

Electronic Supplementary Information for:

Two-Step Model for Ultrafast Interfacial Electron Transfer: Limitations of Fermi's
Golden Rule Revealed by Quantum Dynamics Simulations

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1. Method comparison for fitting the characteristic IET time

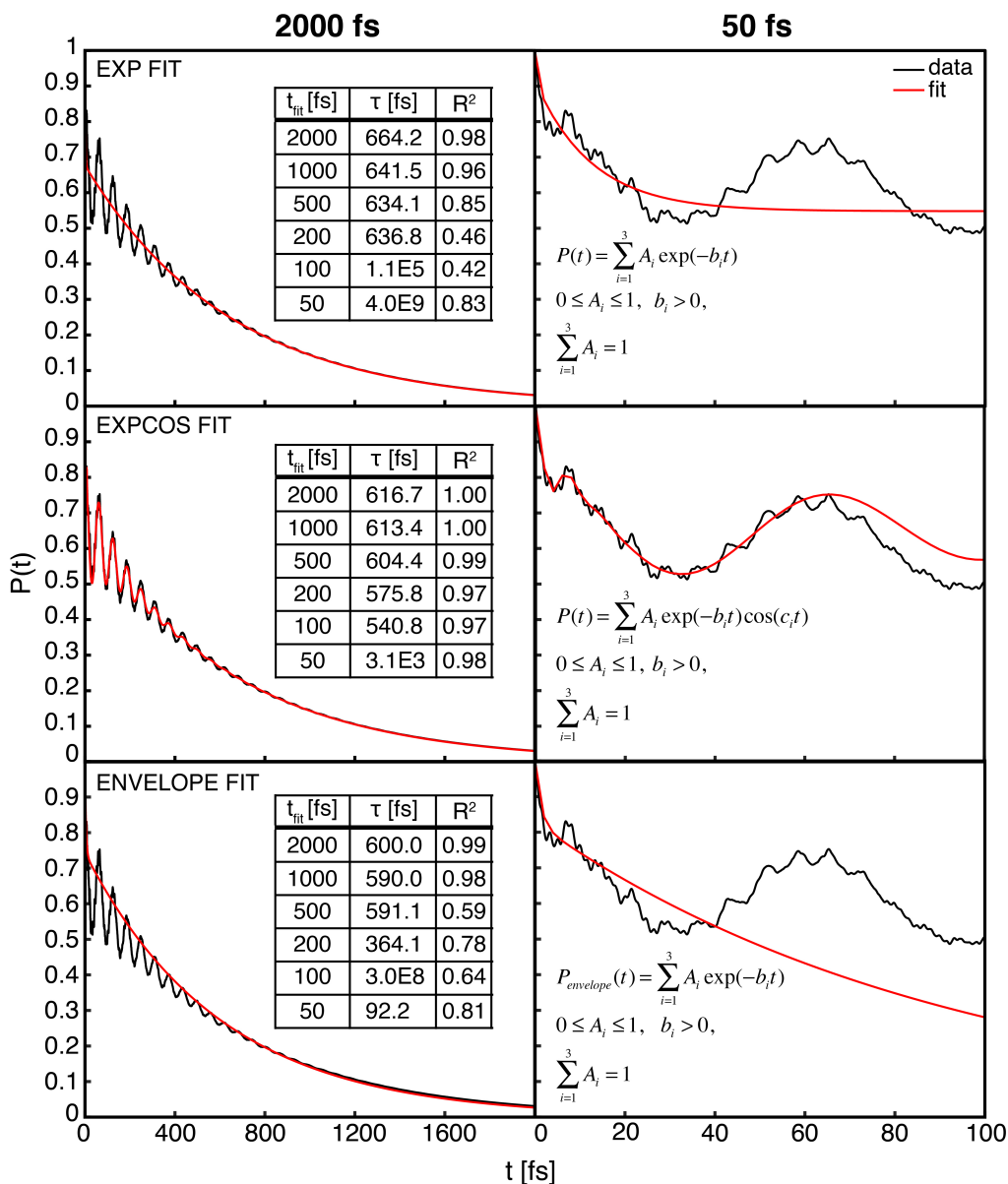


Figure S1. Comparison of different fitting methods with 2 ps and 50 fs fitting times. Black lines represent survival probabilities for simulations with LUMO initial state on one of the MD sampled bidentate structures. Characteristic IET times and corresponding R^2 for the fits are listed in the tables on the left.

