



What is ReelLIFE SCIENCE?

ReelLIFE SCIENCE is a novel science communication competition for primary and secondary school students in Ireland. It aims to encourage students to engage with Science by researching and communicating a scientific topic via a three minute video. It also provides a means for scientists to take part in outreach and community engagement activities. Winning schools are invited to the Galway Science and Technology Festival to see their videos on display to the general public and to receive their prizes, which consist of funding towards scientific resources for their classrooms or labs, or a science trip or project, reinforcing the students' participation in science-based activities.

At primary school level, the project aims to introduce students to everyday scientific concepts on the national Science curriculum, e.g. the environment and living Things by, examining 'Science in the Garden' or learning about 'The Food we Eat' or 'The Power of Science', when researching the topics for their video. At secondary school level, the project is aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at Transition Year students, to enable them to step away from the curriculum and choose to research a topic of particular interest to them, within the framework of the competition. This can be done individually or in groups that are typically smaller than those at primary school level, promoting independent learning, project management and communication.





ReelLIFE SCIENCE – How it began.

ReelLIFE SCIENCE began in 2013, after Dr. Enda O’Connell, who manages the Genomics and High Throughput Screening Core facilities in National University of Ireland Galway, received science outreach funding as a winner of the inaugural Irish ‘I’m a Scientist...get me out of here!’ competition. With additional funding from the NUI Galway Student’s Union EXPLORE Innovation Initiative and the College of Science, ReelLIFE SCIENCE 2013 was launched in Co. Galway schools, with a prize fund of €1000. The competition received 37 video entries from all over the city and county of Galway, and hugely positive feedback from the participants. The highlight of the competition was meeting the students (aged from 4 to 18) and teachers who made the winning videos at the Galway Science and Technology Festival, and seeing their pride and delight when their videos were screened for the general public attending the festival, as well as receiving their prizes and certificates.

Inspired by the success of 2013, funding was sought to roll out ReelLIFE SCIENCE nationally, with an increased prize fund for the winning schools. A Science Foundation Ireland Discover grant was awarded to fund the programme, and in September 2014 more than 4,000 primary and secondary schools in Ireland were invited to take part in ReelLIFE SCIENCE 2014. The response was overwhelming, with 255 video entries received, made by more than 3,500 students in 24 counties around Ireland. The videos were shortlisted by a panel of 42 NUI Galway scientists and science students, based on scientific communication, production and entertainment. Shortlisted videos were judged by a panel of special guest judges (Prof. Stephen Curry, Imperial College London and science writer with The Guardian, Dr. Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin, University College Dublin and Radio and TV broadcaster and the 2014 BT Young Scientist and 2013 SciFest winner Paul Clarke).





ReelLIFE SCIENCE and The Biochemical Society at the Galway Science and Technology Festival

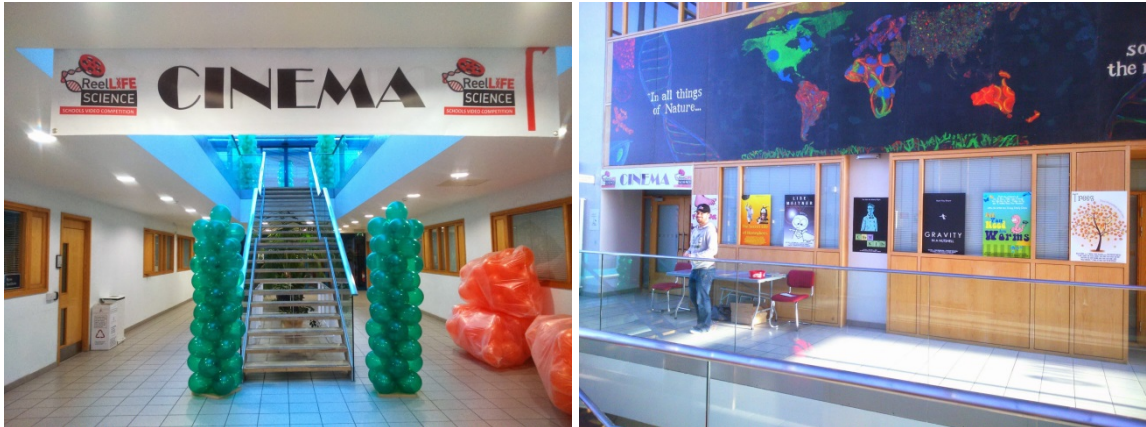
The Biochemical Society supported ReelLIFE SCIENCE in 2014 by awarding a Scientific Outreach Grant to fund the Screening and Awards Ceremony at the Galway Science and Technology Festival on Sunday November 23rd. The seven prizewinning schools were invited to receive their prizes and view their videos being screened at the NUI Galway-based festival, which is Ireland's largest Science and Technology Festival with approximately 20,000 people of all ages in attendance, with a strong emphasis on families and school groups. In 2013, all of the prizewinning schools were able to attend, as, on average, they were located less than 25 km away. However, with the national expansion of ReelLIFE SCIENCE, the prizewinning schools were located over 200 km and 3 hours away from NUI Galway, with one school in Donegal facing a 9 hour round trip.

