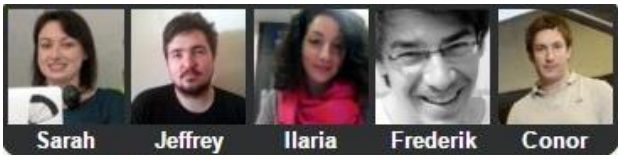
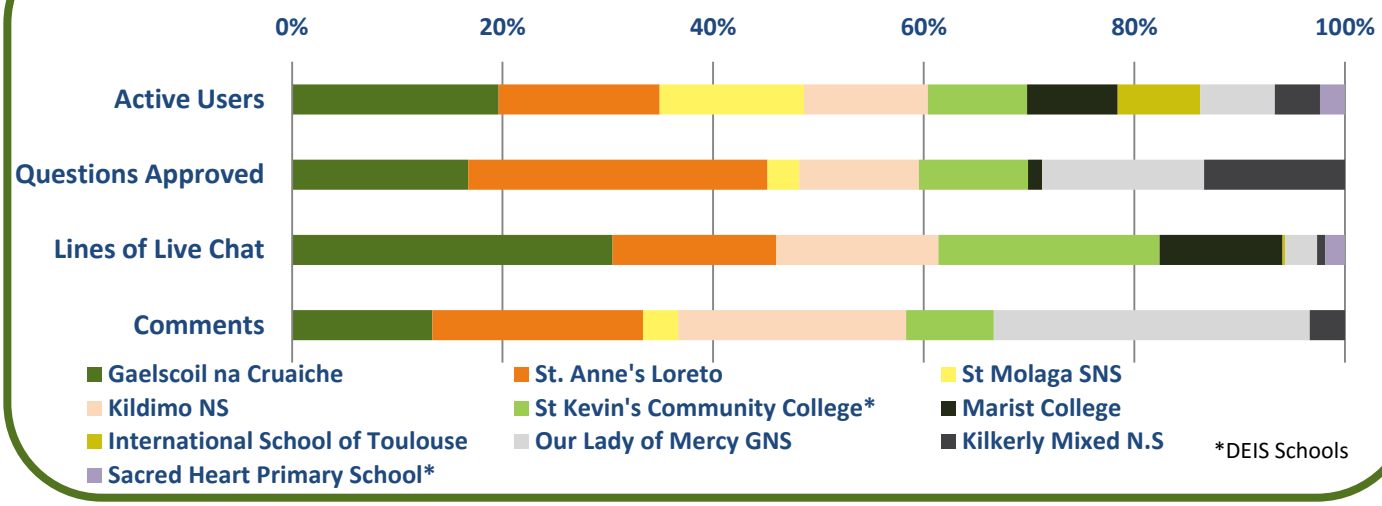


February 2016

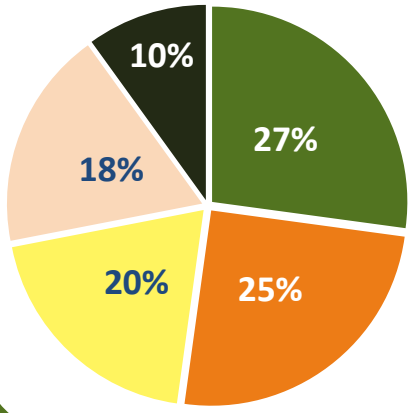
The Coding Zone was a themed zone funded by the Science Foundation Ireland Discover programme, and included engineers who use programming and coding in a variety of ways. Conor designs and builds robots that help elderly and disabled people to live independently, Jeffrey is Head of Development for the app *parkbytext,* Sarah works as Technical Lead for a travel website, Frederik teaches computers how to learn from their own experiences and Ilaria studies Biomedical engineering. The zone was busy and engaged, with a large amount of questions asking for guidance on how to learn more about engineering and developing technical skills. The zone winner, Conor, was especially good in the ASK section giving many long and detailed answers. Jeffrey, who came in second place, was particularly active in the live chats and accounted for half of all the total chat by engineers.

School data at a glance

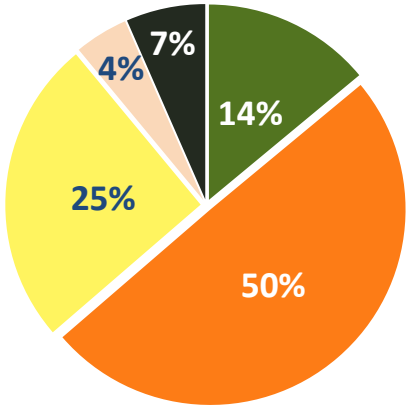


Engineer activity

Answers



Lines of live chat



Engineer	Profile views	Position
Conor McGinn	745	Winner
Jeffrey Roe	595	2nd
Sarah Doran	500	3rd
Frederik Gossen	345	4th
Ilaria Cinelli	377	5th

