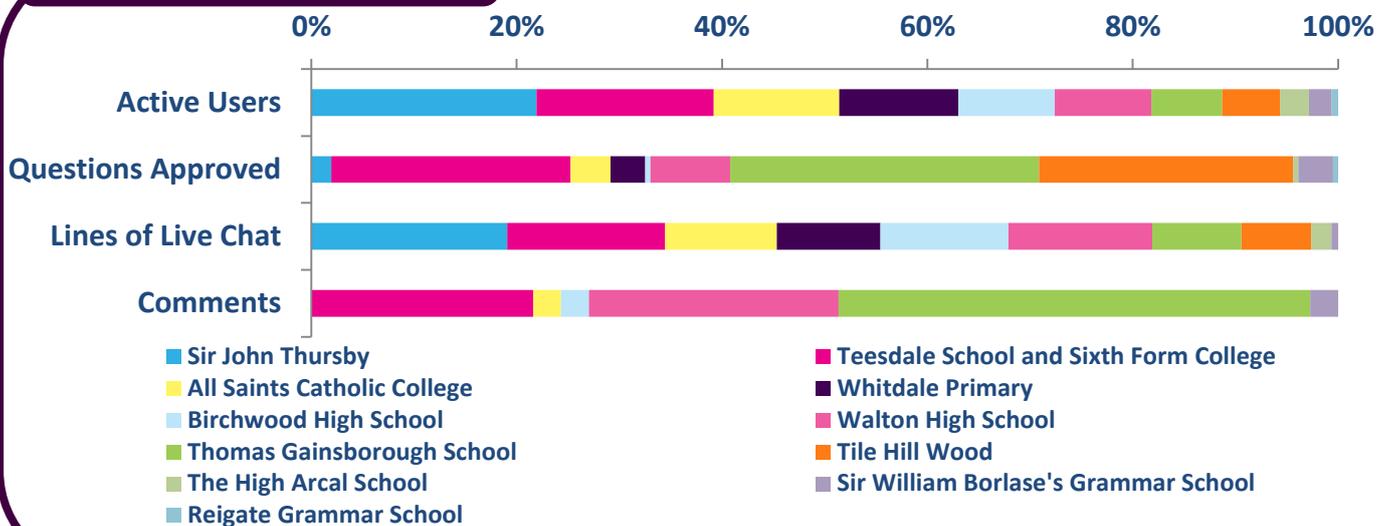




March 2015

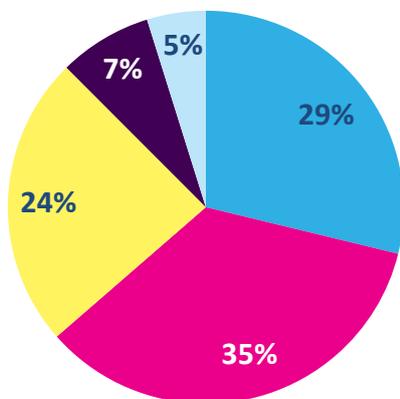
The Genes Zone was one of the most focused zones during the March event, with many discussions on the topics of genetics and DNA. A very high proportion of students (93%) were active on the site, the number of comments submitted was above average, and the ratio of approved questions to those submitted was high at 56%. The scientists were mostly excellent in attending chats, with nearly all the chats including at least three scientists.

School data at a glance

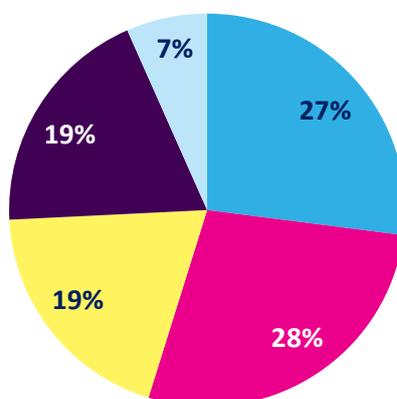


Scientists activity

Answers



Lines of live chat



Scientist	Profile views	Position
Barbara Shih	1,138	Winner
Matthew Moore	821	2nd
Sophie Robinson	748	3rd
Tristan Smith	722	4th
Ravinder Kana	567	5th

