

# Brain Info/ Info Cerveau: Ask and you shall receive an answer from a neuroscientist!

ComSciCon, August 2021

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# Introduction

- Brain Info / Info Cerveau is a graduate student run, Montreal based bilingual (English and French) science communication initiative.
- Brain Info started in November 2020, under the guidance of Dr. Reza Farivar, the director of the Integrated Program in Neuroscience at McGill University.
- The mission of Brain Info is:

*"To increase availability of accessible, reliable information about current neuroscience knowledge and research by providing informed answers in response to the public community's questions."*

# Structure and organization

```
graph LR; A[Faculty advisor] --- B[Student admin team<br/>(8 members)]; B --- C[Writers]; B --- D[Translators]; B --- E[Social media contributors]; B --- F[Graphic designers];
```

Faculty advisor

Student admin team  
(8 members)

Writers

Translators

Social media  
contributors

Graphic designers

# Structure and organization

## Workflow

Question submitted via website

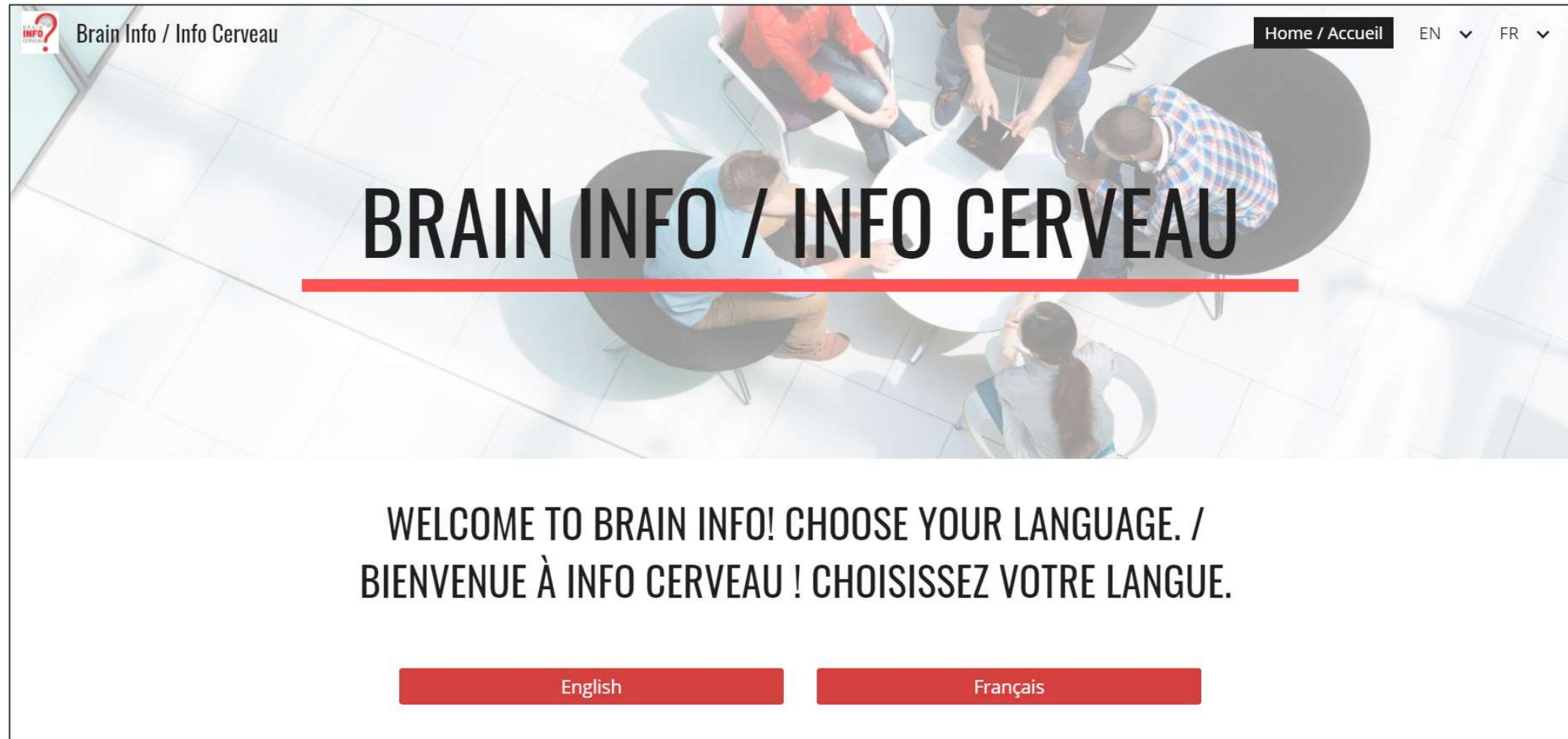
Assigned to writer

Peer-reviewed by admin

Translated if required

Emailed to submitter & posted on social media

# Website



# Question submission form

7. Preferred language of response / Langue de réponse préférée: \* 

- ☐ English / Anglais
- ☐ French / Français
- ☐ French or English / Français ou Anglais

