

TWIV@SGM



W B Yeats @WBYPoet
#education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire – #sgmdub
 Retweeted by @I0queues

Someone from my lab laughed and shot a look of disbelief, tinged with pity when, just before the *Viral zoonosis* symposium was about to begin at this year's SGM annual meeting, I asked the simple question, 'what's a hashtag?' To him this seemed tantamount to asking, 'is Dublin where Guinness comes from?' or, 'what's the point in vaccinating my kid?' Therefore if you, like me at the time I asked that question, need a translation of the above, then read on!

One of the key functions of the Virus Division is organizing two symposia at the Spring Meeting with the aim of ensuring the virological community is kept up to date with state-of-the-art science. Education and training are vital elements which underpin the thinking of the committee and our working model is to arrange one fundamental and one applied symposium to ensure we engage with as many virologists as possible. It is somewhat of a top-down approach where we bat ideas around, come up with a title and goal, and invite some of the best speakers in the world to the meeting. It works well; last year's fundamental symposium, *Seeing the cell through the 'eyes' of the virus*, was rated as a great success in the Survey Monkey questionnaire circulated by SGM.

As scientists we are experimental and this year our division decided to try something just a little bit different in the

applied *Viral zoonoses* symposium. Partnering with our colleagues in the Education Division, we nominated Vincent Racaniello (Columbia University, New York) for the Peter Wildy Prize in Education, which he won. Vincent, or @profvrr as he's known on Twitter, has led the way in effectively communicating science in general and microbiology in particular, to the public using social media outlets, blogs and netcasts. Internationally, he has blazed a trail into eLearning and is someone who argues that it is vital to make the science we do relevant, exciting, accessible and meaningful to a wide audience. His enthusiasm for teaching inspired him to reach beyond the classroom and establish the virology blog (www.virology.ws) which explains concepts in virology to scientifically and non-scientifically trained people in a creative and innovative manner. The blog has spawned a conversational netcast entitled *This Week in Virology* (TWiV). Each week Racaniello and friends invite virologists to discuss current news, scientific papers and answer listeners' questions which are emailed or tweeted to #TWiV. The show is downloaded about 50,000 times each month and is becoming a staple for PhD students and professors alike. However, in his Wildy Lecture



Vincent Racaniello receives the Peter Wildy Prize from Joanna Verran, SGM Education Officer at the SGM Spring Conference in Dublin. I. Atherton

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by Chris Condayan on March 20, 2012
 Tags: Dublin, SGM, This Week in Virology, TWiV, Vincent Racaniello, Virology

Join Vincent Racaniello and guests Connor Bamford, Ron Fouchier, Wendy Barclay and Richard Elliott, for a live-streaming episode of This Week in Virology from Conference in Dublin, Ireland. The live stream starts at 3:30 PM GMT (10:30 AM EST / 7:30 AM PST) and you can watch it below. If you have any questions for Vincent tweet your question using the #TWiV hash tag.

In addition, Vincent Racaniello will be accepting the Peter Widely Prize for Microbiology Education, awarded annually by the Society for General Microbiology for Racaniello's acceptance speech will also be live streamed at 5:15 PM GMT (12:15 PM EST / 9:15 AM PST).

If you live elsewhere in the world, please use www.extratimezone.com, to calculate when the live streams will start in your area.





(video soon to be available at www.youtube.com/user/SocGenMicrobiology) Vincent shared how this netcast has reached well beyond academic virologists. Having Vincent at the SGM and streaming the first live TWiV from Europe was, to use the US word, a no-brainer! This was a phenomenal success and if you didn't catch it live or were not at the Dublin meeting, check out TWiV 177 (www.twiv.tv). From my perspective this was education and training in the truest sense being neither exclusive nor simply the didactic filling of a pail. Rather it represents the fire of the spoken word, conversational virology, which spreads so readily in the virtual world or, for want of a better analogy, goes viral.



Paul Duprex @I0queues
 #sgmdub want to help shape a virus symposium? Tweet your top virology qs to me!

The beauty of a TWiV netcast is that it is far from only the preserve of those fortunate enough to be involved in science professionally. Rather, it engages a wider audience and helps to explain that what is achieved at the virological bench impacts society as a whole. This, in turn enhances engagement in, and appreciation of, our science by the individuals whose taxes fund the work we do. From the Society's perspective it also gave the communications teams in the American Society for Microbiology, who jointly supported the TWiV, and the SGM a great opportunity to work together and learn from each other, something we plan to build on in the future.

Recognizing the power of social media and wanting to involve the wider community in a 'bottom-up' symposium the Virus Division decided to organize *10 Questions in Virology*. Armed with a new Twitter account (@I0queues) and the sgmdub hashtag (#sgmdub) we asked our community to submit their burning virological questions to us. With this instantaneous connection to anyone following @SocGenMicro and #sgmdub, the fire was lit and questions (qs) came in. Bloggers @AJCann and @cggbamford took up the baton and have spread the idea to a much broader audience. It will be an interesting experiment and we encourage you all to get involved.

So 'what's next?' asked @Dariel_Burdass. Is this just for the virologists? Of course not! Colleagues from the Eukaryotic and Prokaryotic Divisions might consider getting in touch with @I0queues; after all #TWiP and #TWiM are alive and well too!

For posterity here's how it began and how I discovered the value of a #tag!

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