For consistency, all overall characteristic times were fitted with 3 exponential components. Three different fitting schemes were tested. The exponential fitting utilizes a sum of three exponential functions to fit the survival probability curve:

$$P(t) = \sum_{i=1}^3 A_i \exp(-b_i t)$$

with the following constraints:

$$\sum_{i=1}^3 A_i = 1, \quad 0 \leq A_i \leq 1, \quad \text{and} \quad b_i > 0$$

A representative exponential fit is shown in Figure S1 (top).

Since an exponential fit is not able to capture the rapid oscillations seen in the survival probability curve, a fitting scheme containing a periodic cos function was also tested:

$$P(t) = \sum_{i=1}^3 A_i \exp(-b_i t) \cos(c_i t)$$

A representative fit for this functional form is shown in the second row of Figure S1. While this functional form successfully reproduces the oscillation of the survival probability curve, it contains 9 parameters and is non-linear, making the results very sensitive to the initial parameter guess.

When calculating the characteristic IET time, only the exponential parts, which correspond to the upper envelope of the curve, are used. Therefore, we also tested direct fitting of the curve envelope with tri-exponential functions. The envelope fitting approach uses the top 10% of data points (or at least 50 data points) for fitting, and results are shown in the bottom panel of Figure S1. The envelope fitting method, in principle, should give the same result as oscillation exponential decay function. However, in practice, envelope point selection decreases the number of data points used for fitting. Moreover, the points selected are not the true envelope points but its approximation, and the fitting results diverge from results obtained with oscillating exponential decay function.

Different fitting lengths from 50 fs to 2000 fs were also tested, and the results are listed in Figure S1. For fitting times longer than 500 fs, all three fitting methods give very similar results. The results start to diverge for shorter fitting times. This is true for all other IET curves. Since utilizing a simple exponential function leads to similar fitting results as two more sophisticated fitting methods (provided the time interval is long enough), we elected to use the simple 3-component exponential function for all subsequent fits.

2. Calculation of the number of the TiO₂ acceptor states

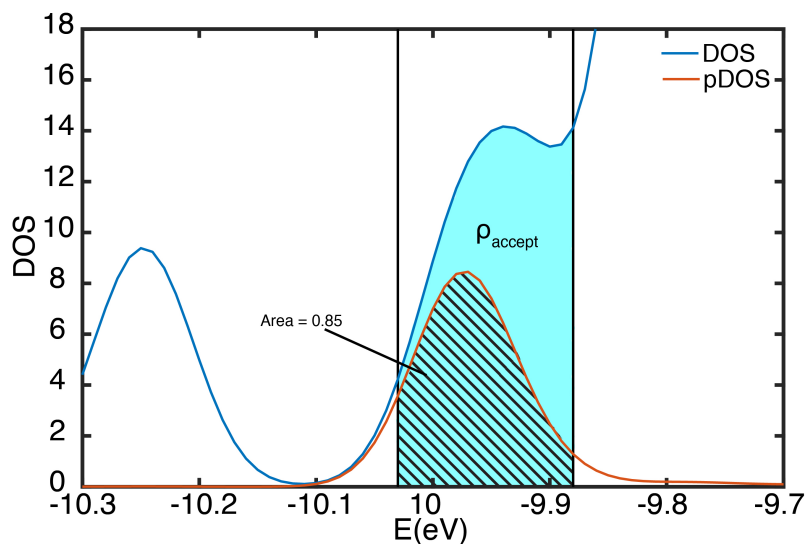


Figure S2. Example of a calculation of the number of TiO₂ acceptor states. Left and right boundaries are chosen so as to make the area of pDOS of the dye between two boundaries (patterned region) to be equal to 0.85. The number of acceptor states is equal to the area covered by DOS curve (cyan region).