8. Desired length of response / Durée de réponse souhaitée: \*

- ☐ Short / Courte
- ☐ Long / Longue

9. Desired complexity of response / Complexité de la réponse souhaitée: \* 

- ☐ Low / Faible
- ☐ Moderate / Moyen
- ☐ High / Élevé

10. Would you like additional resources? / Souhaitez-vous des ressources supplémentaires? \*

- ☐ Yes / Oui
- ☐ No / Non

# Response template

## Volunteer

*Name (first and/or last), position at IPN*

## Question

*Copy from Teams, also copy the “why are you asking” if relevant*

## Response

*General Structure:*

- *Background*
- *Relevant findings in research*
  - *The take-aways*
- *Significance*
- *Limitations*
- *Addressing common misinformation*
- *Social contexts (may go under additional resources, link to blog)*
- *Overall interpretation*
- *Future directions*
- *Consider emphasizing important terms*
- *Cite any primary sources you use<sup>1</sup>*

1. Yu, W., Uzun, Y., Zhu, Q., Chen, C. & Tan, K. scATAC-pro: a comprehensive workbench for single-cell chromatin accessibility sequencing data. *Genome Biology* **21**, 94 (2020).

## Additional Resources

*Remove this row if the client doesn't ask for resources*



# Answering guidelines

- **Suggested length:**

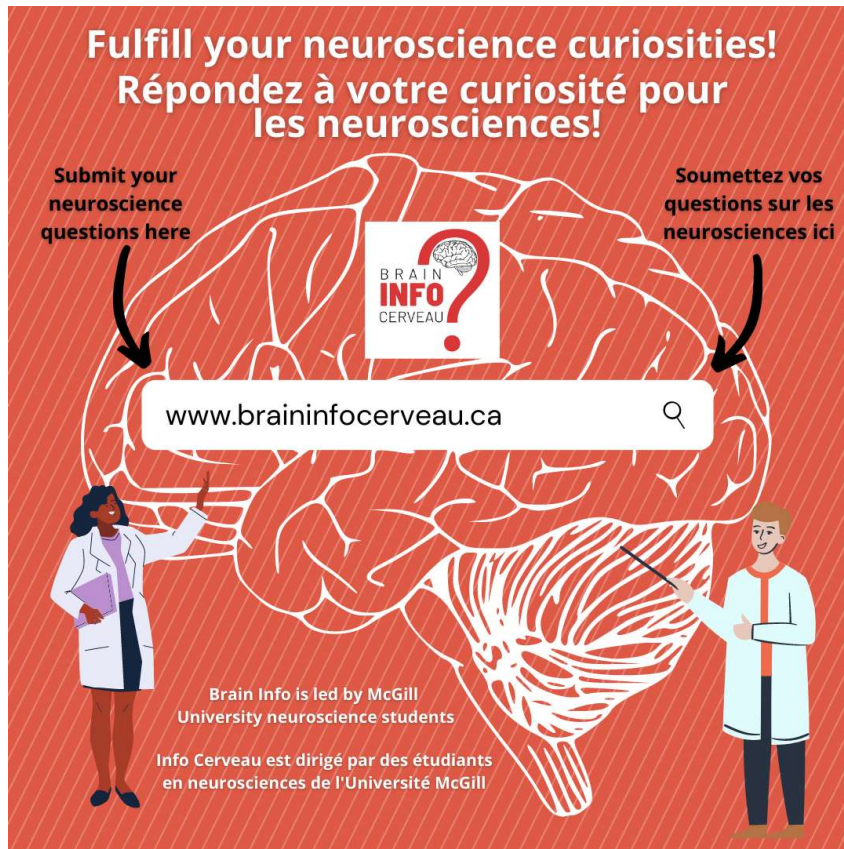
- *low complexity, short length* → one paragraph
- *low complexity, long length* → one page
- *medium complexity, short length* → one page
- *medium complexity, long length* → 1.5 pages
- *high complexity, short length* → one page
- *high complexity, long length* → two pages



