

Small Talk event snapshot 6

NB percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

Event name: **Young People's Parliament**
Date & venue: **17 March 2006, Young People's Parliament, Birmingham**
Target Audience: School students
Attendance: ~70 (68 completed the survey)

Event format

A day-long event, students take part in an e-voting quiz, hear from specialists then take part in workshops that address aspects of the science, social science implications and the role of Government departments. In the afternoon students had an opportunity to debate the issues raised throughout the day, poll their peers with the e-voting and question MP Clare Short.

Audience

Age (n=68): Audience members were aged between 13 and 18, 85% of the audience were aged 14-17.

Gender (n=68): male 68%; female 32%

Students were asked what they knew about nanotechnology before the event. Around three-quarters were familiar with the term, and many knew that it related to very small things. A few mentioned specific applications, namely new medicines and more advanced computers. Three mentioned the iPod nano.

Opinions of event (modal response is shaded)

Overall impression (n=68), good 46%, average 49%, poor 4%, not sure 2%

Quality of speakers (n=68), good 63%, average 34%, poor 0%, not sure 3%

Level of audience involvement (n=68), good 24%, average 45%, poor 28%, not sure 3%

Are you likely to continue the discussion? (n=68), yes 40%, no 16%, not sure 43%

How involved in the discussion did you feel? (n=68) Very involved 7%, involved 41%, a little involved 41%, not involved 7%, not sure 3%

Perceived policy impact (n=68), very useful 6%, useful 43%, a little useful 28%, not useful 15%, not sure 9%

Would you attend an event like this again? (n=68) Yes 55%, no 15%, not sure, 30%

There was a range of responses to the event, the majority of students found it interesting and informative. However, a small but significant number said that the event was boring.

Nearly half of the students rated the event as 'average' (49%), although a similar proportion said it was 'good' (46%). Just over half (55%) said they would definitely come again, and a third (30%) said they were unsure if they would. Two-thirds (63%) were impressed with the speakers.

Many students commented that they would have liked the event to be more interactive, which was a surprising result for an event that included electronic voting, hands on activities and lots of discussion sessions. A couple of the comments indicated that, by 'interactive', the students may have meant practical science experiments. There was also a sense that the day was somewhat rushed, and that some of the explanations were too technical to be easily understood. This was reinforced by the students who took part in the focus group discussion (see separate report).

Audience comments included:

"Make it fun - we need to be more involved, not just listening or discussing" (16 year-old female)

"Less complex, emphasis on everyday applications of nano tech" (16 year-old male)

"Make it more interesting using interactives and get the people more involved" (18 year-old male)