3. R² values for correlations between the calculated IET characteristic times and selected electronic and structural parameters

Table S1. R² for linear fits between log(τ), overall characteristic time, and selected electronic and structural parameters. Values of R² larger than 0.1 are bolded.

	Mono			Bi			Mono, Bi		
	L	L+1	L, L+1	L	L+1	L, L+1	L	L+1	L, L+1
E _{MO}	0.17	0.06	0.17	0.36	0.02	0.35	0.14	0.04	0.05
log(% ρ_{linker})	0.02	0.01	0.19	0.02	0.35	0.10	0.05	0.20	0.00
log(ρ_{accept})	0.37	0.05	0.00	0.24	0.05	0.38	0.08	0.07	0.11
log(ρ_{accept^+})	0.18	0.05	0.15	0.40	0.03	0.42	0.11	0.04	0.06
log($\rho_{surface}$)	0.4	0.10	0.01	0.31	0.07	0.37	0.00	0.10	0.02
log(ρ_{bulk})	0.45	0.05	0.01	0.23	0.05	0.36	0.11	0.07	0.13
R(O-Ti)	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.01	0.09

Table S2. R² for linear fits between log(τ_{ini}), initial characteristic time, and selected electronic and structural parameters. Values of R² larger than 0.1 are bolded.

	Mono			Bi			Mono, Bi		
	L	L+1	L, L+1	L	L+1	L, L+1	L	L+1	L, L+1
E _{MO}	0.06	0.00	0.59	0.41	0.02	0.42	0.17	0.01	0.49
log(% ρ_{linker})	0.00	0.19	0.60	0.00	0.81	0.83	0.00	0.51	0.70
log(ρ_{accept})	0.53	0.15	0.05	0.68	0.23	0.02	0.55	0.17	0.03
log(ρ_{accept^+})	0.07	0.01	0.57	0.34	0.02	0.37	0.17	0.01	0.44
log($\rho_{surface}$)	0.62	0.21	0.01	0.80	0.26	0.00	0.51	0.12	0.00
log(ρ_{bulk})	0.52	0.15	0.03	0.58	0.22	0.02	0.52	0.17	0.03
R(O-Ti)	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

4. Correlation plots for the selected parameters and characteristic IET times

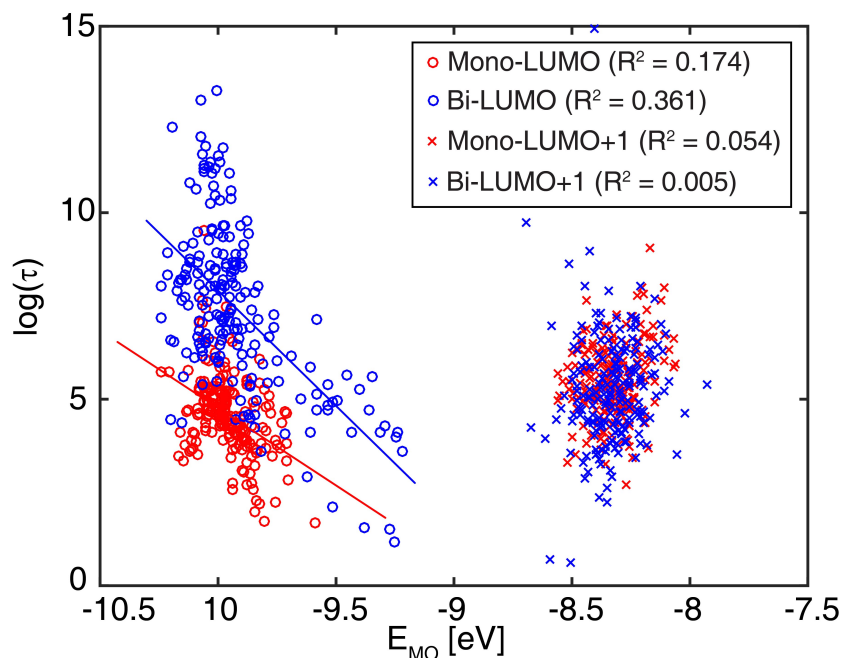


Figure S3. Correlation plots for the energy of particle state and $\log(\tau)$. LUMO initial states are labeled as circles, while LUMO+1 initial states are represented as crosses. Mono and Bi are shown in red and blue, respectively. For the LUMO initial state, the trend lines are also drawn.

