

Marblar site seeks to clickstart science uses

October 23 2012, by Nancy Owano

(Phys.org)—"That's a cool lab trick but what's its purpose?" Marblar wants to tease out great answers from those who log in to participate. With prizes, points and kudos in the mix. Marblar is a new web site that aims to make dream connections possible between scientists and an enlightened audience of innovative thinkers who might collaboratively dream up new uses for unused technology. The Marblar team is coaxing its audience to clickstart a science revolution by coming up with uses that can enable the next big thing. "One thought leads to the next but sometimes to a dead end," said the site's video. "Perhaps we can help make ideas click together in a new way."

Marblar describes itself as a creative collective of [scientists](#) who take on innovation challenges. Marblar hunts down these challenges and opens them up for "the collective" to unlock their "latent genius." The team suggests that those who have technology that awaits a second opinion to sign up along with this sea of geniuses who will offer their advice.

How Marblar works: [Inventors](#) post their science onto Marblar. Bright minds from around the world log in and share their thoughts on how they think this discovery could be used. They talk about the problems the technology might solve and the paths to make it possible. Marblar turns the potential exchanges into a fun game atmosphere where discoveries are posted as "challenges" and Marblars everywhere can have their turn in moving the technology forward. "Marblars" can earn points and cash prizes. The Marblar team acknowledges that it is gamifying science, in that it is making it fun to move science to the real world.

Content to be discussed is provided on the site. "How would you use this tech?" asks the site. Blocks of technology entries include Superfoam, where the creator made strong polymer foams that can be easily molded into complex shapes. Also among the entries is an "exceptionally stable" spectrometer.

The project statement said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all discoveries deserve a second chance, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of New Frontiers."

The team proclaimed that "On this date, the Twenty Second of October – Two Thousand Twelve, Marblars everywhere declare our Scientific Independence. Let the Revolution begin."

On a more direct note, they have written how problems that emerging science can solve are not always obvious. A sound discovery may languish and over time be forgotten. "Indeed," they said, "by some estimates up to 95 percent of technologies patented by universities never get commercialized." They lamented how wasteful this is, in the form of taxpayer or philanthropy-funded research that never makes any lives better. They also pointed to another reason good discoveries may never materialize: "Scientists have become fantastically specialized over time," and it may be difficult for a scientist to recognize real-world relevance of a discovery that was made in a niche field.

Marblar co-founders are Daniel Perez, a PhD student at the University of Oxford, who serves as CEO; Mehmet Fidanboyly, a PhD student at King's College London, in neuropharmacology; Gabriel Mecklenburg, a PhD student in regenerative medicine at Imperial College London. and Tom von Erlach, also a PhD student in regenerative medicine at Imperial College London.

More information: www.marblar.com/

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