

## Science Online 2013 – The Return to North Carolina

### Description

Another year, another Science Online conference under my belt, but this year's was quite a bit different than last year.

To the uninitiated, Science Online can seem like a daunting experience – 450 scientists, journalists, bloggers, social media hounds and more discussing science communication. It's very intimidating, even for veterans that have been to every single one of them.

But, it is a good group. Everyone is incredibly friendly, accommodating and willing to talk to you. As we were told on the first day, as soon as you get here, your associations leave with you. Reporters mingle with scientists, bloggers talk with accomplished writers and the passion from each and every one of them is almost palpable.

Last year, I was new. I had no experience at such a conference and I was dreadfully nervous about meeting people that I had been conversing with on Twitter for the past few years. But, my fears were ill founded. The friendships I had made with people online easily transferred to in person. Even –big names in the industry, such as David Dobbs, Ed Yong and Carl Zimmer are just people (impressive as they may be).

As great as the sessions are, the best part of this conference is the socializing and reconnecting with what is almost an extended family. Last year was like meeting old friends I never knew I had, but this year was like reuniting with old friends – yes, friends.

All of the sessions I attended were quite good, and I tried more of a varied selection from last year. I attended sessions on how to explain difficult topics, improving press communication, issues of identity and the Internet and more.

My session, co-moderated by the lovely Jeanne Garabino, went extremely well. Our talk on using first-person narrative to communicate science fostered a lot of discussion and interest – I even heard from many people that they wished it could have go on for even longer! For a full report on what was said in my session, please see my wrap-up post [here](#).

I also actively tweeted a lot more during this conference, which helped me chat with more people at the conference, sometimes without even seeing them. I was even asked to live-tweet the –online identity session by some friends of mine, in order to have a record of the topics covered. And I was honoured to do it!

A few memorable moments:

- Talking with Ed, Liz and Erik about infectious diseases
- Engaging in a live-tweet battle with a worthy adversary, which lasted the entire conference. And even though I conceded, we have become very good friends (though a new rivalry has been

born)

- Having far too much fun joking and tweeting with my Twitter nemesis
- Learning from a mathematician how to calculate if a number really is prime (only at Science Online, folks!)
- Celebrating Lou Woodley's birthday with a large group of friends
- Trading stories with Kiley
- Meeting a fellow Canadian at lunch who went to the exact same High School!
- Dancing with Melanie like nobody's watching, even though they were
- Singing and shouting "She blinded me with science" on stage at the open mike night and practically ruining my voice on day one
- Watching an insurance salesman hit on a friend of mine and fail miserably
- Singing Broadway songs with SciCurious, a pseudonymous blogger
- Asking to sign copies of "The Best Science Writing Online 2012," where my twin article was featured (STILL shocked and honoured about that)
- Coming up with two different session ideas with two different people for next year before the conference was even over

Science Online 2013 was an amazing time and a special thanks to Karyn Traphagen, Bora Zivkovic and Anton Zuiker who organized the conference and everyone I met or didn't have the chance to meet. I am already counting down the days until next year!

### Category

1. #MySciStory
2. #scio13
3. Science Online 2013

### Date Created

February 10, 2013

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