

British Science Association news

Ollie Christophers on a smörgåsbord of science

Join the ideas explosion!

Do you know any 11-18 year olds who have completed a project in science, technology, engineering or maths? Did their project dazzle you? If so, you should encourage them to enter the National Science & Engineering Competition! It is very quick and easy to enter online until 31 October, and the best entries will be invited to present their projects at The Big Bang: UK Young Scientists' and Engineers' Fair, in London on 10-12 March 2011.

There is over £50,000 of prizes to win for both teams and individuals in three age categories. The two individual winners in the senior category will also gain the titles of UK Young Scientist of the Year and UK Young Engineer of the Year.

So, do you know a winner?

For more information about the National Science & Engineering Competition, please visit:

www.nationalsciencecompetition.org
or contact Fiona Burford, National Science & Engineering Competition Manager at fiona.burford@britishscienceassociation.org or 01483 826 126.

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Regional Roundup

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CREST (CREativity in Science and Technology) takes a leading role in the regional and national Big Bang Fairs. Over 70 CREST-specific prizes were awarded to students at this year's regionals: many of these projects will go on to next year's National Science & Engineering Competition.

More information about CREST, the Big Bang and the National Science & Engineering Competition can be found at: www.britishscienceassociation.org/crestevents

Neuromantics

This year you can join in two online mass participation activities that British Science Association is running as we approach the Festival. Log on to www.neuromantics.co.uk to take part in our working memory test and then jump into the Adlab and tell us what you think about advertising.

People with superior working memory tend to have better jobs, better relationships, and lead happier lives. People with poor working memory tend to struggle in their working and personal lives and are more likely to have trouble with the law. A growing number of studies link memory with mental health.

The initial study on working memory, the ability to remember and manually process information, is looking to see if there is a link between your working memory, your outlook on life and the incidence of depression.

The second part of Neuromantics is the Adlab where we will be investigating what it is about a particular advertisement that appeals to different types of people. Are some more influenced by celebrity? Or the

scientific argument? Or the beauty of the person seen in the ad?

The experiment aims to discover whether advertising is passive knowledge transfer, allowing individuals to make up their own mind, or whether advertisers can manipulate specific elements of commercials to target individuals' 'buy button' in the brain.

You can find out the results from neuromantics.co.uk at the British Science Festival in September.

The x-change

This year the British Science Festival comes to Aston University in Birmingham from 14-19 September. With workshops, debates, activities, plays and films, the choice is endless.

To help you out, our team of x-change volunteers pick and choose the best of the fest to round up the day. Join them and other festival-goers each evening in the Student's Guild Blue Bar to hear from a selection of the day's best speakers and catch up on who was most controversial, interesting or downright hilarious, all for free.

Disagree. Question. Debate. Enjoy a drink and get your teeth into some of the hottest science of the day. We guarantee to make you think. Everything expertly knitted together by BBC journalist Sue Nelson.

Read more at www.britishscienceassociation.org/x-change



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David Willetts meets STEM Ambassadors from Rolls-Royce, GE Aviation Systems, BMT, Magnox North and GCHQ at the Cheltenham Science Festival.

Science and Society – moving forward

The Big Society! What does that really mean? The Science and Society strategy expert groups have been thinking about science's relationship with society in coming up with their reports and action plans. David Willetts, the new Science Minister, tells us what he thinks on pp8-9. And here's a brief update on what's happened since the reports were published in the spring.

Science for All

A follow-up group has met, and a member of staff recruited to drive forward progress with delivering the action plan. The group is once again chaired by Roland Jackson and consists of representatives from across the public engagement spectrum. Progress includes:

- sessions at the Science Communication Conference on how delegates could shape the follow-up actions to the reports
- The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement is leading consultation on an Attributes Framework for Public Engagement for use in higher education institutions
- Sciencewise is leading development of a tool which can be used by public engagement intermediaries to talk in a common language about public engagement activities
- The Royal Academy of Engineering, with support from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), is developing a research proposal to investigate motivations within business for public engagement
- The British Science Association has launched a 'Collective Memory' to pull together evaluations of public engagement activities. See www.britishsociety.org/forms/scicomm/evaluation/access

The Media and Trust groups also ran workshops at the Science Communication Conference in May and have also established follow-on groups.

Science and the Media

Progress includes:

- A Journalism Training Coordinator, based at the Royal Statistical Society, has been appointed
- Funding has been agreed for Science Press Officer Training and Introduction to the Media Course
- The BBC Buddy Scheme is continuing with several exciting collaborations and contributions being developed.

Science and Trust

- Science Communication Conference workshops on evaluation and development of resource to explore 'good science'
- Aileen Allsop met with business to develop a business ethics working group
- Project underway to redevelop the universal ethical code for scientists and assess ethical training needs in government compared with other sectors
- Work by the Research Information Network to develop a pilot scheme for discussing science in library spaces
- New Sciencewise dialogue on trust in various settings
- Paper on proposals for strengthening evaluation in science and society in progress.

Science for Careers

The Careers group has also established a follow-on group whose actions include:

- A pilot project to raise awareness of the important contribution parents make to careers choices
- Research into raising the visibility of small and medium enterprises as employers
- Widening the range of role models available and research into the portrayal of STEM skills
- Developing a STEM volunteering strand to work alongside leading, existing volunteering and mentoring projects
- Research into the demand and delivery of science and engineering work experience and sandwich year placements, and the barriers to their supply
- 'Hidden Scientist' event to highlight the amount of science used in 'non-science' jobs.

Science and Learning

The Science and Learning Expert Group was fundamentally different from the others, reporting to both BIS and the Department for Education Ministers. Many of the recommendations in the report align with policy intentions in the Coalition Agreement, such as 'attracting more top science and maths graduates into teaching'. The findings are being taken into account as part of policy development work for the new government.



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