Public Outreach at RAL: Engaging the Next Generation of Scientists and Engineers
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Content:
The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) in the UK is established under a Royal Charter. Part of this requires us to generate public awareness, engagement and dialogue in relation to the science we undertake. This activity is important to encourage the next generation of students to study STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects, providing the UK with a highly skilled workforce in the future. Skilled staff are a vital component of any e-Infrastructure and ensuring their availability in the future is a key sustainability issue for any site. This kind of outreach is important to every nation, not just the UK.

The Scientific Computing Department (SCD) undertakes a variety of outreach activities aimed at communicating the importance of science to students’ everyday lives, while also making it fun. We will describe the outreach activities undertaken by STFC, particularly focussing on those of the Scientific Computing Department. These activities include an Arduino based activity day for 12-14 year olds to celebrate Ada Lovelace Day, a program called Young Rewired State where 11-18 year olds create web applications with open data, and the Engineering Education Scheme, which is a program where we support a small team of 16/17 year olds to solve a real world engineering problem.

We believe these activities could serve as an example for other sites involved in scientific computing around the globe.

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