



The Vizzies

Visualization Challenge

The most beautiful visualizations from the worlds of science and engineering

Participants' Guide

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PRIZE INFORMATION

The contest winners will be awarded cash prizes. One Experts' Choice prize will be awarded per category. One People's Choice prize will be awarded per category. The prizes will be awarded as checks made out to the registered team leader/submitter and may be shared among any additional team members listed on the registration form at the team leader's direction.

Photography

Experts' Choice: \$2,000

People's Choice: \$250

Illustration

Experts' Choice: \$2,000

People's Choice: \$250

Posters & Graphics

Experts' Choice: \$2,000

People's Choice: \$250

Interactive

Experts' Choice: \$2,000

People's Choice: \$250

Video

Experts' Choice: \$2,000

People's Choice: \$250

CATEGORIES

Submissions for each category will include a visual entry as well as a written description of their visualization.

Photography

Digital or film photographs, including but not limited to as well as images from sensors, microscopes, telescopes, and similar instruments. Photographs submitted to the competition may not exceed 50 MB, and should not contain text. Visit the winners' page to see last year's winning photographs.

Illustration

Hand-designed or computer-assisted illustrations and drawings/paintings that conceptualize the unseen or recreate an object, process, or phenomenon without using text. Illustrations submitted to the competition may not exceed 50 MB. Visit the winners' page to see last year's winning illustrations.

Posters & Graphics

Hand-designed or computer-assisted illustrations, drawings, infographics, data visualizations, or photographs that conceptualize the unseen or recreate an object, process, or phenomenon, and include text. Posters and graphics submitted to the competition may not exceed 50 MB. Visit the winners' page to see last year's winning posters and graphics.

Interactive

Games, web applications, interactive visualizations, and smartphone or tablet apps that require user input. Entries must be self-guiding or include rules that explain the purpose, challenge, or goal of the interactive. Interactives should be free of charge and compatible with Microsoft Windows or Mac OS, or, for smartphone and tablet apps, both iOS and Android platforms. Entrants must provide any needed passwords required for access. Interactives will be evaluated based on the first five minutes of use. Visit the winners' page to see last year's winning interactives (previously known as the "games and apps" category).

Video

Videos constructed from photographs, illustrations, or graphics, film, or digital visualizations to depict an object, process, phenomenon, or the natural world. Accepted video formats are MP4 and MOV. Videos will be evaluated based on the first five minutes of running time. Visit the winners' page to see last year's winning videos.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Entries must convey science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics principles.
- Entries can be produced by individuals or by teams.
- Entries are not limited to those from academia but are welcomed from all sectors and professions (e.g., illustrators, scientists, engineers, research groups, institutions, etc.).
- A maximum of one entry per individual or team is permitted in each category.
- Entries can be submitted to one category only.
- Entries must match the description of the category to which they are submitted.
- Entries must not advertise or promote a commercial product visually or orally.
- Entries in the Interactive category must be free of charge and compatible with Microsoft Windows, iOS and/or the Android platform, and must provide any needed passwords required to access the entry.
- Entries and registrant information must be submitted in English. Videos narrated in a foreign language are acceptable if English subtitles are included.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Visual Impact

A successful entry provides viewers with new scientific insight, is visually striking, and conveys the artist's skill and expertise in the chosen medium (e.g., photography). It conveys the artist's mastery of the fundamentals and principles of design and is executed with factual accuracy.

Effective Communication

A successful entry communicates in a clear and understandable manner. It uses plain language, both written and spoken, in the entry itself and its accompanying text. An entry also must convey science, technology, engineering, or mathematics principles.

Freshness and Originality

A successful entry has an individual voice, vitality, and energy, creates a novel presentation or tells a compelling story, and portrays new scientific insight and methods.

JUDGING ROUNDS

Preliminary

- Qualifying entries (those that meet eligibility criteria and abide by all competition rules) are anonymously scored by a panel of judges including scientists, engineers, and other professionals from NSF.

Semifinal

- Entries scored in the top half of each category in the preliminary round advance to the semifinal round. However, if more than 100 entries are received in a category, only the top 50 entries advance.
- Entries are anonymously scored by a panel of judges including scientists, engineers and other professionals from NSF and from Popular Science.

Final

- The Top 10 entries from the semifinal round advance to this round.
- Entries that reach the final round are also eligible to win the People's Choice award via an online public vote.
- Entries are anonymously scored by a panel of distinguished judges representing a variety of fields, including scientists, engineers, film producers, and graphic artists, who are chosen jointly by NSF and Popular Science.
- Each entry is scored by all of the final round judges and those scores are averaged to determine the Experts' Choice winner.
- Judges, at their discretion, may choose not to award an Experts' Choice winner in a category.
- All judges' decisions are final.

Winners will be notified individually before the public announcement of the official contest results. Contest results will be publicly announced by Popular Science on popsci.com in March, and NSF will also publish the names and entries of the winners on its website. Additionally, contest results will also be announced by a joint NSF - Popular Science news release.