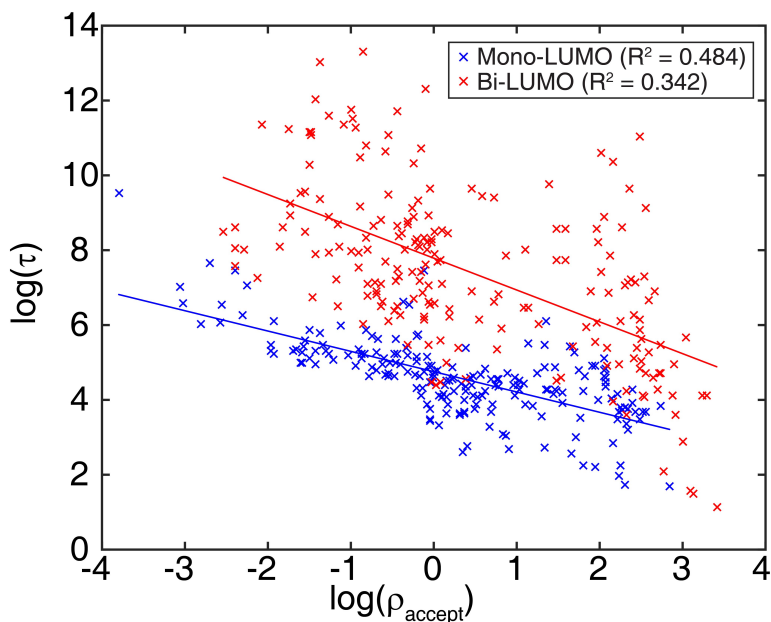


Figure S4. Correlation plots for the logarithm of the number of available acceptor states on TiO_2 slab for coupling with pyridine's LUMO particle state and $\log(\tau)$.

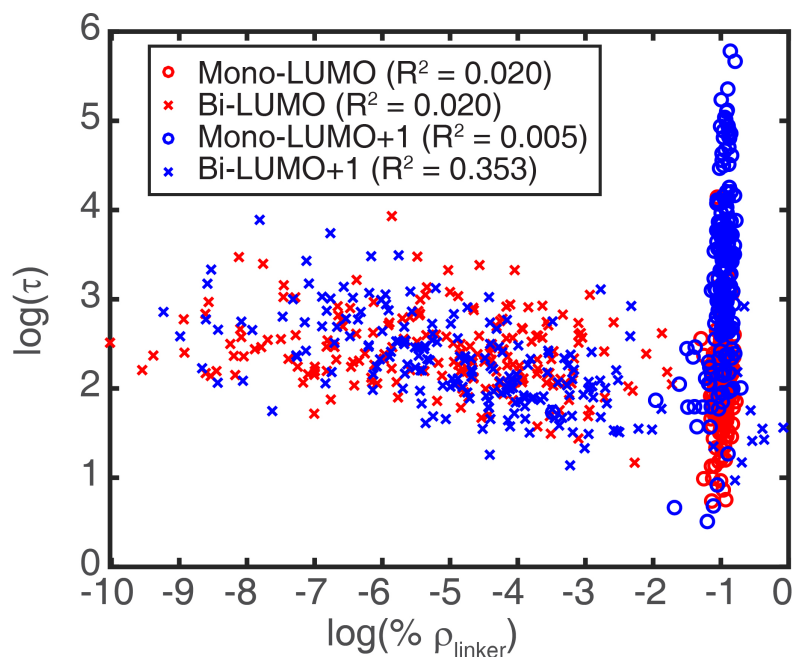


Figure S5. Correlation plots for the electron density on the linker group and $\log(\tau)$.

