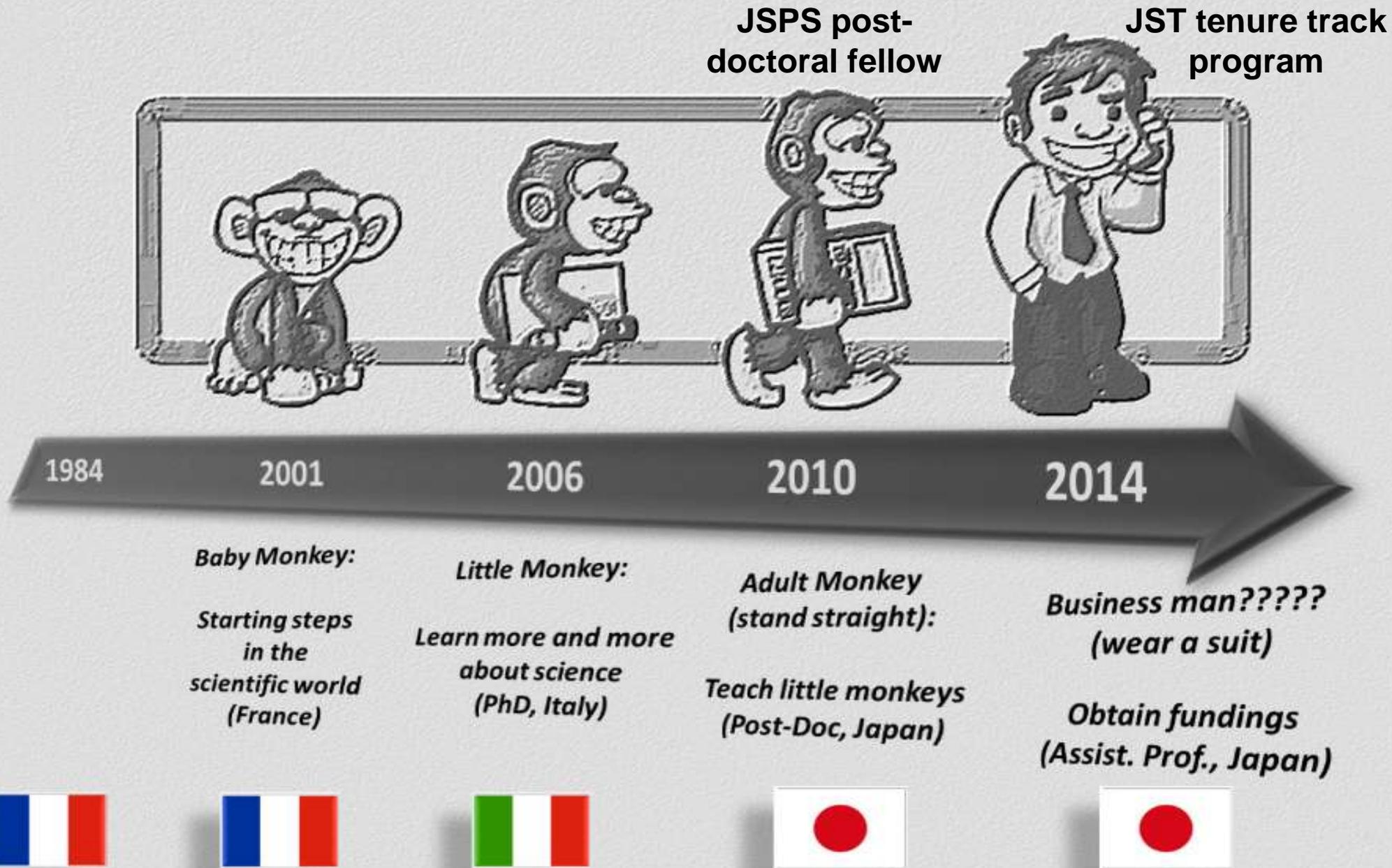
Dr. Varun VOHRA

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(my own) Theory of scientific evolution



Brief introduction to research interests

Organic electronics and nanostructured devices

Lightweight, thin, low-cost, flexible, low-energy consumption
Possibilities to create original new devices

