I’m a Scientist, Get me out of here!

an award-winning
science engagement activity,
funded by the Wellcome Trust

Sponsored by:
Institute of Physics
Research Councils UK
Science and Technology Facilities Council
A few numbers

- 3 years
- 270 scientists
- 586 teachers
- 16,000 students
- 30,000 questions
- 220,000 unique visitors
- 500 schools applying
- 650 scientists applying
Why does it work?

• Scientists
  – Done from the lab/office
    – No wasted time
  – Appeals to younger scientists particularly
  – Enjoyable
  – Quick, frequent, iterative feedback

• Students
  – Excellent teaching resources
  – Voting provides a purpose
  – Anonymity of online levels the field
  – Uses young people’s culture and media
Outcomes

Students

• Enthuse students about science
  “I kept finding that I’d ask a question, and they’d give me an answer, and then I’d have loads more questions, and then more, and then more!”
  Student, West Thames College

  “by the time you finish the project, science will have taken over your brain and made you love it for the rest of your life”
  Student newsletter

• Show students the range of science careers
Outcomes

Scientists

• Increased interest in PE
  “I haven’t done any sort of public engagement activity before... It's certainly encouraged me to do more in the future”
  Scott Grandison, Lecturer in computational biology, UEA

  “This is by far the best science engagement activity I’ve been involved with, and I rank it as amongst the most rewarding and fulfilling activities of my professional career.”
  Dr Tom Hartley, York University

• Broadening outlooks
  “I think it reminded me what was cool about science, from explosions to purple carrots. It is also humbling when a student pierces the jargon and asks a great question. It reminds you the it is not knowledge but curiosity that makes a great scientist!”
  Leo Garcia, Cancer Research
Outcomes

Scientists

• Good training in communication skills

"[I've gained] a better understanding of how important ethical issues are to the students – they really have thought a lot more about such things than I have – consequently I have now thought about them and now know my own ethical opinions!! It shows that scientists need to communicate the ethical implications of their work better."

Dr Vicki Onions, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research Fellow, University of Nottingham.

• Get challenged about their work
Who got in?

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I'm a Forensic Anthropologist, which means I examine skeletons, bones or flesched bodies from crime scenes or mass disasters to work out as much as I can about the person - who they were, how they lived and especially how they died.
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What I'd do with the money

Would you like to investigate a real dead (pig) body? I’d start a Discover Decomposition workshop for teenagers on my mini “Body Farm” (Forensic Fieldwork Facility).
Who got in?

I use biomechanics and perception tests to understand how lame horses move and how clinicians see that they are lame - by combining these objective and subjective methods, I hope to improve lameness detection in the future.

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Epidemiology of meningococcal disease in Europe
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Dietary manipulation to reduce methane output in ruminants

I’m working out how changing what cows eat might reduce their farting
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@imascientist
http://imascientist.org.uk/scientists