

## Celebration of Excellence in Science and Launch of SciFest 2010

Minister Conor Lenihan, TD launched SciFest 2010 in October with a 'Celebration of Excellence in Science' in the Open Innovation Lab in Intel Ireland, Leixlip, Co. Kildare. Thirty-three second-level students were awarded Intel Excellence in Science medals in recognition of their achievement in SciFest 2009. Each of the thirty-three students had been either individual or group winners of the 'Best Project' awards at SciFest 2009.



Best Project Award winners SciFest 2009 with Minister Conor Lenihan TD

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### SciFest 2010 [www.scifest.ie](http://www.scifest.ie)

Preparations for SciFest 2010 are already underway. Five Institutes of Technology have already set dates for their SciFest Science Fairs.

**Dublin Institute of Technology** : Thursday 15 April  
**Athlone Institute of Technology** : Friday 23 April  
**Cork Institute of Technology** : Tuesday 27 April  
**Limerick Institute of Technology** : Tuesday 27 April  
**Institute of Technology, Tralee** : Wednesday 12 May

As the date of each fair becomes available it will be posted on the Exhibition Dates and Contacts page of the website. Please check regularly for updates.

Entry forms will be downloadable from the website in January and the closing date for receipt of entries is Friday 12 March 2010.

Science fairs are a fun and exciting way to encourage an interest in science at school level. They provide not only an occasion to celebrate achievement and a job well done but also an opportunity to encourage active and

collaborative learning. This helps stimulate students' interest in science and enables them to apply scientific concepts to real-life scenarios. SciFest encourages a love of science, maths and technology through active, collaborative, inquiry-based learning and provides an opportunity for students to display the results of their scientific investigations.

If you are still not convinced log on to  
[www.scifest.ie](http://www.scifest.ie) and click  
**'Photographs and News Reports'**

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### Science Week 2009 SciFest Crossword Competition

Well done to the 784 students who entered the competition.

**Apple iPod nano (16GB)**

**winners:**

Aoife McLoughlin, Ursuline Secondary School, Thurles, Co Tipperary and Nour Sleiman, St Raphaela's, Upper Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan, Co Dublin



## SciFest and Coursework B

Exhibiting at SciFest in First or Second Year is good preparation for Coursework B. The investigation itself, if it meets the specified criteria, can then actually be submitted by the student at the end of Third Year as their Coursework B investigation.

## SciFest and Transition Year

Transition Year provides an ideal opportunity for the student to think 'outside the box' and develop important skills such as forward planning, research, communication and critical thinking. This will leave them more able to cope with the demands of the senior cycle. Participation in SciFest encourages the development of these skills. A 'Science by Inquiry' module suitable for Transition Year is downloadable from the website [www.scifest.ie](http://www.scifest.ie).

At the end of the module there is a list of resources, a proposed timetable and a useful last minute checklist which could also be helpful to students entering the

## BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2010

The BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2010 will take place in the Main Hall, RDS, Dublin from 12 – 16 January 2010. For more information on the exhibition please visit the website.

[www.btyoungscientist.com](http://www.btyoungscientist.com)



Happy Christmas

If you need any further information please visit me on the SciFest/Intel stand in the RDS in January.

## Intel Mini Scientist [www.miniscientist.ie](http://www.miniscientist.ie)

The finals of the Intel Mini Scientist 2009 took place in Intel Ireland, Leixlip on 2 December in IR6. The standard was high and it was lovely to meet and chat with so many potential 'SciFest 2012' exhibitors. One of the projects that particularly impressed me was a study of spiders from Scoil Mochua, Celbridge. The investigation was carried out by four fifth class boys, Dylan Casey, Jordan McElroy, Jack Nolan and Nathan Schwarz. They started work on their project last September and their aim was to find out if native spiders had become bigger in size and was there any possibility of foreign spiders coming into Ireland. In order to answer these questions they collected spiders, observed their habitats and types of webs. They interviewed a number of experts and one of the things they discovered was that the number of spider species found in Ireland since the 1800s has increased from 100 to 377. They also confirmed that three types of foreign spiders, the Huntsman, Black Widow and Red Backed Spiders have been found in Ireland. *AraChnophobics beware!*



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