Key figures from the Coding Zone, and the average of zones in Ireland

PAGE VIEWS	CODING ZONE	FEB '16 IAE AVERAGE
Total zone	16,335	16,741
ASK page	1,694	1,569
CHAT page	1,267	1,803
VOTE page	1,219	1,227

	CODING ZONE	IAE IRELAND AVERAGE	IAE IRELAND 2014-2016 AVERAGE
Schools	10	12	10
Students logged in	314	333	284
% of students active in ASK, CHAT or VOTE	81%	84%	86%
Questions asked	602	488	494
Questions approved	299	259	240
Answers given	663	599	549
Comments	73	61	41
Votes	263	267	233
Live chats	12	14	14
Lines of live chat	3,076	3,742	3,441
Average lines per live chat	256	266	241

Popular topics

Questions about coding, apps and websites were very popular within the zone, and students showed an interest in related topics such as schemes for learning code. Robots were also a popular topic, and Conor and Frederik provided lots of detailed answers to questions in relation to this as well as building or inventing.

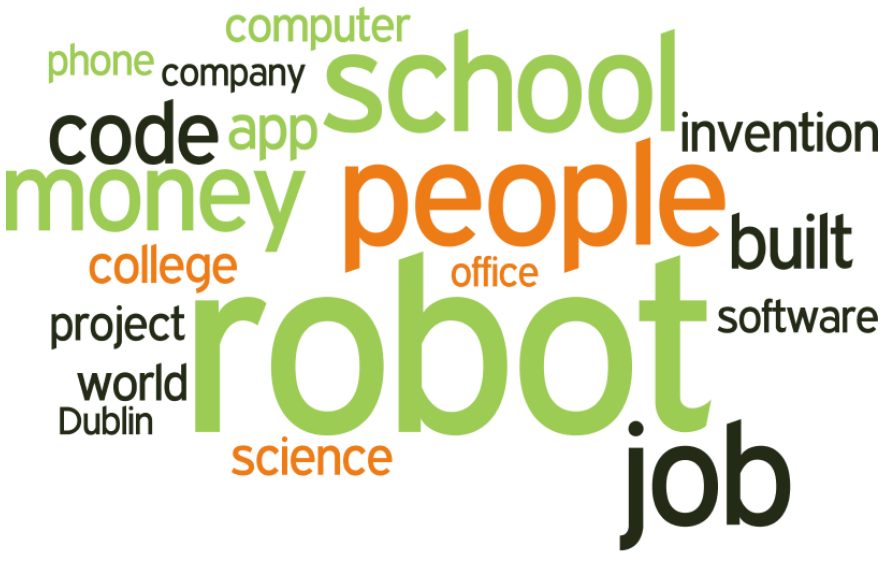
There were questions about careers and qualifications for engineering, and the students were keen to ask about how the engineers found their time at school and how well they did in their leaving cert.

There were some general science and engineering questions asked, on topics such as rollercoasters and the moon. There was a lot of interest in the engineers' personal lives, with the students finding common ground through conversations about food, computer games and sport.

The theme of gender in coding came up often, and there was much encouragement from both the female and male engineers for girls to give it a try and not be discouraged. A lot of the students and teachers were very interested in opportunities for girls to get into engineering and programming.

