

# What is *Science by Email*?

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CSIRO

10 February 2012

**science by email**

Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

bankmecu  
responsible banking

**News: Opening a can of elephants**  
By Patrick Mahony

Driving through northern Australia, what sort of animals would you expect to see? Perhaps kangaroos, crocodiles and water buffalo, but what about elephants? Or a Komodo dragon?

Professor David Bowman from the University of Tasmania recently suggested introducing elephants into Australia's northern grasslands to help fight invasive gamba grass. Gamba grass is an introduced weed that fuels bushfires but is too big for most herbivores to eat.

David also suggested that introducing Komodo dragons could reduce populations of feral animals such as pigs and water buffalo.

What do you think of David's plans? On the one hand, Australia doesn't have a good track record of introducing non-native species - just look at rabbits, cane toads and lantana. However, some current environmental management strategies are expensive and not working, so changes may be necessary.

Scientists' ideas can be controversial. Galileo, Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein supported radical ideas that were criticised and condemned at the time but are now accepted by mainstream thinking. However, other ideas have fallen by the wayside due to lack of evidence.

Ask yourself some questions: what are the benefits of David's suggestion? What could go wrong? Are there consequences that we haven't thought of yet? How could scientists monitor and control such a course of action? Is all of this worth it?

**More information**

- [Bring elephants to Australia?](#)
- [CSIRO link: Biosecurity and invasive species](#)
- [Gamba grass](#)

**Careers link**

- [Good Universities Guide: Environmental studies](#)

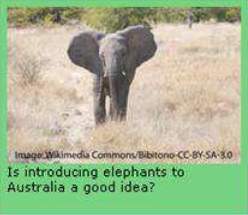


Image: Wikimedia Commons/Bibione-CC-BY-SA-3.0  
Is introducing elephants to Australia a good idea?

- News
- Hands-on activity
- Weblinks
- Quiz
- 'Did you know'
- Other

# Evaluation

## Methodology

Evaluation by Lorraine J Larri, Renshaw-Hitchen & Associates



### Online questionnaires

- Adults
- Students
- Teacher non-users

### Teacher blogs

### Expert curriculum consultants

# Evaluation




## Findings

*'...CSIRO education can feel confident in promoting Science by Email as resource for young people and adults that has a positive impact on their engagement in science and scientific research.'*





# Implementation of recommendations

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24 AUGUST 2012

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### News: Reporting on our oceans


**At school you receive report cards to keep track of how you're going and to identify strengths and weaknesses. Report cards are good for students – what about our oceans?**

The 2012 Marine Climate Change in Australia Report Card was released last week. It includes information on factors such as ocean temperatures, sea levels, ocean currents and the El Niño Southern Oscillation. It also includes the impacts these may have on marine plants, animals and microbes.

The report card isn't the work of a few researchers – over 80 Australian marine scientists from 34 research institutions, including the CSIRO, contributed research to the report card. Why so many people? The reason is that scientists tend to specialise. For instance, a marine scientist may be an expert on ocean currents, but know very little about fish. The report card covers such a wide range of scientific disciplines that many experts were needed.

The report card is also different from many other scientific announcements in that it is not the result of a single experiment or group of experiments. Instead, it brings together the observations, results and conclusions from

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### New South Wales: Deep Oceans exhibition


The deepest parts of the ocean are some of the toughest places to live. The Deep Oceans exhibition at the Australian Museum takes you on a journey to meet some of the bizarre creatures that call these murky marine depths home.

The exhibition runs until 14 October. For more information and tickets, go to the [Australian Museum website](#).

### Quiz questions

1. What colour is the pigment lycopene?
2. What animal product is usually pasteurised before human consumption?
3. What went extinct first: dinosaurs or trilobites?
4. What type of animal is the main carrier of Hendra virus?
5. What is thought to have started with the Big Bang?

