

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 Genes Zone was busy straight from day one, with students asking loads of questions and having intense live chats. Student questions gradually slowed down in the second week, as students started asking fewer but more complex questions.

Number of pageviews in the 4 weeks surrounding the event

Zone page	Pageviews
Total zone	23,835
ASK page	1,191
CHAT page	2,106
VOTE page	1,052
Joanna Giles	1,176
Marcus Wilson	859
Adam Paige	856
Louise Stanley	834
Louise Walkin	722

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	317	286	859
% of active students (used ASK, CHAT, VOTE or commented)	79%	79%	-
Questions asked	580	383	1,148
Questions approved	224	176	529
Answers given	670	507	1,520
Comments	99	75	224
Votes	241	211	632
Live chats	10	12	36
Lines of live chat	2,845	4,381	13,144
Schools	7	10	29

Popular topics

In live chats students asked lots of questions about mutations, genetic diseases and gene therapy. Students were keen to find out how the scientists do genetic tests. Often students would ask the scientists about their experiments, including what chemicals they use to mimic injury, and how DNA in egg cells can be tested to see if a baby inside the womb is healthy.

There were quite a lot of questions about what it is like to be a scientist in general and the scientists often gave good career advice, which went down well with the students.

Some of the most interesting questions were about reproduction and included: [how do animals figure out how to reproduce](#) and [if people can cross breed tigers and lions could we cross humans and apes what happens when you cross humans and apes](#).

Students asked some really imaginative questions, which got scientists thinking outside of their area, including [is the world and everything made on it made up of stars](#) and [what you do you thing happened a second before the big bang?](#) There were some great questions about the individual scientists' work, including Adam Paige's work on the WWOX gene: genesn12.imascientist.org.uk/q-keyword/wwox-gene

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.

[animal](#)7 [animal testing](#)4 [big bang](#)5 [blood](#)5 [body](#)3 [brain](#)3 [cancer](#)12 [career](#)19 [cell](#)7 [cell](#)
[division](#)4 [cheese](#)2 [chocolate](#)2 [cure](#)6 [danger](#)3 [disease](#)6 [dna](#)7 [doctor](#)2 [dream](#)3 [education](#)8 [evolution](#)4
[experiment](#)19 [explosion](#)3 [gcse](#)3 [gene](#)14 [GM](#)3 [guinea pig](#)3 [human](#)8 [IAS](#)8 [impact](#)3
[invention](#)3 [lab](#)3 [life](#)8 [lifestyle](#)5 [memory](#)3 [money](#)4 [periodic table](#)3 [personal](#)10 [philosophy](#)3
[reproduction](#)5 [research](#)18 [science](#)21 [scientist](#)15 [space](#)6 [win](#)4 [wwox gene](#)3

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



Examples of good engagement

One question that got scientists answering in a different way to normal was [how would you describe your journey throughout the competition as making a sandwich?](#) where Adam Paige noted that “*despite the metaphor – this experience is a lot more fun than sandwiches!*”.

The scientists often went that little bit further to help the students – one student asked for further reading on the membrane attack complex, which scientist Joanna Giles sent on to her.

During one live chat with Colchester County High School for Girls, students asked some very complex questions such as:

Student: 'how do you see in a cell that the RNA Polymase has got 'stuck'?'

Marcus Wilson: 'good question. so i break open the cell and look and then analyse the proteins. i know that

the stuck polymerases gets tagged by ubiquitin and you can see this because its heavier. but its really hard to study how it happens in just one cell as everything is happening on a nanometer scale'

After the chat the teacher Iona Martin said: *'My students absolutely loved yesterday's chat with the genes scientists, some great replies that made them think and for some of them facing university interviews at the moment, it will hopefully provide something extra they can discuss. The same group took part in the last live chat session and were so keen to participate again. I was impressed with scientist at the meeting abroad taking part!'*

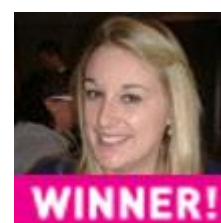
The winning scientist Joanna Giles spent the first half of the event in the US at a conference about arthritis research. Despite the time difference, Jo made it to nearly all of the live chats, which impressed the students and teachers, and showed them you get to travel as a scientist!

Student: *'what sort of things are you learning about arthritis at your conference in america?'*

Joanna Giles: *'it's been such a busy conference! We are learning about what other scientists have been discovering.'*

Scientist winner: Jo Giles

Jo's plans for the money are: *"I would give a chunk to Jeans for Genes and I would also design and print posters of all the best questions posted on here and send them to the schools taking part."*



She's written a thank you post with more details about her plans at genesn12.imascientist.org.uk/2012/11/26/thank-you-from-your-winner-jo

Student winner: nessyl23

For asking lots of great questions about the history of science, time machines and dreaming. Nessy 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 had so much fun participating in the event -am so sad that it is over! Hopefully I can take part again some day!" – Jo Giles, scientist

"thank you very much for your time this afternoon, you havemade the students think once again, great A level extension and fits in well with our genetics topic about to start in January. Good luck with final vote tomorrow!" – Iona Martin, teacher, Colchester County High School for Girls

"everyone gave awesome answers, no one should be evicted!" – georgieholiday, student

"Congratulations Jo, and a big thank you from all our students. You and the other Scientists helped us have a fun and stimulating week! Good luck with your future work" – Paula Conibear, teacher, Churston Ferrers Grammar School