With the support of The Biochemical Society, we were able to offer the schools a travel bursary to help them attend the Science Festival and we were delighted that six of the seven schools were able to come along on the day, as well as a number of other participating schools. We were also able to turn the lecture theatre into the 'ReelLIFE SCIENCE Cinema' for the Screening and Awards Ceremony, with large banners and unique full-size movie posters designed for each of the screened videos lining the venue. The 'Cinema' held 7 screenings throughout the day and attracted full houses for each of the screenings, with a total audience of over 500 people. Based on the demand, we are planning on relocating to a larger venue on campus in future years.

In addition to the Screening, an Awards Ceremony was held on the day, with speeches from Margie McCarthy, Head of Education & Public Engagement, Science Foundation Ireland, Prof. Donal Leech, NUI Galway Dean of Science and Tom Hyland, Chairman of the Galway Science and Technology Festival. The first placed primary and secondary schools were presented with cheques for €1,000, with €300 and €200 for 2nd and 3rd placed schools, and with the support of The Biochemical Society, each winning and shortlisted school was awarded a framed ReelLIFE SCIENCE certificate and a full-sized copy of their movie poster for their classroom.

The feedback from the general public who attended the screenings was overwhelmingly positive, with numerous enquiries as to where the videos could be viewed online and how students could take part in the competition in 2015. The real highlight of the day was meeting all of the winning students and teachers from all over the country, and being able to put on a memorable event for them in recognition of their hard work in the preceding weeks. Some of the feedback received from the teachers and students was extremely gratifying, particularly:

"There's little doubt it will go down as No. 1 on the 'Greatest Thing I've Ever Done In My Life' list for each of them...It's given them a wonderful opportunity to be creative and upon learning that they'd won, gave me the greatest reaction (sheer euphoria!) I've witnessed from any group of children in 15 years of teaching." Thomas, primary school teacher.



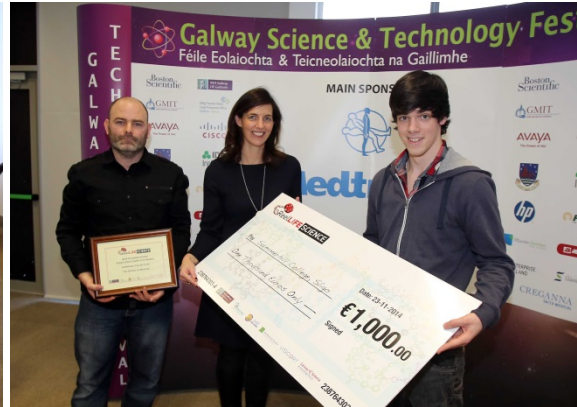
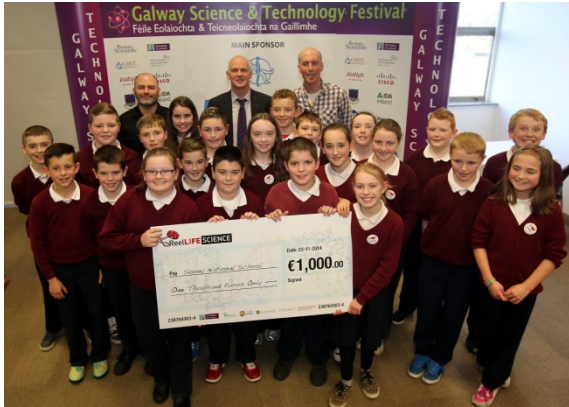
The ReelLIFE SCIENCE Cinema at the Galway Science and Technology Festival



