



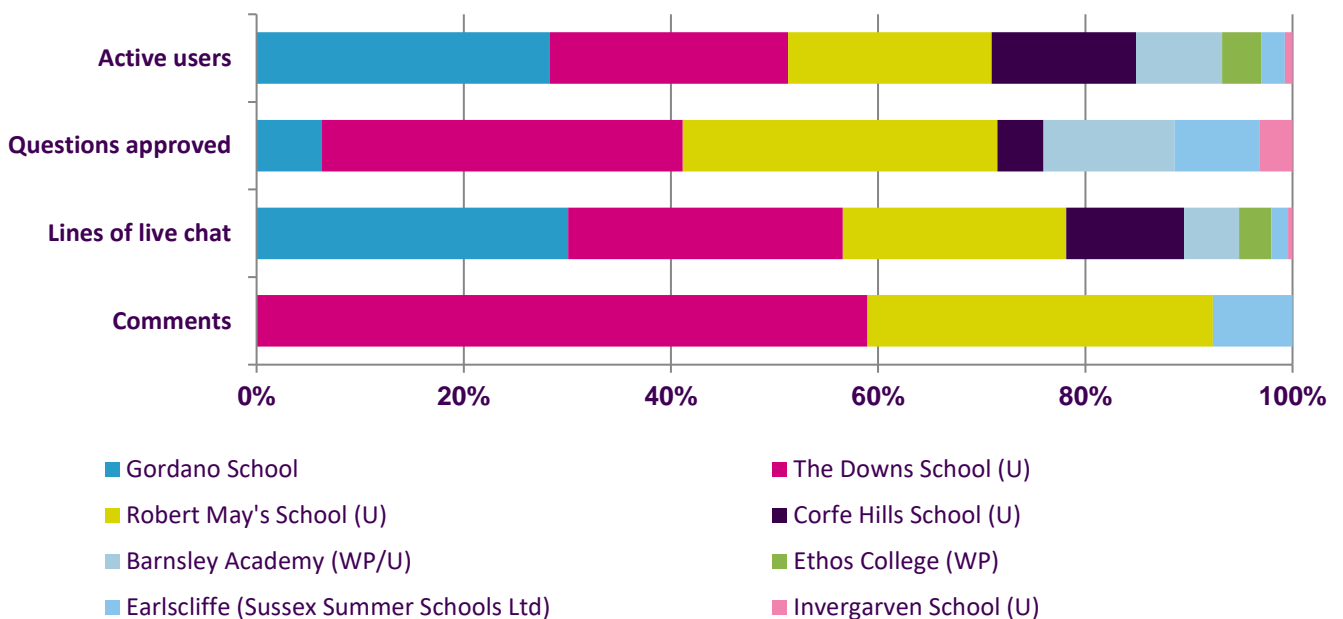
June 2018

The Californium Zone was a general science zone supported by Wellcome, with six scientists from a range of fields.

- Thomas investigates the earth beneath our feet to make sure buildings and tunnels don't collapse, and homes don't flood
- Hayley works in cellular pathology, turning biopsies into slides to help diagnose a patient
- Ella, the winner of this zone, is a first-year PhD student researching how neurons talk to each other
- David designs and builds new CT scanners for research in dentistry
- Alison is a PhD student researching how to utilise microalgae for biotechnology applications
- Alex is a neurosurgeon in training, performing brain and spine surgeries

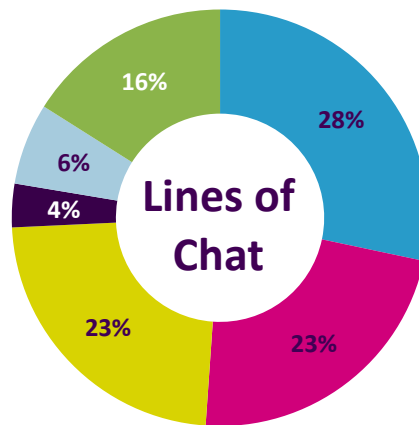
Students engaged well with the scientists' research, with one of the most popular topics both in Ask and Chat being Ella and Alex's work with the brain. This zone was the quietest of all June's zones as two schools with a number of classes unfortunately had to drop out at the start of the event, and we weren't able to replace them.