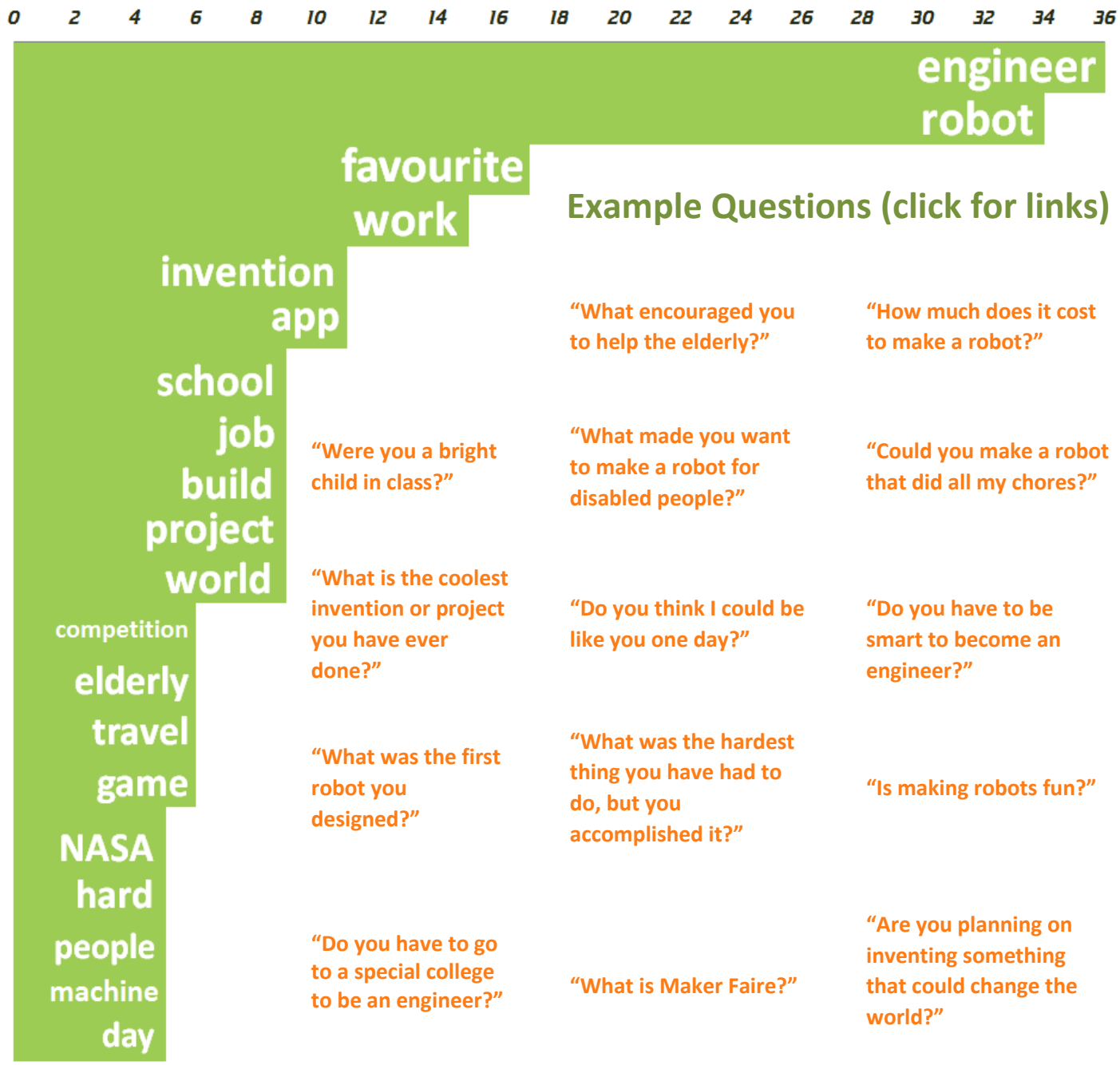
Chat

Keywords from live chats in the zone, size of the word represents its popularity



Ask ?

Keywords of questions asked in the zone, length of bar represents frequency of use



Example Questions (click for links)

"What encouraged you to help the elderly?"

"How much does it cost to make a robot?"

"Were you a bright child in class?"

"What made you want to make a robot for disabled people?"

"Could you make a robot that did all my chores?"

"What is the coolest invention or project you have ever done?"

"Do you think I could be like you one day?"

"Do you have to be smart to become an engineer?"

"What was the first robot you designed?"

"What was the hardest thing you have had to do, but you accomplished it?"

"Is making robots fun?"

"Do you have to go to a special college to be an engineer?"

"What is Maker Faire?"

"Are you planning on inventing something that could change the world?"

"How long does it take to code a website?"

"What is the best thing you have got a robot to do?"

"Is there any invention in the world you would be proud to say you had invented?"

"What was it like building a robot with NASA?"

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Examples of good engagement

Gender was a recurring topic within the chats and all of the engineers were very encouraging:

> *"What would you do with the money?"* **– Student**
>
> *"If I get the money I would try to engage girls to get into computer science. The gender ratio is still not close to 50% and there is no reason why girls should not do it as well."* **– Frederik, engineer**

There were many engaging questions and conversations between students and engineers about robotics:

> *"@conor you think you could create a robot MMA fighter?"* **– Student**
>
> *"Haha, funny you mention that... I did try once to make a humanoid robot that could wrestle. There is a popular robot competition called 'robot sumo' where you have to make a robot that can sumo wrestle another out of a ring. I built a robot to do this a few years ago!"* – **Conor, engineer**
>
> *"Did your humanoid win?"* – **Student**
>
> *"No unfortunately not - these competitions can be annoying because it's not an even playing field. I have always built my robots from the ground up. When you have a small budget and are up against guys with a robot they paid for and works well, it's always tough. For me, these things are not really about winning - more about learning and having fun - sounds corny I know"* – **Conor, engineer**
>
> *"Thanks @conor that was great... your votes are safe with us!"* - **Student**

Engineer winner: Conor McGinn

Conor's plans for the prize money: *"I'm currently in the process of developing a website that will showcase some of my research and share open-source teaching materials. It will also contain a blog and podcast where myself and invited guests talk informally about technology, education, research, science as well as recent robotics related discoveries and developments".* Read Conor's thank you message.

Student winner: stannes8

For great engagement during the event, this student will receive a gift voucher and a certificate.

Feedback

We're still collecting feedback from teachers, students and engineers but here are a few of the comments made during the event…

Sarah D
@sarahd0ran

So much fun in @IAEGMOOH #IAEIE this morning.. The students were trying to hack the chat webpage! Awesome.

"I wish this wouldn't end" – **Student**

"My class is very impressed with that. Thanks so much for answering all of our questions. They all just clapped!" - **Teacher**