We want to attract and engage diverse audiences and access the positive impacts of innovation. IF Oxford is an independent science and ideas festival and a connected society is better equipped to understand social media engagements. Festival feedback shows: 43% of our audience wouldn't normally do science; 93% rate IF Oxford as "Good" or "Excellent"; 95% of visitors will tell a friend to try IF Oxford! 105 events over 11 days in 35 venues, hosted 25 events in east and southeast Oxford. Normally think of science as "for me" and our Festival developing ideas with communities that wouldn't contribut ideas and content to share. Many successes; more to do. We want to attract and engage diverse audiences and organisations to share the best ideas in Oxford because a connected society is better equipped to understand and access the positive impacts of innovation. A festival that brings together science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) subjects. The team works year-round, developing ideas with communities that wouldn’t normally think of science as "for me" and our Festival hosted 25 events in east and southeast Oxford. In 2019, 105 events over 11 days in 35 venues, attracted 16,000 people, generating over 0.6 million social media engagements. Festival feedback shows: 43% of our audience wouldn’t normally do science; 93% rate IF Oxford as “Good” or “Excellent”; 95% of visitors will tell a friend to try IF Oxford! Can you help shape the next Festival programme? 

Overview of IF Oxford 2019

16,000 visitors to IF Oxford 18–28 October 2019 105 events 11 days 35 venues 60% of visitors spoke to 3 or more researchers 340 researchers in hands-on zones and 300 presenters at other events 2 year-round staff, 40 venue managers and 60 volunteers!

Thank you to 740 individuals in 160 teams from 60 organisations:

University of Oxford 70
Communities or individuals 34
Companies and Charities 19
Oxford Brookes University 10
Oxfordshire County Council 10
Science Oxford 6
City of Oxford College 6
Universities outside Oxfordshire 5

Content

65,000 materials distributed: 68-page Programme and 8-page Guide

Marketing

0.6m Social media reach
210% rise in online engagement
11,000 Festival items delivered to homes across Oxfordshire

Coverage

1 in 4 people discovered IF Oxford by word-of-mouth and 95% would recommend it

Timeline for action:

An open call February–May 2019 generated over 100 events with 60 organisations, representing research institutions and businesses, local authorities, cultural organisations and neighbourhood charities.

- The Festival ran briefing sessions and gave 1:1 support – from concept to completion – placing activities in one of the ten interactive zones or developing meaningful events for specific audiences with different learning styles.
- The 68-page Programme and 8-page Guide launched in August with a coordinated media campaign: one launch Tweet created 17k impressions; Festival channels reached 0.6m overall.
- In September, brochures went to homes and cafes across Oxfordshire and banners were installed on lampposts and prominent buildings.
- Dozens of magazine, newspaper, blog and radio features in October.

Events throughout the Festival

Audiences came to churches, shops, cafes and pubs, as familiar places to encounter unusual ideas with discussion and immersive experiences highlighted curious aspects of innovation, from nuclear physics to the future of food. Young people shared their voice through: the annual Poetry of Science competition; a collaborative music project using rap to explore neighbourhood dynamics; using computer games to experiment with emotion; and with dance to demonstrate strengths.

Zones within the Festival

Mental and physical health, new technologies and environmental change look on the horizon when 11,000 people got hands-on in one of the ten Festival zones. Everyone, young and old, explored complex topics and developed skills while meeting hundreds of friendly and enthusiastic researchers. Visitors tried out superconducting materials, surgical techniques and some remarkable properties of diamonds. Budding new scientists looked behind laboratory doors and peered into the future, imagining a world where quantum physics has transformed life as we know it today.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think a science day would be one of the biggest and most successful events in Westgate in 2019! The atmosphere was fantastic."

Events Manager, Westgate Oxford

Thank you

The Festival sends huge thanks to its collaborators, supporters, and talented individuals who volunteer to make the Festival possible. It could not happen without their time, creativity and enthusiasm.

