



## **SCIENCE.09 CONTEST SHOWS SINGAPOREANS ARE CURIOUS ABOUT THE SCIENCE OF BODY AND MIND**

**Singapore, 20 September 2009** – Why are people selfish? Why do I feel sleepy after a meal? Why do humans get "goosebumps" when they are cold? If a recent contest is anything to go by, it seems Singaporeans are most curious about what makes their body and mind tick.

As part of science.09 – Singapore’s largest science festival – members of the public submitted 1,184 questions about a variety of scientific topics in an online contest that shed some light on what sparks their curiosity.

“The contest reveals that Singaporeans are very curious about the world around them. The questions asked were very diverse and no stone was left unturned – from the natural world to food to how the human body works. This suggests that the spirit of enquiry and curiosity that is at the heart of all sciences is alive and well in Singapore,” said Dr Chew Tuan Chiong, Chief Executive, Science Centre Singapore.

In keeping with the ‘**Ask Why**’ theme of science.09, members of the public were invited to fire up their curiosity, and share their questions through the official science.09 website – [www.sciencemonth.org.sg](http://www.sciencemonth.org.sg) - and Twitter between 14 August and 4 September 2009.

The contest received 775 questions through the website, while Twitter drew 409 questions. Most participants wanted to find out more about the human body and mind, accounting for almost 35%, or more than a third, of all questions posted.

There was also considerable interest in how everyday things work, such as “How does a microwave oven cook food?” and “Why can we see through glass?” These questions accounted for almost a fifth of submissions, while about the same proportion were queries about animals. The questions about animals and plants centered on insects; such as ants and lizards. Selected questions were answered by local scientists and posted on the website.

Huang Yipeng, 22, was the lucky winner of the grand prize and received a 16GB Apple iPod Touch at Kids Science Fest! 2009. He submitted his question, “Why can't you feel ticklish by tickling yourself?” over Twitter. Another six participants also won attractive prizes over the three week contest.

A highlight event of science.09, Kids Science Fest! 2009 offered an exciting line-up of interactive exhibits, hands-on workshops, stage games and science quizzes, aimed at encouraging children to experience the “fun” side of science by encouraging them to ‘Ask Why’.

Jointly organised by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR) and the Science Centre Singapore (SCS), the six week-long science.09 program, which ends on 30 September 2009, has been a major success, drawing thousands of participants across more than 100 events to date.

Launched in 2001, the science month is an annual national event committed to cultivating scientific interest, nurturing the passion for scientific enquiry and stimulating Singapore’s talent development in science, technology and biomedicine. For more information, log on to [www.sciencemonth.org.sg](http://www.sciencemonth.org.sg).

**Sample of interesting questions asked through Ask Why contest:**

- Does the sun rise at the exact same time everyday? Why or why not?
- Why do we dream?
- Why do parrots have the ability to mimic?
- Why do snowflakes crystallize into such intricate structures?
- What is the science behind lie-detectors?
- How do shooting stars appear?

## science.09 Event Highlights

Event Title	Date	Synopsis
X-periment!	14 -16 Aug 2009	Come and join in the excitement at the launch event X-periment! at Marina Square. For the first time in Singapore, audiences will be treated to TV's most extreme educational scientist, Dr Bunhead, from the UK. Experience his spectacular and explosive science show - Crash Test Science! Witness some of his most outrageous science experiments - the Fire Tornado, Flaming Trump Tube, Glo-stick Rollercoaster, and many other stunning activities that make science fun for the whole family. Be awed by cool science demonstrations and have fun with hands-on experiments for kids and families at over 18 booths managed by outstanding research and tertiary institutions. It's a science carnival for all!
The National Science Challenge 2009	25 Aug – 26 Oct 2009	Watch the sixth season of the National Science Challenge! Hosted by Stephanie Carrington, this half-hour television game show merges both outdoor and indoor science challenges as Singapore's brightest young minds put their skills and knowledge to the test. Tune in to Channel 5 each week to watch 12 secondary school teams progress from the audition rounds to the grand finals through 7 episodes. You can win great prizes in the Home-viewers Contest too. Who will emerge as the Grand Champions?
Sci-fi Movie Festival and Forums	02 – 04 Sep 2009	The Singapore Sci-fi Movie Festival is back with a great selection of science fiction movies. Enjoy exciting science-fiction blockbusters such as the "Incredible Hulk", "Iron Man" and "The Day the Earth Stood Still". After the movie screenings, participants can share their questions about the science behind the films in a Q&A session with a panel of scientists.
National Junior Robotics Competition (NJRC)	07-12 Sep 2009	The National Junior Robotics Competition (NJRC) is an exciting and unique event organised annually by Science Centre Singapore and the Agency for Science Technology and Research (A*STAR). This robotics competition encourages students to develop problem solving skills, entrepreneurial skills, creative thinking skills and team spirit among the participants. Over the past 10 years, more than 30,000 participants and 200,000 supporters have gathered for this premier robotics competition which celebrates fun and interactive learning.
Science in the Gardens	12 Sep 2009	It's fun for the whole family in the gardens! Make your very own windsock or create a chromatography butterfly, and go on an exploration trail through the gardens to discover unique plant life. And don't miss entertainer Jay and his "J-show" as he demonstrates the exciting, intricate science of juggling.
Kids Science Fest!	15-20 Sep 2009	Do not miss this fun science carnival at the Science Centre! Through plenty of multi-disciplinary science activities, it is a chance for the whole family to "Ask Why", and learn more about the world around us and be inspired to learn more about the wonders of science. Expect exciting science shows from SciTech Australia too.

### **About Science Centre Singapore**

The Science Centre Singapore is a non-formal educational institution dedicated to the promotion of science and technology among students and members of the public. As a leading Science Centre in the region, the Science Centre Singapore has twelve exhibition galleries with more than 1,000 exhibits, and another 18,000 sq metres of outdoor space showcasing the Waterworks, Ecogarden and the Kinetic Garden exhibits. The Centre also houses the Omni-Theatre — Singapore's only dome-shaped, 5-storey high theatre with a capacity of 276 seats. The Science Centre received 1.049 million visitors, while Omni-Theatre and Snow City received 400,000 visitors for FY2008/2009. For more information, please visit [www.science.edu.sg](http://www.science.edu.sg).

### **About the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR)**

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR) is the lead agency for fostering world-class scientific research and talent for a vibrant knowledge-based Singapore. A\*STAR actively nurtures public sector research and development in Biomedical Sciences, and Physical Sciences and Engineering, and supports Singapore's key economic clusters by providing intellectual, human and industrial capital to our partners in industry and the healthcare sector. It oversees 23 research institutes, consortia and centres located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis, and the area in their vicinity, and supports extramural research in the universities, hospitals, research centres, and with other local and international partners. For more information about A\*STAR, please visit [www.a-star.edu.sg](http://www.a-star.edu.sg).

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