

Trinity student's stress-free alarm idea wins LERU citizen science competition

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Trinity student Shauna Quinn and her team emerged victorious from a citizen science competition run at the League of European Research Universities (LERU) Doctoral Summer School after proposing 'Letswakeapp' – a project that will poll citizen scientists to bank the right alarm tone on an individual basis so as to ensure a good wake-up experience.

The project, presented by PhD candidate in the School of Biochemistry and Immunology, Shauna Quinn, was awarded first prize by a panel of experts that also comprised Secretary General of LERU, Kurt Deketelaere. The prize included seed funding to continue the project, with a pilot study already mooted for Dublin next year.



Shauna Quinn (third from left) and the Letswakeapp team at LERU's doctoral summer school.

Trinity joined LERU's prestigious ranks last year, and the theme of its 2017 summer school, which aims to provide doctoral candidates with unique professional and personal development

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opportunities, was *Citizen Science – nexus between research and public engagement*.

“**Shauna Quinn** said: “Our team was international, intercultural and interdisciplinary. Our project 'letswakeapp, can we find our perfect alarm?' was created around the idea that the modern alarm is not conducive to an essential healthy early morning mind-set. Instead, harsh programmed tones evoke stressful feelings, which then have a negative impact on our daily productivity, making gloomy mornings that bit harder.”

“We are a generation of alarm clock users and the long-term negative impacts of the constant abrupt awakening by these alarms in unknown. Our aim is to use citizen scientists to find the preferred alarm sound on an individual basis and, at the same time, collect data on the impact of sounds, which may also benefit researchers.”

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Some of the doctoral students that took part in LERU's 2017 summer school.

There are many citizen science projects carried out in Ireland, including the garden bird survey run by Birdwatch Ireland and public participation in protection of the coastal zone run by Coastwatch. In addition, another group of Trinity researchers are assessing floral resources for bees in Ireland – you can help by visiting: <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/eileenfranklin/count-flowers-for-bees> and counting flowers for bees.

With the recent explosion in citizen science projects, it is clear that people all around the world are willing and ready to make science happen.

“**Shauna Quinn** added: *“The LERU citizen science project was an incredible opportunity that I would recommend to all Trinity students. It offered amazing experiences, both personally and academically and helped me develop numerous skills that would ordinarily have to be honed outside PhD study.”*

“Zurich University did a wonderful job at organising this year’s LERU summer school. I hope Trinity is given the opportunity to host a LERU summer school sometime in the near future.””

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