



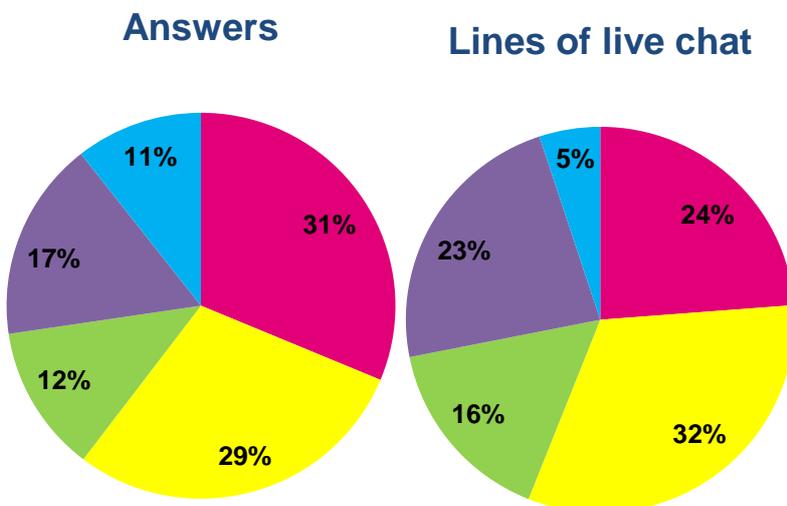
June 2014

The Infectious Diseases Zone had a high number of fast-paced and intense live chats, as a result of over 400 students from 9 schools taking part. The students were really interested to learn more about how microbes can affect our health, as shown by the Wordle and keywords on the next page. Given that one of the scientists' research interest was in Human Papilloma Virus, students got the perfect opportunity to ask questions about STD's that they might shy away from asking in a different context. The scientists in the zone were particularly good at handling cheeky questions and comments from the students.

Schools' data at a glance



Scientists' activity



| Scientist profile | Page views | Position |
|-------------------|------------|----------|
| Peter Elliott | 1,218 | Winner |
| Bethany Dearlove | 1,320 | 2nd |
| Keith Grehan | 1,024 | 3rd |
| Hannah Tanner | 855 | 4th |
| Ramya Bhatia | 925 | 5th |

Key figures from I'm a Scientist June 2014 for the zone, and the average of all 17 zones

Number of page views during the event (plus 2 previous weeks)

| INFECTIOUS DISEASES ZONE | PAGE VIEWS | ZONES AVERAGE |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Total zone | 24,259 | 16,052 |
| ASK page | 1,340 | 1,091 |
| CHAT page | 4,564 | 1,699 |
| VOTE page | 1,549 | 968 |

| | INFECTIOUS DISEASES ZONE | ZONES AVERAGE |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| Registered students | 426 | 282 |
| % of active students (used ASK, CHAT, VOTE or commented) | 85% | 80% |
| Questions asked | 534 | 488 |
| Questions approved | 219 | 217 |
| Answers given | 406 | 429 |
| Comments | 30 | 54 |
| Votes | 343 | 219 |
| Lines of live chat | 5,662 | 4,020 |
| Live chats | 17 | 12 |
| Schools | 8 | 6 |

Popular topics

Popular topics in both the CHAT and ASK sections were facts about microbes, diseases, and what it's like to be a scientist.

Other common topics included whether bacteria on our hands are actually good for us, and if we could use micro-organisms to enhance the human body or treat other diseases. There were also lots of questions about diseases in animals (related to Keith's research on how bats can pass viruses to humans) and about sexually transmitted diseases and cancer, related to Ramya's research on Herpes Papilloma Virus.



Keywords from live chats in the zone (the size of the word represents its popularity)





Keywords of questions asked in the zone

| Keyword | Number of times | Keyword | Number of times |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| microbe | 58 | virus | 14 |
| infection | 53 | cancer | 13 |
| research | 29 | gene | 12 |
| animal | 27 | contagious | 12 |
| work | 25 | evolution | 11 |
| medicine | 19 | preference | 10 |
| death | 18 | experiment | 10 |
| immune-system | 18 | history | 10 |
| cell | 14 | career | 9 |
| microbe | 58 | discovery | 9 |

Example questions

"Why are viruses so hard to cure?"

"What do bacteria eat?"

"is there an antidote to the most poisonous fungi?"

"do you think that avian influenza can mutate to be able to pass between humans?"

"could you create a new disease ?"

"How do you find a cure or vaccines to a virus?"

Examples of good engagement

All of the scientists had an enthusiastic and engaging tone, and Peter and Bethany were particularly notable. All of the scientists were really good at giving elaborate answers and linking to additional resources for further information on the topic, and using humour to engage with the students. Here are some examples:

[“what in a white blood cells cytoplasm engulfs the other pathogens so successfully?”](#) – lovindatscience123, student

“what do you do in science?” – 11jensen, student

“sadly I cannot tell you the specifics, as I have signed certain contracts, but I work on developing my technologies and products to help you and other scientists as well as monitoring bacterial populations within certain environments” – Peter Elliott, scientist

“does that mean you work for top secret government?!?!” – imnotscientist, student

“maybe.....but no I don’t, it is just the companies I work for don’t want their competitors learning about what they are working on so they have told me to keep quiet or face a firing squad (joke)” – Peter Elliott, scientist

Scientist winner: Peter Elliott

Peter’s plans for the prize money: “The average number of bugs on a human is 1 trillion. Whilst most of these are harmless and even beneficial there are a small number that are harmful to us. One way of protecting ourselves is to ensure we wash our hands properly. Over several years I have gone into schools and museums in Manchester to teach school children the importance of proper handwashing to keep us all safe and healthy. With the money I would be able to get to more schools to teach the same handwashing technique that doctors and nurses use.” [Read Peter’s thank you message here.](#)



Student winner: terry123

For great engagement during the event, **terry123** will receive a £20 WH Smith voucher and a certificate!

Feedback

We’re still collecting feedback from teachers, students and scientists but here are a few of the comments made during the event...

“Thanks, I wanted to know what it was like as I would like to work in a lab when I am older.” – kimberley10, student

“Thanks, I looked at the pictures you mentioned and they are amazing. It’s hard to believe that things that small can actually exist.” – student

“I’m having great fun...some of the questions are really challenging the way I think and respond.” – Bethany Dearlove, scientist

“The two week event has been an absolute blast. When I first started I did not know what to expect, but the more I took part the more addicted I became” – Peter Elliott, scientist