RULES

- Contest entry constitutes agreement to adhere to the rules and stipulations set forth by the contest sponsors.
- Submissions may be made by either individuals or teams.
 - A lead contact person must be designated for team submissions - the "Team Lead."
 - Team leads must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents. Monetary prizes will be distributed to team leads.
 - The order in which names are listed on the entry form is how the names will appear on popsci.com and on the NSF website.
- All entrants must be at least 18 years of age.
- Any entrant or entry found to be in violation of any rule will be disqualified.
- Each entrant certifies, through submission to the contest, that the entry is his or her own original creative work and does not violate or infringe the creative work of others, as protected under copyright law.
- By entering the contest the entrant agrees to hold harmless, NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com for all legal and administrative claims, to include associated expenses that may arise from any claims related to his or her submission or its use.
- Entrants retain all copyright and equivalent rights but give NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com nonexclusive rights to use their names, likenesses, quotes and submissions for educational publicity and/or promotional purposes. This includes but is not limited to website display, social media, print materials and exhibits.
- NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com reserve the right to use semifinalist and finalist winners' names and entries for educational publicity and/or promotional purposes, including website or exhibition of winning entries. It is understood that entries will be shared with reporters covering these awards and for promotion of the competition itself.
- NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com will not be responsible for any claims or complaints from third parties should these visualizations be published or exhibited.
- Winners that are published by Popular Science and popsci.com will be required to sign an agreement granting nonexclusive publication and Web rights.
- Winners are responsible for all taxes or other fees connected with the prize received and/or travel paid for by the sponsoring organizations.
- NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com will not respond to any claims or inquiries regarding contest results.
- NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com have the final say on any point not outlined in the entry rules.
- Information requested on the entry form will be used to determine how and if the competition is meeting its goals, purposes and audience. Submission of this information is also necessary to contact entrants.

- Employees, contractors, officers or judges of the sponsoring organizations are not eligible to enter the competition.
- Finalist judges, either individually or as part of a team, are not eligible to enter the competition.
- If an insufficient number of qualified entries are received, the sponsoring organizations reserve the right to modify or cancel the competition prior to announcing winners.
- Should NSF decide to bring winning contestants to Washington, D.C., or to any other location for promotional and other purposes, expenses paid by NSF will be within the limits set forth in law according to federal travel regulations. The travel will be restricted to participants based in the US. Foreign winners will have to designate a US-based representative for that purpose.
- Should NSF decide to bring contestants to Washington, D.C., or to any other location, NSF will fund travel for only one person per group or team entry if the entry wins. The maximum funding is \$1,000 for one person per group or team entry. This person will be the contact person listed on the entry form. If this person is not available, he or she will designate a replacement from the team. If a single person wins multiple categories, he or she must represent all of the winning entries; designees are not permitted in this instance. Only persons listed on the original entry form may have their travel funded by NSF. All other persons accompanying the winner/group representative must arrange and fund their own travel and accommodations.
- All contestants agree that they, their heirs and estates shall hold harmless the United States, the employees of the federal government, and all employees of NSF, Popular Science, and popsci.com for any and all injuries and/or claims arising from participation in this contest, to include that which may occur while traveling to or participating in contest activities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: May I submit custom code that I have written?

A: No. Unfortunately, we don't have the resources or manpower to compile/install custom software or the time to ramp up on running your particular simulation.

Q: I have custom code that I ported to Windows, and it has a compliant Windows Install Shield, so can I submit that?

A: No. For the same reason as cited in the previous question.

Q: I have some media produced on an SGI workstation. Is that OK to submit?

A: Not if we need an SGI workstation to view it. Unless otherwise noted, we do not accept entries unless they can be reviewed in a PC environment.

Q: May I submit Photoshop or QuarkXPress files?

A: No. Please submit your images as a JPG, JPEG, GIF, BMP or PNG file.

Q: Is PowerPoint OK?

A: No. PowerPoint decreases image quality and is primarily used for presentation purposes.

Q: What can I submit? What kind of things would be appropriate?

A: Please review our Eligibility Criteria and Rules pages for specific information. We encourage you to submit your entry!

Q: What characterizes a winning entry?

A: Entries are scored based on visual impact, effective communication, and originality. Winning entries should also include thorough and thought provoking answers to the entry form questions. See our Judging Criteria page for more information.

Q: Can I resubmit an entry this year that didn't win last year?

A: Yes.

Q: I am from a foreign country. Can I submit an entry?

A: Foreign participants must be part of a team, and the team lead must be a U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident. Foreign students will not receive a monetary prize if they are part of a winning team. Monetary prizes will be distributed to team leads.

Q: Do works need to be submitted in English?

A: Yes. Videos narrated in a foreign language are acceptable if English subtitles are included.

Q: What exactly do you mean by "visualization"?

A: Entries should show and explain some aspect of the world that people don't typically see. This can be a unique viewpoint (e.g., extreme magnification), non-obvious relationships, "impossible" views (e.g., standing inside the sun), extra-sensory views (e.g., X-ray photographs of galaxies), etc.

Q: What are the file size restrictions for my entry?

A: Photographs may not exceed 10 MB. Illustrations and Posters & Graphics may not exceed 50 MB.

Q: When does the clock start for the five-minute evaluation period allowed for Video and Interactive entries?

A: The five minutes begin when actual game play or video viewing starts.

Q: Are multi-player game entries allowed in the Interactive category?

A: Yes, but only if single-player participation is also possible.

Q: What is meant by "Apps" in the Interactive category?

A: For the purposes of the Challenge, an "app" is software that can be installed on a device operating on the Microsoft Windows, iOS or Android platforms, such as an iPad, tablet, smart phone or personal computer.