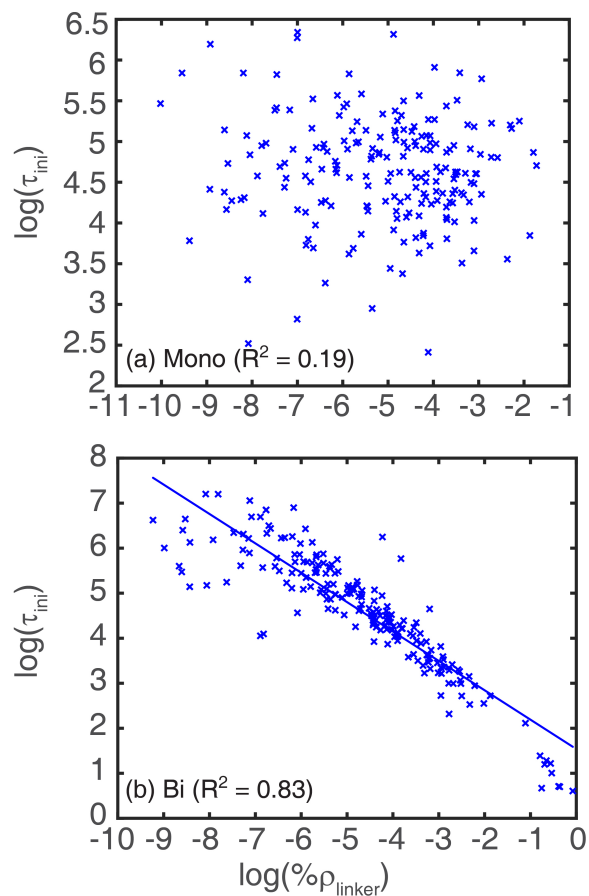


Figure S6. Correlation plots for the electron density on the linker group and $\log(\tau_{ini})$ for the LUMO+1 initial state.

5. Wavepacket survival probabilities in the surface region

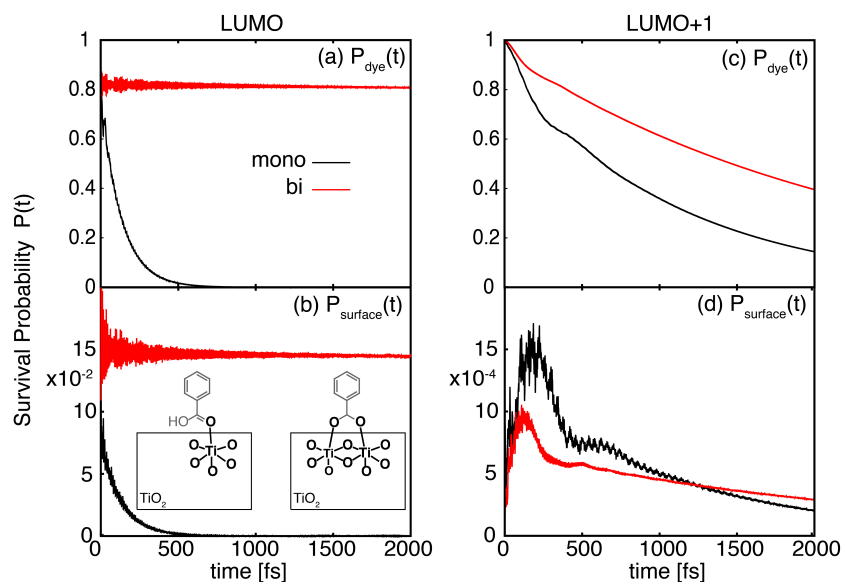


Figure S7. Survival probabilities on the first layer of TiO_2 slab connected to the dye. Surface regions are defined as a TiO_8 or Ti_2O_{10} cluster for the monodentate and bidentate attachment modes, respectively (highlighted in black in schematic figures). Bulk regions are defined as the remainder of the TiO_2 slab.

