About the Brain Domain

What is the Brain Domain?

The Brain Domain is primarily a **public engagement website** that seeks to inform the interested public about advances in neuroscience.

- **It's for you!**– For young neuroscientists passionate about science communication
- **Skill-building environment–** practice communication & reach a wide audience
- **Community project**–capitalize on an active membership with different areas of expertise to collectively write, edit, and promote content.

Why did we make it?

The ability **to effectively communicate science** is gradually becoming another **criterion of the modern scientist**.

HOWEVER

- Communicating high level concepts to lay audiences is still a mostly untrained skill.
- Current development opportunities tend to be **inflexible** and **time consuming**.

We wanted a way to **practice** these skills, with the support and guidance of peers on the same track, whilst having **a wider impact** than we would alone.

What are the aims of this project?

The Brain Domain specifically aims to:

- Enable the interested public to learn more about neuroscience (by collecting and curating present online resources for neuroscience, and writing about recent advancements).
- Facilitate young neuroscientists in their pursuit of science communication (by providing an outlet for original works, and a supportive community to develop these skills with).
- Inspire young academics to pursue a neuroscience related career (by increasing awareness of research conducted by young neuroscientists)

Who are we?

Oly

Background: Clinical Neuropsychology
Current Work: Epigenetic variance of neural derived iPSCs
Interests: Neurological loss, regenerative medicines, stem cells

Kira

Background: Genetics
Current Work: Investigating the role of imprinted gene GRB10
Interests: Imprinting, epigenome editing, neurodevelopment

Rachael

Background: Neuropsychology
Current Work: Neurovascular coupling in health and disease
Interests: Multi-modal neuroimaging, multiple sclerosis

Rae

Background: Neuroscience and Psychology
Current Work: Characterising animal models of psychiatric risk
Interests: Schizophrenia, synapse biology, gene-environment interaction

Aurelien

Background: Biochemistry
Current Work: Deriving microglia from human iPSCs
Interests: Neuroinflammation, neurodegeneration

Ellen

Background: Neuroscience and Psychology
Current Work: Social olfaction in mouse models of autism
Interests: Imaging, sensory modalities and models

Jon

Background: English Literature and Education
Current Work: Helping scientist friends make sense to fellow lay-men
Interests: Science, but better at non-science (nonsense)

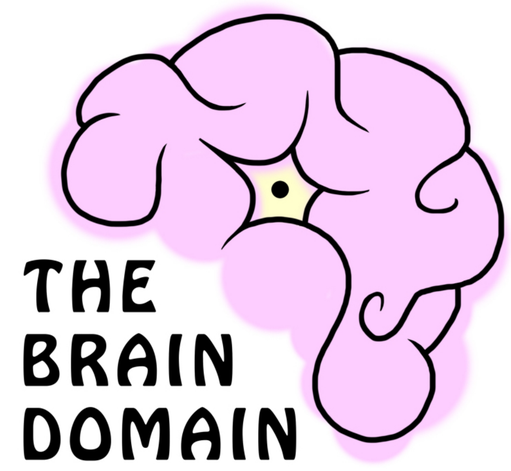
You?

Background: ???
Current work: ???
Interests: ???

www.thebraindomain.org

Science Writing for Public Engagement

O. Bartley, K. Rienecker, R. Stickland, R. Pass, A. Bunga, E. Cross, & J. Fagg



@Neuroscience.TheBrainDomain @Brain_Domain editors@thebraindomain.org

How to get involved?

Research

Naturally you'll do some reading around the topic, but you should ALSO research the kind of articles we publish, and think a little beyond basic content. Do you have a direction and a story to make your article that little bit more interesting?

Write

DO get writing! Don't muse on it for months!
Pick an article format and have a go! USE colloquial language. DON'T pour hours and hours into it. The first draft should be just that: a first draft!

Send in

First draft ready? Send it to us (editors@thebraindomain.org) and we'll ask you a few questions about it. Then, we'll pass it onto our lay editor (Jon) who will work his crazy magic and guide your article to be the best it can be!

Edit

Once you receive your draft back, seriously look over the advice Jon has given you, and work the draft into a final copy. This takes time, but you'll learn a lot here! If you want further edits with Jon he's more than happy to work with you.

Final Submission

When it's ready, we'll do a 'scientific edit' for accuracy, and then work with you to create a fully formatted and website-ready post! We'll also designate it a **coffee rating**: One cup – an easy read; Two cups – for actively focusing on learning a new topic; or Three cups – For tough stuff!

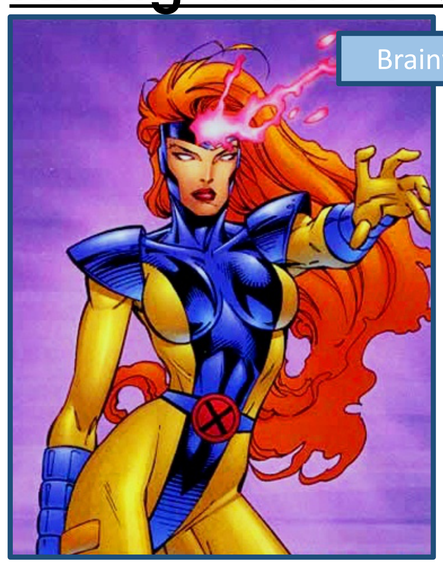
Post & Share

We'll notify you when we plan to publish it (normally within a few days of final submission). Share your hard work with your own social networks, and with our audience! Congratulate yourself with a cookie! When a new article idea strikes… rinse & repeat! (Don't rinse the cookie, it will go soggy)

If you want to get involved with the Brain Domain, by another means than writing, then email us! The Brain domain is a **community project**, and we're keen for our community to grow!

Sample articles

Killing Cancer with your Brain!



Brainwave

Difficulty Level: 2

By Oly

It is predicted that in the UK over one thousand people will be diagnosed with cancer every day this year [1]. Those unlucky enough to develop the most common form of brain cancer (Glioblastoma) will typically only survive 12 to 15 months [2]. But what if you could kill the cancer with your brain? Unfortunately, I don't mean cancer-fighting psychic powers (I know, the picture of Jean Grey is misleading… it was a cruel hook!). Instead, I'm referring to a new use for neural stem cells (NSC), to do the job of tracking and killing down cancerous cells for us. Believe it or not there are scientists working on such an intervention, and a new paper [3] published last month in Nature Communications describes an exciting advancement that could help bring this strange therapy to a cancer clinic near you…

A Step-by-Step Guide to convincing Mom it's Dad's fault–with Science!

Deep Thought

By Kira

Difficulty Level: 2

(You *do* want to seem like the reasonable one here, right?)

Let's say it's a hot summer day (As an American, the chances of such a day seem slim in Britain, but let's roll with the hypothetical here), and you have in your hand an exquisite ice cream sandwich–cool and sweet, with the mist of a sub-zero freezer still rising off it.

Now let's say a pesky younger sibling didn't think to get his own, and you now stand (ahem–fairly) accused of not sharing, under threat of dire punishment.

How do you convince Mom your behaviour is Dad's fault?
(Preferably before this lovely ice cream sandwich melts away!)

STEP 1: Argue behaviour has some genetic roots
Behaviour is a difficult trait to pin to a genetic origin. It is a complex, emergent property of the brain, influenced by many other confounding factors, like culture, experience, and social context. However, we do have experimental models that demonstrate behaviour does have some genetic roots. For example, some knock-out models, in which we delete…