School data at a glance



We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups going into STEM careers. Find out what we mean by our under-served (U) and WP schools (WP), and how you can support us in working with more of these at about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp/

Scientist activity



SCIENTIST	PROFILE VIEWS	POSITION
Ella Mercer	591	Winner
Thomas Perriment	517	2nd
Hayley Pincott	569	3rd
Alex Alamri	388	4th
Alison Hughes	369	5th
David Mills	414	6th

Key figures from the Californium Zone and the averages of the June zones

PAGE VIEWS	CALIFORNIUM ZONE	JUNE '18 ZONES AVERAGE
Total zone	17,698	19,125
ASK page	877	1,307
CHAT page	1,015	1,422
VOTE page	1,036	1,252

	CALIFORNIUM ZONE	JUNE '18 ZONES AVERAGE	IAS 2012-18 AVERAGE
Californium Zone Schools	8	9	10
Students logged in	227	393	387
% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE	96%	91%	86%
Questions asked	348	461	689
Questions approved	158	225	300
Answers given	334	400	536
Comments	76	68	74
Votes	218	300	304
Live chats	16	18	16
Lines of live chat	5,987	6,513	5,509
Average lines per live chat	374	357	354

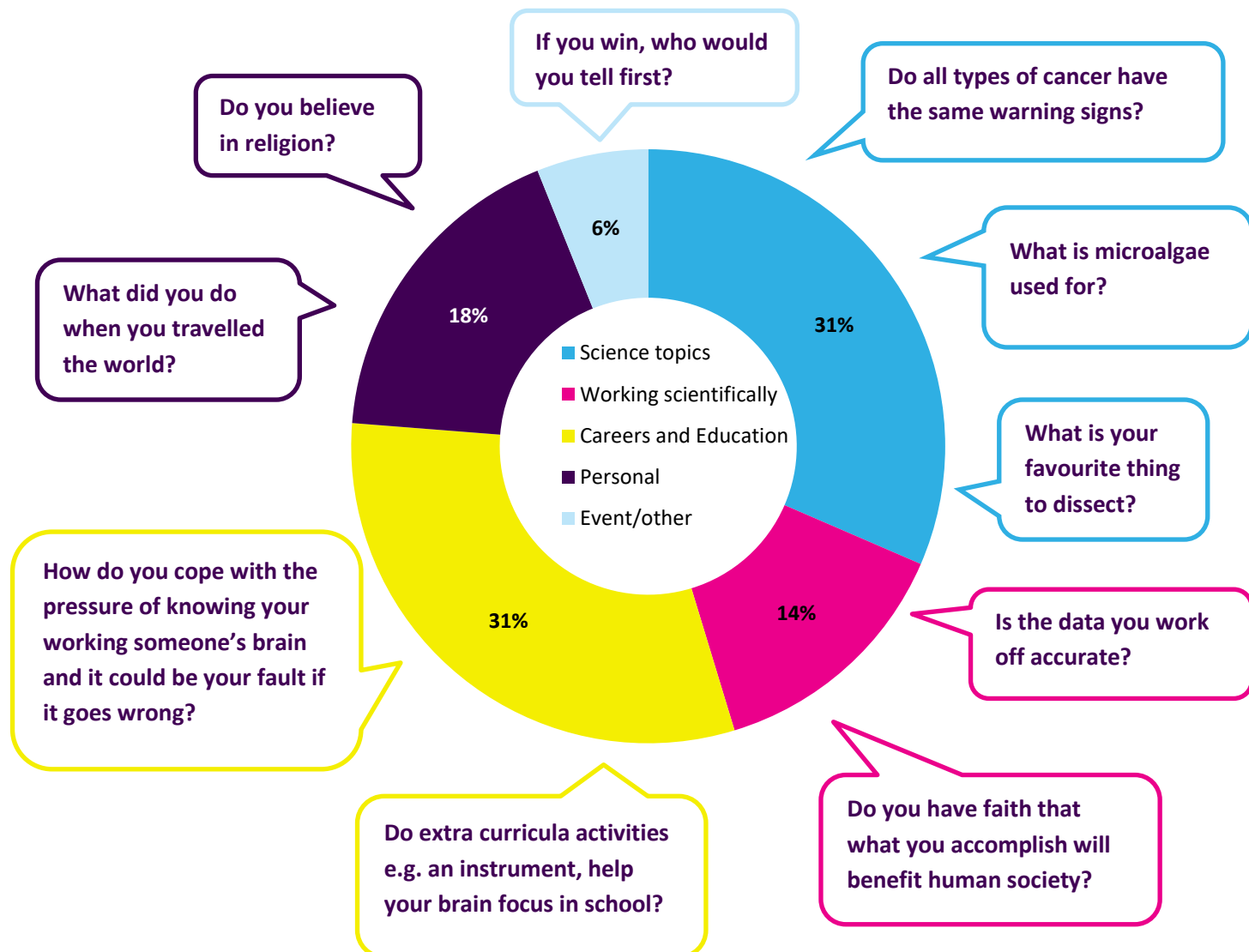
Popular topics

As this was a general science zone conversations were varied, with lots of general questions about space, animals and diseases such as cancer. Students did engage with the scientists' individual work areas, asking Ella and Alex all about the brain — what causes brain damage, how neurons work, what it's like to be a brain surgeon and the risks associated with this job. Alison was asked what microalgae is and what it is used for, and David about the CT scanners he has designed.

Lots of students were interested in being a scientist and what their daily lives were like, as well as why they preferred their jobs to others and the previous jobs they had had. Students and scientists also bonded over personal interests, especially with Thomas who plays video games.

Question themes and example questions in the Zone

Find out about how we've coded the questions at about.imascientist.org.uk/2017/student-question-coding



Examples of good engagement

Within the chats students were keen to share their own ideas with the scientists, such as in this exchange with Thomas about measuring the pressure of a moving glacier:

"I made a theory about glaciers moving that maybe you could measure the pressure it exerts when it moves, can you actually do this? I thought this because you measure the magnitude of an earthquake using the Richter Scale, so I thought it could apply to glaciers?" – Student