Key figures from the Genes Zone, and the average of the March zones

PAGE VIEWS	GENES ZONE	MARCH '15 ZONES AVERAGE
Total zone	24,699	36,564
ASK page	1,102	2,481
CHAT page	1,999	4,878
VOTE page	1,146	2,422

	GENES ZONE	MARCH '15 ZONES AVERAGE	IAS AVERAGE
Students	349	383	338
% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE	93%	87%	83%
Questions asked	366	496	713
Questions approved	206	238	297
Answers given	354	495	540
Comments	55	45	86
Votes	266	299	270
Lines of live chat	5,074	5,467	4,437
Live chats	17	17	13
Average lines of live chat	298	331	335
Schools	11	10	8

Popular topics

The questions and chats stuck quite closely to the theme of genetics, including genetic engineering, including questions about making organisms and even cheese glow in the dark. There were a number of questions about inheritance and physical characteristics as well as more controversial topics such as animal testing. The questions directed to scientists demonstrated that the students had read the scientist's profiles as so many were related to their work e.g. blood cancers, cystic fibrosis, and the appearance of DNA and risks of sun exposure. The below average level of approved questions suggests that many students' questions were on the same topics and had already been covered, or that student's prior knowledge of the topic may have been limited.

More general science questions appeared in many chats asking about aliens, evolution and space in addition to the personal and mundane such as "Do you like rugby?" and "What do you like doing in your spare time?".



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





Keywords of questions asked in the zone, length of bar represents frequency of use

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

cancer
DNA

science

gene
blood

cure

human
people
scientist
disease

genetic

research
work
career
life
world
space
universe
ebola
subject

Example Questions (click for links)

“Can diabetes be cured? If not is anyone working on it?”

“Do you think it's necessary to test on animals?”

“Can u get Netflix in space?”

“Because all of our cells divide, does that mean we all have cancer inside us?”

“Would you advise your career to others who are interested in science and why?”

“How do you look at DNA?”

“Does everything have ‘genes’”

“How can we make our immune system stronger?”

“Is it possible to create a griffon from a lion and an eagle?”

“What do you think has been the most important scientific discovery ever?”

“Do you ever get stereotyped?”

“When the cure for cancer is discovered how long do you think it will be before everyone is cured?”

“Why do people have different shades of skin?”

“Why do some children look more like their mothers and others look more like their fathers?”

“What do you think of the infinite universe theory? Why or why not do you think it is accurate?”

“If aliens do or did exist, what genes would (or did) they have?”

“Which country do you think are the most scientifically developed country in the world?”

Examples of good engagement

Many submitted questions and chats focused on the research of the scientists. The scientists were able to discuss controversial genetic issues and express their views very well in the chats e.g.

“Should designer babies be allowed to modify the DNA of foetus' to get rid of genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis?” – Student

“Designer babies' should definitely be allowed where there is a medical benefit. However, great care should always be taken and any such techniques should never be pushed forward if the potential outcomes aren't fully understood. IVF has certainly been shown to be safe so discriminating against embryos which have inherited disorders should be no problem” – Matt, scientist

“Some people would say it is. However I don't think we should let scares about designer babies prevent us from harnessing medical breakthroughs and reducing people's suffering. 'Designer babies' that have chosen traits would never be allowed” – Sophie, scientist

“I think it just requires to be sensible. Genetic screening has the potential to save thousands of lives and help us advance our understanding of genetics. Thankfully designer babies aren't possible, and the more we can make people aware of how genetics works, they will hopefully understand the problems with 'designer babies'” – Tristan, scientist

Scientist winner: Barbara Shih

Barbara's plans for the prize money: *“Making an illustrative blog/webcomic relating high school sciences and maths to research (for both teachers and students). By relating things students learn from school to how/why they matter in real life or in research situations, I am hoping to help students develop an interest in what they are learning, as well as decide on the subjects they want to study in the future. (Or maybe help the teachers to make the subject more interesting in class)”*



Read Barbara's [thank you message](#).

Student winner: 552genb48

For great engagement during the event, this student will receive a gift 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...

“Thank you to replying to me because it will make a difference in my life” – Hooria, student

“Thank you very much scientists, you were extremely helpful.” – Keeleya, teacher



Matt Moore
@91Mattmoore

Wasn't expecting multiverse q's in the genes zone of #IASUK, but I probably better understand the argument from Kolmogorov complexity now!