

# Einstein Year is coming!



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*“When a man sits with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like a minute. But let him sit on a hot stove for a minute – and it’s longer than any hour. That’s relativity.”*

When Albert Einstein came up with this quote nearly a century ago he probably never thought it would appear on a greetings card – nor that that card would provide the inspiration for an unlikely alliance between London rap artist, DJ Vader, and the Institute of Physics. The Institute used Vader’s track “Einstein – not enough time” to announce to the media that Einstein Year is coming in 2005.

2005 has been designated by the United Nations as International Year of Physics, marking 100 years since Einstein published papers on three of his most important discoveries – Brownian motion, the photoelectric effect and the theory of special relativity (leading to the iconic equation  $e = mc^2$ ).

The Institute of Physics in the UK and Ireland is celebrating this centenary as Einstein Year and is using the anniversary to raise the profile of physics in a bid to attract desperately needed students to the subject and make the wider public aware of the ways in which physics touches and improves our everyday lives.

Caitlin Watson, Einstein Year co-ordinator, is constantly looking for ways to take physics to new audiences during the Year. She says that the track by DJ Vader will help the Institute take the subject to new areas and to help make the topic more relevant for young people.

Nationally, the Institute plans some big projects. Physics will be travelling the country with three “Lab in a Lorry” vehicles. Provided by the Schlumberger Foundation, the lorries will tour schools and other public venues with a cargo of real

interactive physics experiments and enthusiastic physicists. More hands-on physics will be available through a major new travelling exhibition funded by PPARC and EPSRC and will be installed in museums and galleries that do not normally host science exhibits.

One of the British Association for the Advancement of Science’s contributions to the Year is “UNiverse,” a poetry competition inspired by physics, which will culminate during next year’s National Science Week in March – which coincidentally encompasses Einstein’s birthday on March 14 – another date that the Institute is determined to mark in a big way.

“We are currently working with a major national company to hold an Einstein birthday party for 400 children at a local football ground” says Caitlin, “There will be physics party tricks and games – all designed to make physics approachable and not scary. We’d like to replicate this idea with other companies around

the country, Einstein Year provides an ideal opportunity for businesses in the UK to be more proactive – engaging and enthusing young people in the subject.

“As well as sponsoring high profile national activities there will be opportunities to provide community-based activities such as open days, talks, staff competitions and link-ups with schools – local events are key; without them there will be no Einstein Year. And the more events there are, the greater the number of people who will be inspired.”

Parliamentarians haven’t been forgotten; the Institute is working with POST (the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology) to arrange Parliamentary exhibitions during the Year. The Einstein Year website ([www.einsteinyear.org](http://www.einsteinyear.org)) will have details of all activities happening throughout the Year, both local and national. Check it regularly for events being held in your constituency and be inspired by Einstein and physics in 2005.



DJ Vader with the inspiration for his “Einstein rap”