



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH



News Release

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Deep sea robots surface for research event that's big on ideas

A close encounter with deep sea robots will be among the highlights in a programme of research-based events next month.

The robots – which drill into the ocean bed to aid research projects – will surface at Our Dynamic Earth as part of *Explorathon*. This new nationwide initiative showcases the best research and innovation being pioneered in Scottish universities.

Other attractions include a hands-on workshop inviting people to imagine a post-apocalyptic world and an insight into the life of fungi.

Comedian Susan Morrison will describe a world ravaged by nuclear explosion 200 years in the future during the *Steampunk Science* event in the University of Edinburgh's Anatomy Lecture Theatre. Researchers will then encourage members of the audience to think about the aftermath of such an event and make difficult decisions on how they might build a new society.

More than 6,000 people are expected to engage with around 200 researchers on Friday 26 September, in an exciting evening of shows, talks and hands-on activities.

Other attractions during *Explorathon* include Meet the Experts events in the Royal Botanic Garden, the National Museum of Scotland and Our Dynamic Earth. Adults and children can gain a unique insight into discoveries developed by Edinburgh researchers, including robots which work in the ocean and the ways tropical plants and fungi affect our everyday lives.

Elsewhere, numerous PhD students will discuss their projects in cafés throughout the capital. Dr Oliver Escobar will also deliver a post-referendum lecture on political engagement, while Dr Jen Ross will debate whether robot teachers might be more effective than humans.

Other events include comedy nights, a talk on volcanoes and a cinema screening of the award-winning film *Stem Cell Revolutions*.

The *Explorathon* project was made possible with funding from the European Commission secured by the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Strathclyde.

The event is part of European Researchers' Night, which will see more than 300 cities across Europe stage simultaneous events to connect with schools and the public.

Dr Heather Rea, of the Beltane Public Engagement Network, said "The events will showcase the innovative research taking place in Edinburgh and highlight the city's importance and relevance, while stimulating young people to consider career paths that could lead to work in the field of research and innovation."

Ranked among the top universities in the world

Explorathon will take place on 26 September 2014 and 25 September 2015.

Edinburgh partners involved in *Explorathon* include National Museums of Scotland, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Café Scientifique, and Edinburgh Filmhouse.

To find out more, visit www.explorathon.co.uk or follow the event @ERNSCOT on twitter and www.facebook.com/ERNSCOT.

For further information, please contact: Kathryn Dunlop, Press and PR Office, tel +44 131 651 5587, mobile 0787 539 5069; email kathryn.dunlop@ed.ac.uk

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