



**Weekly Wire**  
**News from East Asia and Pacific**  
**National Science Foundation**  
**Tokyo Regional Office**  
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**AUSTRALIA: Astrophysicist to Donate for Gender Equity**

Australian National University astrophysicist Brian Schmidt and his research team received the 2015 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics. Dr. Schmidt will donate a portion of the \$250,000 award received to the Academy of Science to boost gender equity. Dr. Schmidt said that one of the sad things for him is that in 1995 his team had no women because there were almost no women doing astronomy in his field at that time.

*Source:* <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/astronomy/australian-astrophysicist-brian-schmidt-wins-share-of-3m-breakthrough-prize-for-fundamental-physics-20141111-11kcmh.html> and [https://breakthroughprize.org/news?controller=Page&action=news&news\\_id=21](https://breakthroughprize.org/news?controller=Page&action=news&news_id=21)

**JAPAN: 5<sup>th</sup> S&T Basic Plan**

On November 10, 2014, the Council of Competitiveness-Nippon (COCN) held a forum, focusing on Japan's 5<sup>th</sup> S&T Basic Plan that covers 2016-2020. Representatives from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) that normally receives more than 65% of the Japanese Government S&T budget, the Council for S&T and Innovation (CSTI), and the industry sector summarized their still very preliminary internal discussions on the Plan. The MEXT presentation focused on: (1) S&T Personnel System Reform to enable easier researcher mobility among industry, university, and government sectors; (2) Open Innovation by promoting more industry-university-government collaboration; (3) Furthering R&D in ICT areas, including use of Data Science and Big Data; and (4) Strengthening of the function of national research institutions. CSTI presented the following in addition to the MEXT topics: (5) research funding system reform; (6) vitalization of local area S&T; (7) strategic international development; (8) communication with the public; and (9) output-oriented R&D. The discussions will continue until the CSTI will come up with a comprehensive draft plan in mid-2015.

*Source:* [Note taken at the COCN Forum on November 10, 2014 and hearing to the Cabinet Office](#)

**KOREA: “Bigdata World Convention”**

The “Bigdata World Convention” was held in Busan, Korea, on October 22-23, 2014. Global IT companies like Amazon, Cisco, IBM, and Pure Storage gathered to discuss the current status and future possibilities of “big data.” The topics included exploration to expand the use of big data to both the public and private sectors and having a hub city (Busan) as the Data Center in Asia.

*Source:* <http://www.bigdataworldconvention.com/>

**New Zealand: Citizen Science**

Thousands of species in New Zealand are yet to be discovered. But it's not just scientists who could uncover them. It could be you! This year's Conservation Week in New Zealand, which ended Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, encouraged people to do just that – to discover the hidden treasures on their doorstep. Online tools, such as NatureWacch NZ, acted as a “citizen science vehicle” connecting the public with

experts. The website allows people to upload a photo of a plant, animal or fungus they have never seen before and find out what it is. Conservation Week began in 1969 and encourages New Zealanders to connect with their local natural environment.

Source: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC1411/S00017/thousands-of-species-undiscovered.htm>