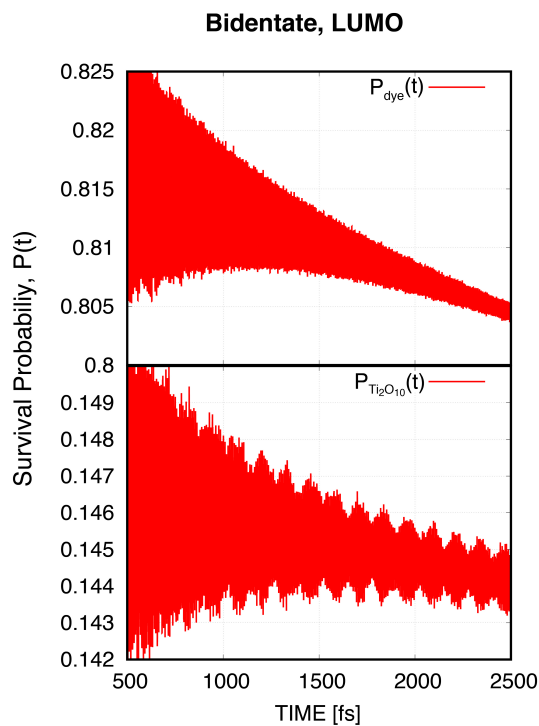


Figure S8. Survival probabilities on the dye and the first layer of TiO_2 slab for pyCA- TiO_2 in the bidentate attachment mode, showing injection from the LUMO initial state. The figure provides a closer look at medium-long term dynamics.

6. DFT-optimized coordinates for pyridine-TiO₂ slab

Table S3. XYZ coordinates for the monodentate attachment mode

ATOM	X	Y	Z
H	5.96863	3.69409	11.09198
H	5.48029	4.75460	14.36871
H	8.38201	7.38052	12.54687
H	5.85571	5.97854	16.52754
H	8.60862	8.52533	14.77172
Ti	0.00000	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	1.90594	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	1.90594	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	0.00000	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	0.00000	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	1.90594	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	1.90594	2.47241	5.54228
Ti	0.00000	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	15.24162	9.28125	8.34672
Ti	1.90644	4.03190	8.34312
Ti	1.90270	1.18887	9.01597
Ti	15.23825	6.42582	9.00844
Ti	3.81187	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	7.62375	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	11.43562	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	5.71781	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	9.52969	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	13.34156	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	5.71781	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	9.52969	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	13.34156	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	3.81187	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	7.62375	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	11.43562	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	3.81187	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	7.62375	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	11.43562	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	5.71781	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	9.52969	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	13.34156	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	5.71781	2.47241	5.54228
Ti	9.52969	2.47241	5.54228
Ti	13.34156	2.47241	5.54228
Ti	3.81187	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	7.62375	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	11.43562	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	3.81113	9.29409	8.35056
Ti	7.62531	9.26745	8.30672
Ti	11.42368	9.28712	8.34396
Ti	5.73112	4.10054	8.27292
Ti	9.52387	4.06077	8.32059

Ti	13.34154	4.02802	8.34279
Ti	5.72448	1.19923	9.00366
Ti	9.51886	1.20402	9.00771
Ti	13.33515	1.18186	9.01176
Ti	3.77817	6.43913	8.99729
Ti	7.63679	6.43694	9.13541
Ti	11.45134	6.43319	8.99629
O	0.00000	10.19857	0.37332
O	1.90594	4.95504	0.37332
O	1.90594	1.98690	1.26110
O	0.00000	7.23042	1.26110
O	0.00000	3.45367	1.83339
O	1.90594	8.69720	1.83340
O	1.90594	5.72904	2.72118
O	0.00000	0.48552	2.72118
O	0.00000	8.81302	3.92446
O	1.90594	3.56949	3.92446
O	1.90594	0.60134	4.81224
O	0.00000	5.84486	4.81225
O	0.00000	2.06812	5.38454
O	1.90594	7.31164	5.38454
O	1.90594	4.34349	6.27232
O	0.00000	9.58701	6.27232
O	15.24193	7.36565	7.45539
O	1.90752	2.12249	7.45847
O	1.90844	9.68983	8.41243
O	15.24328	4.44212	8.39029
O	15.24417	0.63401	9.20742
O	1.89139	5.87506	9.22036
O	1.90048	2.83762	9.83163
O	15.24295	8.08005	9.82370
O	3.81187	10.19857	0.37332
O	7.62375	10.19857	0.37332
O	11.43562	10.19857	0.37332
O	5.71781	4.95504	0.37332
O	9.52969	4.95504	0.37332
O	13.34156	4.95504	0.37332
O	5.71781	1.98690	1.26110
O	9.52969	1.98690	1.26110
O	13.34156	1.98690	1.26110
O	3.81187	7.23042	1.26110
O	7.62375	7.23042	1.26110
O	11.43562	7.23042	1.26110
O	3.81187	3.45367	1.83339
O	7.62375	3.45367	1.83339
O	11.43562	3.45367	1.83339
O	5.71781	8.69720	1.83340
O	9.52969	8.69720	1.83340
O	13.34156	8.69720	1.83340
O	5.71781	5.72904	2.72118
O	9.52969	5.72904	2.72118