A selection of movie posters from the ReelLIFE SCIENCE Cinema



Some of the winning students and teachers attending the ReelLIFE SCIENCE Cinema



The winning schools from all parts of Ireland receiving their prizes at the ReelLIFE SCIENCE Awards Ceremony at the Galway Science and Technology Festival 2015.



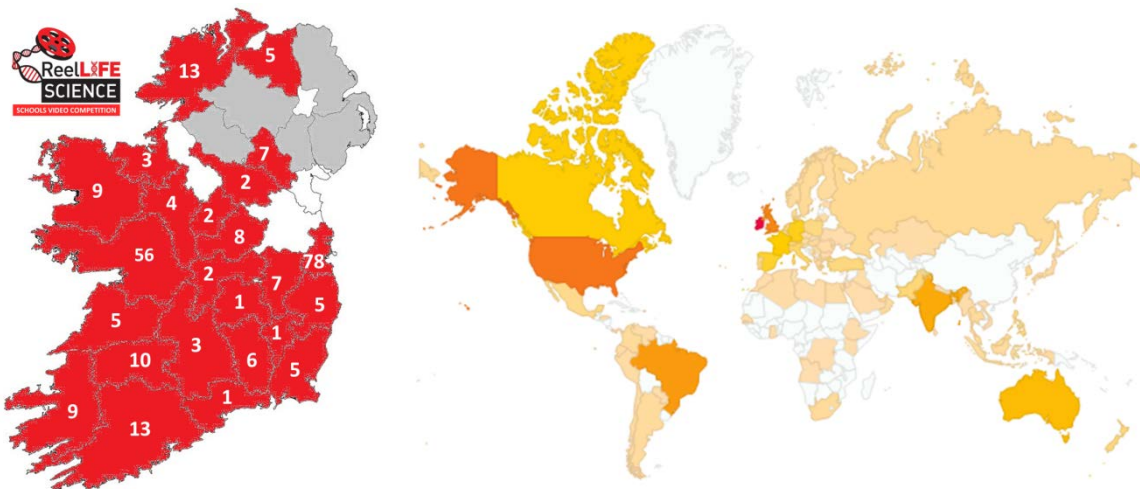
ReelLIFE SCIENCE – The Aftermath!

Media coverage generated by ReelLIFE SCIENCE exceeded expectation with two TV appearances (RTE's 'News2Day' and TG4's 'Cúla4' programmes), three national newspaper articles (The Irish Times (twice) and The Herald), seven regional newspaper articles (Donegal Democrat, Galway Independent, Mayo Advertiser, Connacht Tribune, Galway Advertiser, Sligo Champion and The Kerryman) and three radio appearances (Galway Bay FM, Flirt FM, Connemara Community Radio).



ReelLIFE SCIENCE on TV!

Videos submitted to the competition have been viewed approximately 25,000 times on YouTube. This, combined with an active online presence (since August 1st, more than 42,000 unique users have seen ReelLIFE SCIENCE content on Facebook, with more than 72,000 Twitter page impressions) has generated huge interest in the ReelLIFE SCIENCE website (www.reellifescience.com which hosts the shortlisted and prizewinning videos and a series of scientific blog articles), which had over 25,000 views from 104 different countries.



ReelLIFE SCIENCE will return in 2015!

