



Australian Science Innovations continues to discover young creative scientific minds amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Since 2006, each May, **Australian Science Innovations (ASI)**, has been offering the **Big Science Competition** to students in Years 7 to 10.

The competition is designed to test students' creative and critical-thinking skills, how they apply those skills to solve real-world problems and to encourage them to go on to have science and technology engineering and maths (STEM)-based careers.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, most schools and higher education institutions are cancelling or delaying assessment events. But ASI has opted to forge ahead with this year's Big Science Competition using the *Janison Insights platform*.

"At this time, it's never been more critical for students to consider the role that science plays in problem-solving" said ASI executive director Ruth Carr.

"[The restrictions] have been really tough for teachers and students. Their worlds have been turned upside down.

"We want to provide some sort of normality. This competition has run in May for the past 14 years. The Janison Insights platform means teachers and students have flexibility and reliability – they can access it from home; from wherever they are. The only reason we can offer the competition this year is because of Janison Insights."



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Ruth Carr
Executive Director
Australian Science Innovations



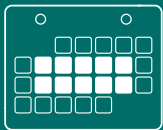
35,000+

students take part each year



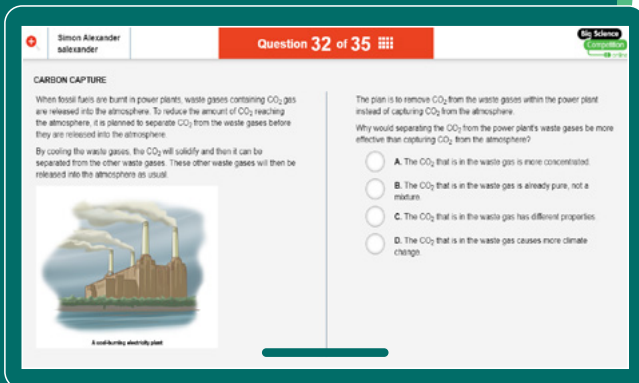
50%

of students have used the online option since 2019



10 days

to receive online results vs 8 weeks for the pen-and-paper competition



The Brief

ASI runs the Big Science Competition at Australian schools and in New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Overall, 35,000 to 40,000 students take part each year. In 2014, ASI asked Janison to provide the platform to allow it to offer the competition online, alongside a pen-and-paper option.

The Challenge

At that time, online exam delivery was relatively new. "Back then, teachers were sceptical about delivering online. So, we wanted a platform that had already gone into schools and was proven to work.

"For ASI, providing an equitable experience was also key. "Not all schools nor kids have access to the internet nor to a device. That's why we continue to offer a pen-and-paper version of the competition."

Our Solution

Janison Insights allows students to take part on their own device. "The ability to bring-your own-device (BYOD) has been one of the reasons we started the online version. Before, kids would have to go to a PC workstation to do the competition, now they can just access it from home, from wherever they are," said Ruth.

Quick results turnaround

"The online system has allowed us to provide teachers and students with a really quick turnaround of results and see their performance on a national scale. We can return results within 10 days – compared with eight weeks for the pen-and-paper version. "That's definitely one of the best outcomes of moving the competition to online."

Full control for teachers

"One of the top features has been the teacher

dashboard that allows the teachers to take control of the test, reset passwords and monitor progress. That's been really useful and it takes a lot of pressure off our call centre. It's very easy to use." The students receive a unique school ID, log on and self-register. They then complete the competition and the teacher can monitor them via the teacher dashboard.

The Result

Take-up of the online option has grown steadily, said Ruth. "In 2019 we reached a tipping point, where more than 50 per cent of schools opted to go online."

"Teachers are more confident in online platforms and the kids are as well. This is an entire generation who are digital natives and are extremely comfortable with the online environment."

Delivering the Big Science Competition amid COVID-19

"There's never been a more critical time to nurture science skills. Our mission is to ensure that the best and brightest students continue to pursue a career in STEM.

"Over the past six months Australia has dealt with the bushfires; now we're dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. By continuing to offer the competition, we're directly ensuring that we've got the best brains available to go on to solve problems like these over the coming decades."

Accelerate your transition to digital during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

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