

# Oral Contributions

## **[MS40-04] Light Reading: engagement with science through creative writing**

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Diamond Light Source ran a project titled “Light Reading” as a way of encouraging creativity inspired by our science.

In 2011, this short story writing competition ran for an adult audience, looking for submissions of 3,000 words. A flash fiction competition ran alongside the main competition, with a maximum length of 300 words. The only requirement was to mention the Diamond synchrotron within the story – the building, the science or the scientists. Authors were encouraged to learn about Diamond by visiting the site in person or by researching online, asking questions and engaging with people. In total, over 70 entries were submitted. Authors included scientists, teachers and professional writers from around the world; the winning entry came from California. Top-ranked entries and highlights from the 2011 competition have been made available on the Internet at [www.light-reading.org](http://www.light-reading.org)

The 2012 competition was designed for school students. Students were asked to come up with a science story, which could be in any genre – not just sci-fi. Stories had to be up to 2,000 words long; and, once again, Diamond had to be included in some way. There were two categories, key stage 3 and key stage 4. The winner in each category won £500 for their school and a Kindle Touch for themselves. The winning entries for the 2012 schools competition can also be found on [www.light-reading.org](http://www.light-reading.org). We will discuss the challenges of running a cross disciplinary engagement project, some of the highlights and unexpected outcomes. We will also discuss how the project fits into our long standing programme of arts/science activities, and future plans.