

Cancer Zone, November 2012



This report has been compiled by the I'm a Scientist team as a summary, containing moderator observations and our web data, to provide some meaningful information on the zone.

The Cancer Zone was steadily busy throughout the event. Students asked lots of generic science questions at the beginning but as it went on they asked deeper, complex questions, often all about cancer. Live chats were really entertaining with scientists and students having a healthy mix of science and humour.

Number of pageviews in the 4 weeks surrounding the event

Zone page	Pageviews
Total zone	16,716
ASK page	884
CHAT page	2,500
VOTE page	1,054
Clare Taylor	676
Susanne Muekusch	624
Robert Insall	595
Mariana Campos	500
Pedro Velica	421

Key figures from I'm a Scientist November 2012 for the zone, the average of all 3 zones, and the whole event

	Zone	Zones average	Whole event
Registered students	241	286	859
% of active students (used ASK, CHAT, VOTE or commented)	79%	79%	-
Questions asked	279	383	1,148
Questions approved	144	176	529
Answers given	442	507	1,520
Comments	93	75	224
Votes	196	211	632
Live chats	11	12	36
Lines of live chat	5,179	4,381	13,144
Schools	10	10	29

Popular topics

The most popular topic in this zone was, unsurprisingly, cancer. Students were really interested in how the scientists' research was going to help cure cancer: cancern12.imascientist.org.uk/q-keyword/cure. They often wanted to know how people developed cancer, for example asking whether it was genetic.

Students also wanted to know what motivated the scientists to research cancer, what animals they use & how their work will impact on the future. Students also asked whether the future cures for cancer would include nanobots, genetically engineered salmonella and vaccines.

Sample questions

[How do you actually get cancer? is it inherited?](#)

[What are the best ways of curing cancer? And do different cancers need different treatment?](#)

[Who is the greatest scientist and or philosopher of all time in your opinion?](#)

[Hi, what actually happens in chemotherapy??](#)

[do you use a lot of robots in your research?](#)

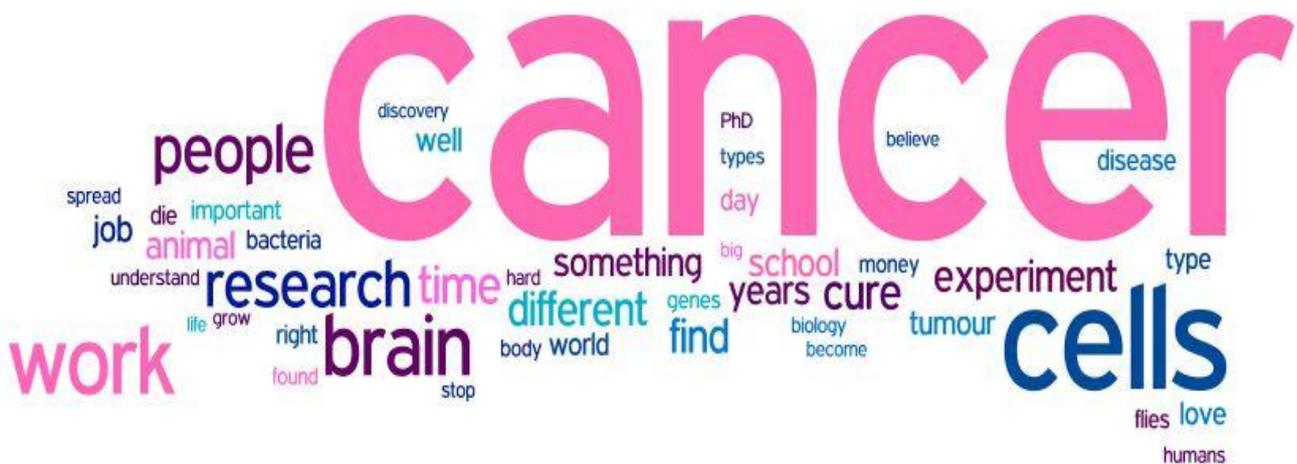
[If i were to create a clone from a cell with cancer, would the rest of the clone's cells have cancer?](#)

[Do you believe in God? And has your research had any effect on your religious views?](#)

Keywords of questions asked in the zone. The size of the word represents its popularity; the number indicates the number of times it was tagged as a keyword.

achievement² animal² animal testing² baby² bacteria² body² brain⁵ brain cancer³ **cancer**³⁶ cancer cause² cancer cell² **cancer type**⁴ **career**⁹ **cell**⁷ chemistry² chemotherapy³ **cloning**⁴ **cure**¹² danger³ death² **disease**⁸ fly³ gene² genetic³ heart² human² IAS³ **impact**⁴ inspiration³ leukemia² memory³ mutation² organ² philosophy² ph scale² physics³ plant² **reproduction**⁴ **research**²¹ science³ **scientist**¹⁰ sense² stem cell² transplant² **treatment**²

Keywords from live chats in the zone. The size of the word represents its popularity.



Examples of good engagement

There were lots of comments in the Cancer Zone, which increased the discussion beyond the question and answers. The question [do you think that it is possible to make a bionic arm that responds to your brain?](#) generated a great career discussion between the student and scientists, and the scientists' answers got 6 likes from the students.

In a live chat with one school the students asked top questions, including how cancer cells 'walk about' and how 'master regulator' molecules go wrong in cancer cells. During the chat scientist Clare Taylor said: *'your questions are brilliant today! I can see you've been doing some homework!'* The scientists were so impressed that they asked to email the teacher to say how brilliant the students were. The teacher replied saying: *"glad that they asked some challenging Qs... What works with other groups doesn't necessarily work with them, but they certainly got into it and they appreciated the extra 10 mins. Cancer always invokes lots of questions and there is one student in the group who's father has just been diagnosed for the 2nd time, so I was watching her questions with interest - she was more than happy to be in the chat."*

There were other instances when students were able to talk about how cancer/illness had affected them personally and the scientists could help give an explanation: [have you done any research on the drug Herceptin?](#) & [Mainly aimed at Susanne, but I welcome answers from others. Tell me more about stem cells please, I hear about them often enough, but don't always understand!](#)

Students really appreciated that Clare Taylor showed up to lots of live chats after she had been evicted.

Scientist winner: Robert Insall

Robert's plans for the money are: "I have an old but excellent microscope; I'd like to set it up as a touring show to let people see cells with their own eyes."



Student winner: henryjones

For asking lots of great questions about cloning, mutations and diseases and asking the scientists more challenging questions in his live chat. Henry gets a £20 WH Smith voucher and a certificate.

Feedback

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

"I Think we have run out of questions and lunchtime is calling. Thank you to everyone. This is the third time we have done this and it is as fab as ever." – Alison Ackroyd, teacher, MidKent College

"the levels were very different on different intellectual and silliness levels...it was nice to talk to students and sometimes their questions really get you thinking" – Susanne Muekusch, scientist

"I am finding that answering the #IAS2012 questions is becoming addictive." – Clare Taylor, scientist

"You guys are an inspiration to all and should be proud of what you do xxxxxxx :) :) You have made me think of science in a completely different way (in a good way)" – student

"U r all really good and u have inspired me that science is more than electricity and simple and u can think out of the box" – student

"Really looking forward to the session! Thanks for taking the time to chat to my students" – Alison Ackroyd, teacher, MidKent College

"FernhillScience @FernhillScience #IAS2012 chatting with scientists like a boss EPIC!! #IAS2012 is Epic!!!! Chatting to Scientists is really fun!" – Danielle Kohlman, teacher, Fernhill School, on Twitter