In association with:

Principal supporter:

UK Research and Innovation

Thematic partners:

SIEMENS

Healthcareers

Oxfordshire Science and Innovation Partnership

Oxfordshire County Council

Oxford Brookes University

Science Oxford

INCOMA

Round and About

PVC street banners

if-oxford.com
It takes a year to research and plan the Oxford science and ideas Festival.

16,000 people at IF Oxford in 2019

740 contributors took part in 2019.
To get involved, 16–26 October 2020 visit: if-oxford.com

Festival impact
Each Festival costs at least £200,000, equating to an investment of £10–£15 per visitor. Feedback shows:

- 47% of visitors are now more interested in science and innovation because the Festival made these subjects meaningful to them.
- Over 80% of contributors said the Festival platform was “Helpful” or “Very important” for sharing their research with public audiences.
- 92% of attendees learned something new about science, technology or creative industries.

It takes a year to research and plan the Festival. For 2019, the City of Oxford College and the Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative again hosted state of the art and future technologies with STFC, university and industry role models. Visitors got up close and hands-on with engineering, forensics and coding in several family workshops. Outside, Iron Age metal smelting brought the alchemy and magic of chemical processes to life. “A brilliant day. My children and I enjoyed it so much. Thank you!” (47, 9, 5)

The Festival experience

“Can’t wait for next year!”
(Family, ages: 46, 45, 8, 6)

“Brilliant learning opportunity! Excellent for all ages and levels of understanding.” (60)

“As a family, these events give us common interest. It’s wonderful seeing my husband and son so animated. It inspires conversations that get picked up again and again for weeks afterwards.” (54, 53, 11)

“Great to make it accessible to people like me who don’t normally consider myself interested in science.” (35)

In its second year, IF Oxford again used Pay What You Decide (PWYD), and in 2019 we found:

- 40% of Festival visitors had used it.
- 80% of our audience like, may use or have already used PWYD with a hundred people choosing to use Gift Aid.

PWYD is just one of the ways IF Oxford reduces barriers to public engagement with science and great ideas while also being able to pay for a high-quality Festival.

If you value all of this, please support the Festival, or it may not be able to continue. To donate, sponsor or get involved, visit: www.if-oxford.com

Marketing and visitor motivation

How did people hear about IF 2019?

Printed brochure or leaflets (35%)
Social media (21%)
Email (17%)
Word of mouth or personal recommendation (28%)
Online referral (15%)
Posters and banners (12%)
News (4%)

Reasons for booking or attending

Main
“Enjoy science, arts or cultural events”
Topic interesting / appealing (to me)
Learning (for me)
Minor
Bringing someone
Social time
Spontaneous decision

Where did visitors to IF Oxford come from?

Oxford
OX1 (11%)
OX2 (21%)
OX3 (18%)
OX4 (15%)
OX5+ (19%)
Other (16%)

1,048 new people agreed...
...we can contact them again.

1,027 people completed the pre-Festival survey (25% of ticket orders.)
605 people gave event feedback
1,237 people took part in 2019.
47% of visitors are now more interested in science and innovation because the Festival made these subjects meaningful to them.
Over 80% of contributors said the Festival platform was “Helpful” or “Very important” for sharing their research with public audiences.
92% of attendees learned something new about science, technology or creative industries.

70% of people will tell a friend to visit IF Oxford.
95% of people think this was a brilliant day.
40% of Festival visitors had used PWYD.
80% of our audience like, may use or have already used PWYD with a hundred people choosing to use Gift Aid.

PWYD is just one of the ways IF Oxford reduces barriers to public engagement with science and great ideas while also being able to pay for a high-quality Festival.

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The Festival has built capacity in researchers by research with public audiences.

It is taking a year to research and plan the Festival. For 2019, the City of Oxford College and the Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative again hosted state of the art and future technologies with STFC, university and industry role models. Visitors got up close and hands-on with engineering, forensics and coding in several family workshops. Outside, Iron Age metal smelting brought the alchemy and magic of chemical processes to life. “A brilliant day. My children and I enjoyed it so much. Thank you!” (47, 9, 5)

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