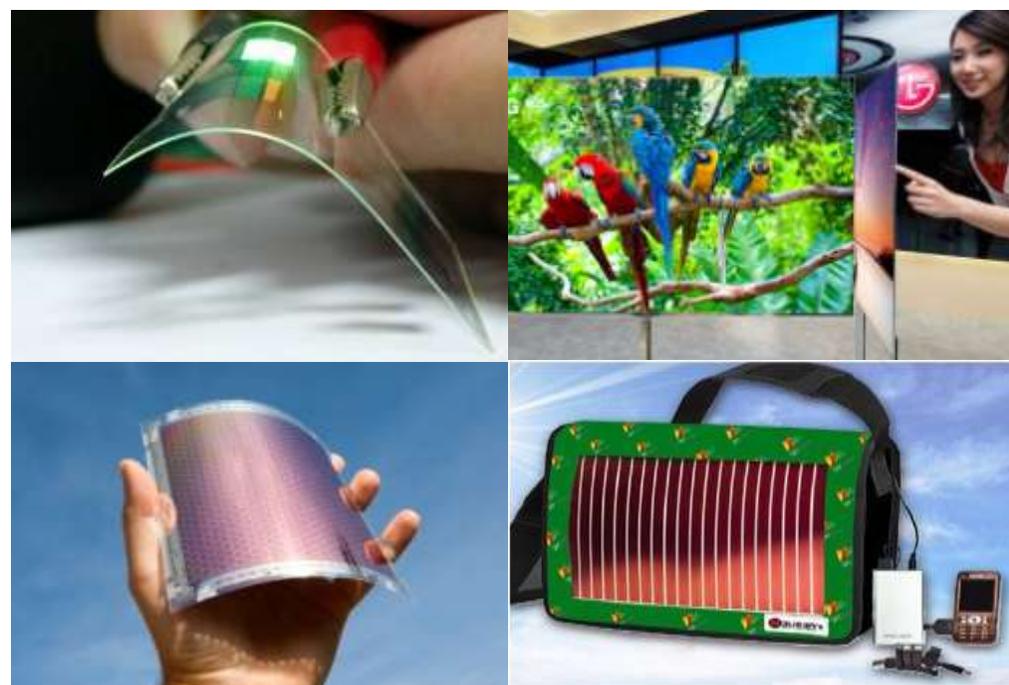
Main research topics:

Organic solar cells (trendy, high impact)

Organic light-emitting devices (OLED)

Flexible electronic skin (pressure sensors)

Best for Kakenhi?



A love-hate relationship with Kakenhi

2014: Just arrived at UEC (solar cells!!!)

**Applied for a Research Activity Start-up: obtained
(wow! Getting funding is so easy)**



**2015: Attempted Wakate-A (same topic)
Rejected! (didn't know you could check the results)
Did I aim to high? (disillusion)**



**2016: Attempted Wakate-B (after Nat. Photon. paper)
Rejected! あなたのおおよその順位は「A」でした。
Not far but still missing something! (and a bit frustrated)**



How to save the relationship? (learn from mistakes)

Learn from my mistakes

評 定 要 素	あなたの平均点 採択課題の平均点		
① 研究課題の学術的重要性・妥当性	2.75	3.33	① academic value • validity
② 研究計画・方法の妥当性	2.50	3.13	② research plan validity
③ 研究課題の独創性及び革新性	3.00	3.15	③ originality and innovation
④ 研究課題の波及効果及び普遍性	3.50	3.15	④ impact
⑤ 研究遂行能力及び研究環境の適切性	3.50	3.21	⑤ research ability and environment
⑥ 研究計画と研究進捗評価を受けた研究課題の関連性	(該当なし)	(該当なし)	

A bit disappointed: academic value, research plan and originality are low!

Looking into details: all the bad points (*) are related to clarity!

①,② and ③ are not low but rather lack in clarity

General message (to me): learn to write in a clear way!

How to write clear proposals?

In English?

JSPS accepts proposals written in English but...

1. *Simplify the English as much as possible*

- Read by Japanese reviewers
- The reviewer might not have the exact same background

2. *Try to write at least the outline in Japanese!*

- Ask colleagues for help if you cannot do it on your own
- Gives a general idea/raises the interest of the reader in his mother tongue and shows that you're trying to be nice to him

Is simpler clearer?

“Japanese scientists don’t like to read long sentences”

Words from a full professor at my university (not sure if it’s true)

1. Itemized writing style or full sentences?

- Itemized style makes it simpler for both writer and reader
- Some people prefer to read full sentences (especially for 目的)

2. Read it on the figure number ... ?

- Is reducing the text and increasing the figures a good idea?
- A visual explanation is always better!
- Make the reader see your “dreams”!

Summarized advice (that I should follow too!)

- 1. Write in a clear way (understandable to anyone either in English or in Japanese)**
- 2. Make the reader dream (e.g. I will save the planet by solving the global energy issue with my smart photovoltaic windows)**
Show how motivated you are and that you believe in your project
- 3. Put a particular effort in the figures**
This should increase the interest of the reviewer for your project
- 4. Emphasize your high impact past achievements**
- 5. Emphasize the international collaborations and involvement of young researchers (if any)**

Last but not least

***Don't give up and learn from everyone
(not only today but from your experienced
Japanese colleagues too!)***

Ask Japanese colleagues to see their successful proposals!

***In my case: After receiving advice from my colleagues,
submitted around 8 proposals in 日本語 to science foundations***

So far:

2 rejected

1 obtained (2,000,000 yen for 1 year)