- **Deadlines:**

- *low complexity, short length* → one week
- *low complexity, long length* → two weeks
- *medium complexity, short length* → two weeks
- *medium complexity, long length* → three weeks
- *high complexity, short length* → four weeks
- *high complexity, long length* → six weeks



# Social media posts & sample answer

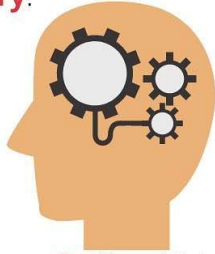




 *Sample Question & Response* 

**Question**  
Why do smells trigger nostalgia/ memories?

**Response**

- ▶ The recollection of a past personal episode triggered by a smell is referred to as **odor-evoked memory**.
- ▶ Research suggests that smells can trigger strong, emotional memories because the neuroanatomy of the sense of smell, or **olfaction**, is closely connected to the neuroanatomy of emotion and memory.
- ▶ The **olfactory cortex** consists of the **olfactory bulb**, which has direct connections to both the **amygdala**, a deep brain structure involved in emotion processing, and the **hippocampus**, a brain region involved in memory formation.




 *Exemple de question et réponse* 

**Question**  
Pourquoi les odeurs déclenchent-elles la nostalgie/les souvenirs?

**Réponse**

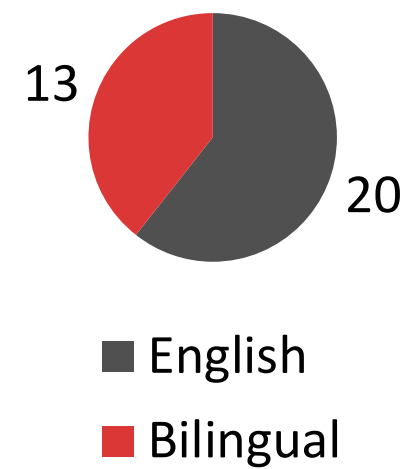
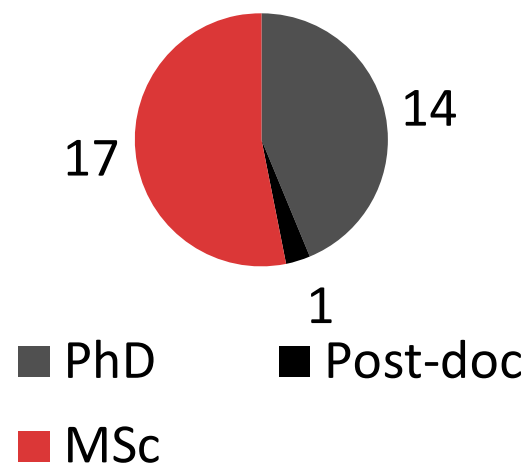
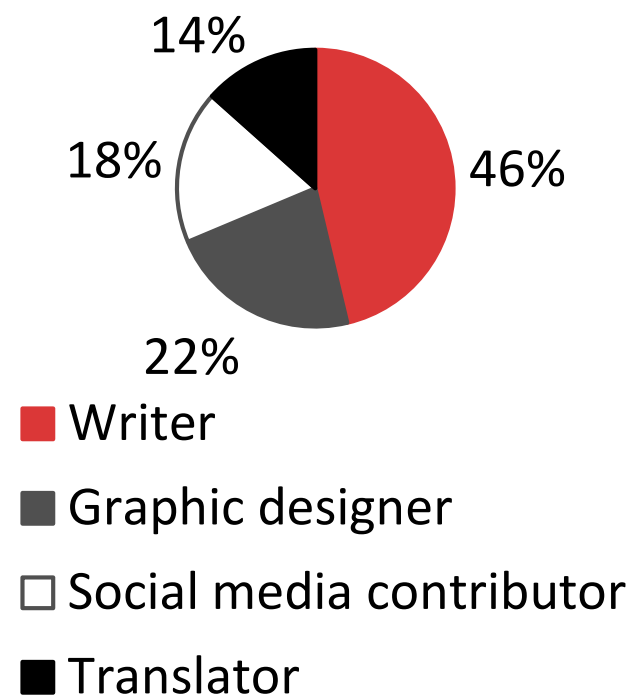
- ▶ Le souvenir d'un épisode personnel passé déclenché par une odeur est appelé **mémoire évoquée par une odeur**.
- ▶ La recherche suggère que les odeurs peuvent déclencher des souvenirs émotionnels forts, car la neuroanatomie du sens de l'odorat, ou **olfaction**, est étroitement liée à la neuroanatomie de l'émotion et de la mémoire.
- ▶ Le **cortex olfactif** est constitué du **bulbe olfactif**, qui est directement relié à l'**amygdale**, une structure cérébrale profonde impliquée dans le traitement des émotions, et à l'**hippocampe**, une région du cerveau impliquée dans la formation de la mémoire.