O	13.34156	5.72904	2.72118
O	3.81187	0.48552	2.72118
O	7.62375	0.48552	2.72118
O	11.43562	0.48552	2.72118
O	3.81187	8.81302	3.92446
O	7.62375	8.81302	3.92446
O	11.43562	8.81302	3.92446
O	5.71781	3.56949	3.92446
O	9.52969	3.56949	3.92446
O	13.34156	3.56949	3.92446
O	5.71781	0.60134	4.81224
O	9.52969	0.60134	4.81224
O	13.34156	0.60134	4.81224
O	3.81187	5.84486	4.81225
O	7.62375	5.84486	4.81225
O	11.43562	5.84486	4.81225
O	3.81187	2.06812	5.38454
O	7.62375	2.06812	5.38454
O	11.43562	2.06812	5.38454
O	5.71781	7.31164	5.38454
O	9.52969	7.31164	5.38454
O	13.34156	7.31164	5.38454
O	5.71781	4.34349	6.27232
O	9.52969	4.34349	6.27232
O	13.34156	4.34349	6.27232
O	3.81187	9.58701	6.27232
O	7.62375	9.58701	6.27232
O	11.43562	9.58701	6.27232
O	3.76225	7.38559	7.45333
O	7.61545	7.37437	7.48822
O	11.47838	7.37728	7.45002
O	5.68630	2.13271	7.45676
O	9.54788	2.12477	7.44798
O	13.33696	2.11859	7.45653
O	5.71367	9.73134	8.39289
O	9.52358	9.69896	8.39070
O	13.33821	9.68381	8.40050
O	3.79349	4.43748	8.39730
O	7.61841	4.46477	8.32643
O	11.44319	4.43845	8.39265
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O	7.61992	0.66463	9.19163
O	11.42967	0.63563	9.21112
O	5.67631	5.89960	9.10780
O	9.55187	5.90488	9.12591
O	13.34562	5.87089	9.21589
O	5.76457	2.88410	9.83160
O	9.50475	2.86238	9.81025
O	13.34171	2.83141	9.82741
O	3.83429	8.08664	9.82521
O	7.61642	8.14600	9.83066

O	11.41755	8.08240	9.82127
O	7.53735	5.59450	11.05036
O	6.00360	4.22039	11.99759
N	7.25494	7.29653	15.75040
C	6.83197	5.23290	12.02035
C	6.93206	5.96187	13.30882
C	6.19012	5.57823	14.43148
C	7.81521	7.04265	13.41608
C	6.40035	6.26935	15.62474
C	7.93180	7.67548	14.65260