 Saturdays at 9 am  
Sundays at 7 am  
Thursdays at 4 pm  
**NEXT:**  
THINGS THAT ARE FAST

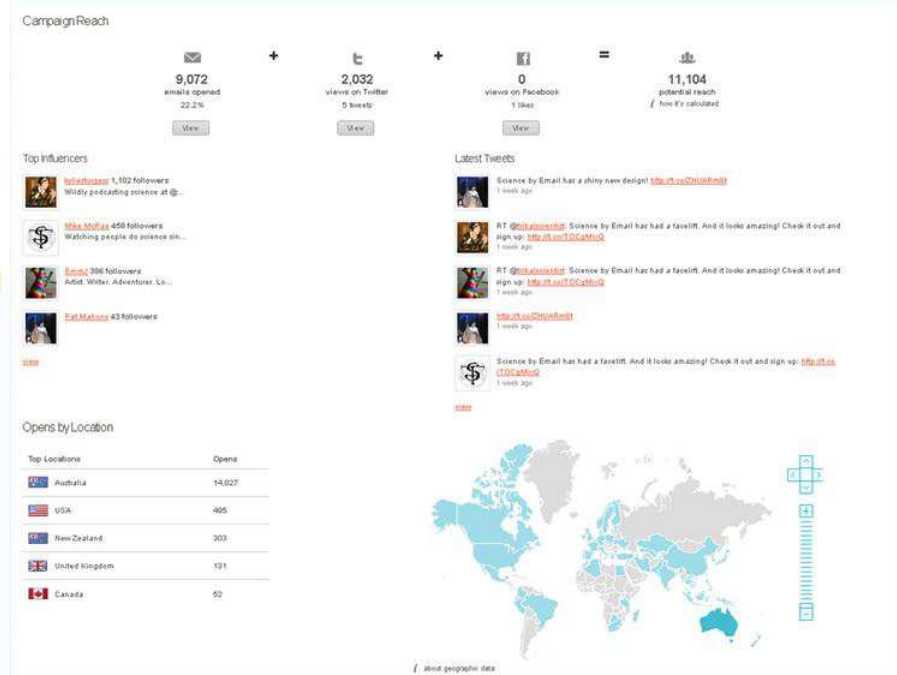
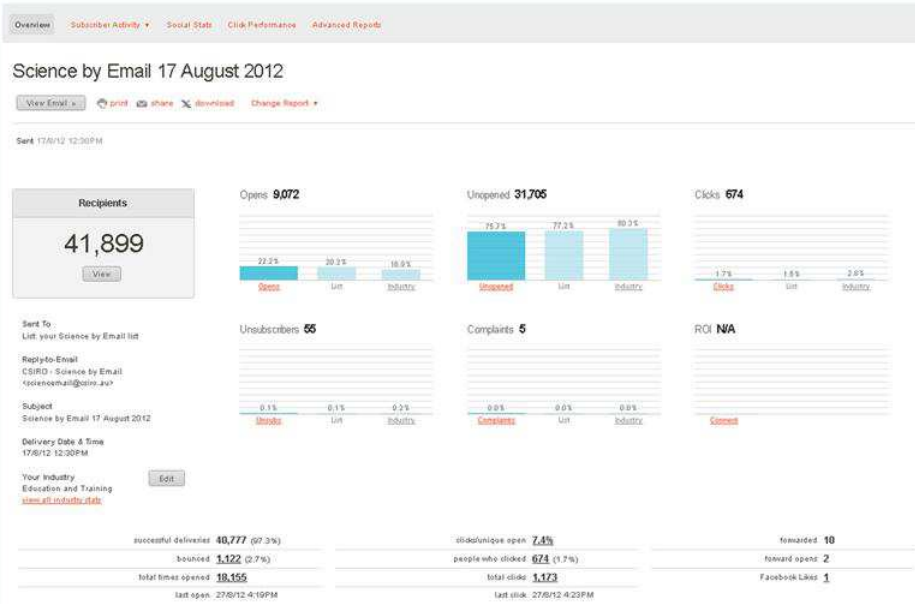
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### Websites

**Read it!**  
Science meets poetry at Science Rhymes. Read some of the poems [here](#).

**See it!**  
Check out the shortlist for the [2012 New Scientist Eureka Prize for Science Photography](#).

# MailChimp – value of analytics



# Future of evaluations for Science by Email

## MailChimp and analytics

- Explore the full potential of what the new system can offer us. The amount and quality of our quantitative data will expand.

## Direction

- Small changes can be implemented and their impact measured quickly. This in turn informs the broader direction.

## Motivation

- See the positive impact that the newsletter has on our readers

## Qualitative analysis

- Evaluations like that done in 2011 will still play a role due to the qualitative data they generate, as well as providing an outsider's perspective

# Thank you

**CSIRO Education**

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