# Volunteers

33

active  
volunteers



47 questions submitted

34 English

13 French

250+ social media reach

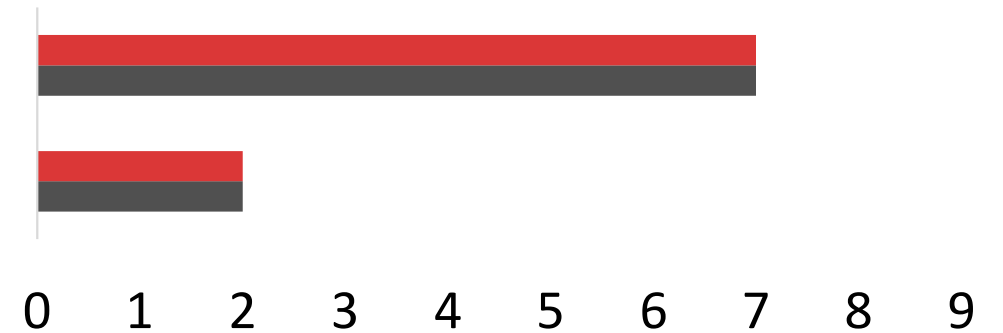
Performance & growth

■ How satisfied are you with the response format?

■ How well did we address your question?

Rating 5

Rating 4

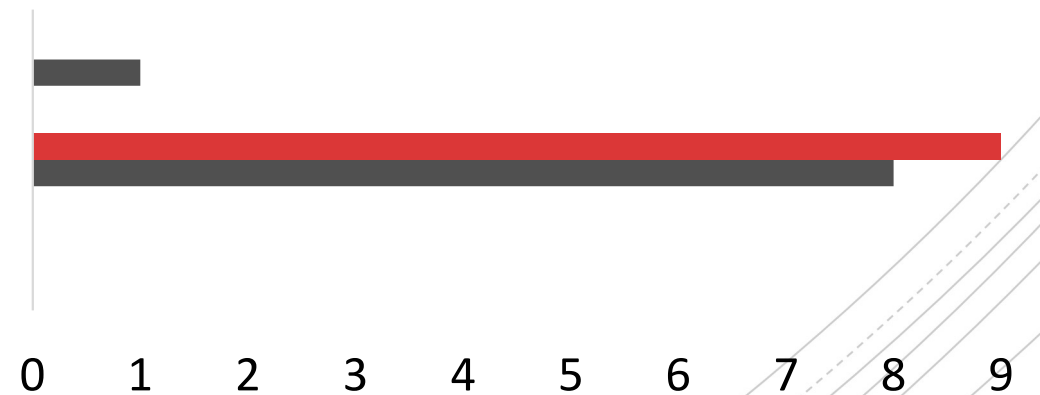


■ Complexity ■ Length

Too much

Just right

Too little



The background of the slide features several thin, curved lines in a light gray color, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion or flow. On the left side, there is a large red speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Future directions'.

## Future directions

### Short term goals:

- Increase our reach, through social media and word-of-mouth
- Increase our capacity to answer questions, especially French language questions, by recruiting more volunteers
- Improve our archiving capability to create a searchable database of previous answers

The background of the slide features several thin, curved lines in a light gray color, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion or flow. A large red speech bubble is positioned on the left side of the slide, containing the text 'Future directions'.

## Future directions

### Long term goals:

- Support other formats for question submission and for providing answers
- Partner with other science communication initiatives
- Provide more structured training for volunteers
- Expand beyond McGill University and Montreal



The background of the slide features several sets of thin, curved lines in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion or orbits. On the left side, there is a large red speech bubble shape with a tail pointing downwards.

## Acknowledgements

- Contributions to volunteer training - McGill Office for Science and Society
- We use Microsoft Teams and Google Sites to power this initiative.

# Contact

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