Table S4. XYZ coordinates for the bidentate attachment mode

ATOM	X	Y	Z
H	3.61682	4.83158	13.02992
H	7.92753	4.85972	12.99759
H	3.72973	3.91697	15.36992
H	7.86306	3.94818	15.33782
H	11.42793	8.36903	10.80023
Ti	0.00000	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	1.90594	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	1.90594	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	0.00000	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	0.00000	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	1.90594	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	1.90594	2.47241	5.54228
Ti	0.00000	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	0.02237	9.28529	8.34111
Ti	1.93828	4.04224	8.34572
Ti	1.93327	1.19082	9.00881
Ti	0.02370	6.43366	9.00992
Ti	3.81187	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	7.62375	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	11.43562	1.58260	1.10335
Ti	5.71781	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	9.52969	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	13.34156	6.82612	1.10336
Ti	5.71781	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	9.52969	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	13.34156	3.85797	1.99114
Ti	3.81187	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	7.62375	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	11.43562	9.10149	1.99114
Ti	3.81187	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	7.62375	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	11.43562	0.19704	4.65450
Ti	5.71781	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	9.52969	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	13.34156	5.44057	4.65450
Ti	5.71781	2.47241	5.54228
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Ti	3.81187	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	7.62375	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	11.43562	7.71594	5.54229
Ti	3.82268	9.25054	8.30043
Ti	7.59781	9.25406	8.29808
Ti	11.42609	9.38471	8.23403
Ti	5.69928	4.06566	8.23657
Ti	9.47024	4.03395	8.33921
Ti	13.39406	4.03048	8.34146
Ti	5.70929	1.21991	9.01630
Ti	9.48628	1.19225	9.01272
Ti	13.36809	1.18552	9.01216
Ti	3.86375	6.43231	9.13226
Ti	7.57327	6.42649	9.11876
Ti	11.43171	6.30161	8.93489
O	0.00000	10.19857	0.37332
O	1.90594	4.95504	0.37332
O	1.90594	1.98690	1.26110
O	0.00000	7.23042	1.26110
O	0.00000	3.45367	1.83339
O	1.90594	8.69720	1.83340
O	1.90594	5.72904	2.72118
O	0.00000	0.48552	2.72118
O	0.00000	8.81302	3.92446
O	1.90594	3.56949	3.92446
O	1.90594	0.60134	4.81224
O	0.00000	5.84486	4.81225
O	0.00000	2.06812	5.38454
O	1.90594	7.31164	5.38454
O	1.90594	4.34349	6.27232
O	0.00000	9.58701	6.27232
O	15.24498	7.36923	7.45595
O	1.90942	2.12436	7.45284
O	1.89186	9.69972	8.39560
O	15.24174	4.44669	8.38538
O	15.24149	0.63411	9.21401
O	1.90176	5.88329	9.18592
O	1.89216	2.84055	9.82631
O	15.23963	8.08439	9.82689
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O	9.52969	7.31164	5.38454
O	13.34156	7.31164	5.38454
O	5.71781	4.34349	6.27232
O	9.52969	4.34349	6.27232
O	13.34156	4.34349	6.27232
O	3.81187	9.58701	6.27232
O	7.62375	9.58701	6.27232
O	11.43562	9.58701	6.27232
O	3.74459	7.40033	7.47311
O	7.69831	7.40163	7.46546
O	11.44016	7.40442	7.49458
O	5.71345	2.11073	7.42993
O	9.52234	2.12215	7.45360
O	13.35257	2.12271	7.45672
O	5.72001	9.68308	8.38897
O	9.55275	9.70906	8.38366
O	13.33143	9.69929	8.38174
O	3.79949	4.40252	8.40996
O	7.63857	4.40033	8.40033
O	11.45053	4.48318	8.33774
O	3.81278	0.66010	9.18850
O	7.62408	0.65852	9.19490

O	11.44133	0.61933	9.21766
O	5.72302	5.98643	8.61406
O	9.54821	5.86853	9.19724
O	13.34019	5.86775	9.22658
O	5.71833	2.87128	9.78435
O	9.54943	2.84180	9.82760
O	13.34077	2.84036	9.82691
O	3.81114	8.13720	9.82112
O	7.64695	8.13616	9.81170
O	11.44184	8.06608	9.87828
O	6.88313	5.77344	10.93841
O	4.60363	5.76646	10.95584
C	5.74677	5.52751	11.47675
C	5.76805	4.92873	12.84625
C	4.57343	4.64719	13.51709
C	6.97918	4.66502	13.49719
C	4.64461	4.13582	14.81325
C	6.93620	4.15335	14.79493
N	5.79751	3.89385	15.45708