"You definitely can! It's a really interested way of measuring frictional components between the glacier and the underlying soil/rock. Although for this you would need to know the volume and weight of the glacier which can be super hard to model. You can definitely measure the force something exerts, even using the compressional strain it generates when pushing on a spring!" – Thomas, scientist

"That's amazing!" – Student

"But that's a really good theory! It'd definitely work I think. Awesome idea" – Thomas, scientist

Students also made the most of the opportunity to ask the scientists about what life is like at university. This is also a great example of multiple scientists getting involved in a conversation within a live chat:

*“What is the best thing to look for in uni social life if you don't drink or party?” – **Student***

*“A really good and supportive Student's Union that has lots of clubs and societies.” – **Alex, scientist***

*“There are so many clubs (at university we call them societies) to join that have nothing to do with drinking or partying! There's sports, arts, culture - you name it, you can probably find it!” – **Ella, scientist***

*“And i guess you meet alot of people which is always a joy :)” – **Student***

*“You will make friends for life there.” – **David, scientist***

*“Going to Uni is a brilliant way to meet people. You're all in the same situation so you instantly have that bond” – **Hayley, scientist***

*“And you'll find so many people at university that also don't drink or like going out! I didn't really go out in my last couple of years at university and I still spent a lot of times with my friends going out for dinner or having movie nights!” – **Ella, scientist***

*“Thank you all! I've only ever had recounts of uni life all about the night life so I wasn't sure what to expect!” – **Student***

Scientist winner: Ella Mercer

Ella's plans for the prize money: *“I'd use the prize money to make my first set of games/activities to take to schools to teach people how amazing the brain is!”* Read Ella's [thank you message](#).



Student winner: Alice

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...

*“It was a great way to engage our young people. Thank you for letting us take part!!” – **Teacher***

*“I have learned that scientists are normal people and also make mistakes.” – **Student***

*“I loved being able to show the students that I'm just an ordinary person with ordinary hobbies and interests.” – **Ella, scientist***