

Don Powell

Don Powell Associates Ltd

Working his way through complexity – in so many ways – Don studied biology of viruses, the fruitfly *Drosophila*, and mouse in the UK and the US before retiring his pipette when at the Babraham Institute in the mid-1990s. Taking up pencils, crayons, paints and overhead sheets, he talked about and discussed biology with all sorts of people, developed websites and worked with funding agencies and the media.

He joined the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute as its first Press and PR Officer in January 2000, just as ‘genomes’ were coming to a lively, rolling boil. Whether he stirred the pot, fanned the flames or tempered the dish is undetermined.

His team built the Institute website (twice), a new intranet and took the annual review through three iterations, from a science report to an accessible suite of features. He led the Public Engagement programme until a new team was recruited in 2005 and coordinated inward visits of politicians, ambassadors and others until the Institute made the wise decision to strengthen the Director’s support team.

He continued to lead communications at the Institute through new and sometimes contentious outcomes from animal experimentation, human evolution, superbugs, chronic fatigue/ME, global genetics projects — and even praise from Tony Blair.

In early 2015, Don announced his intention to leave the Sanger Institute and to set up a science communications’ consultancy. The Institute continues to thrive — as does Don’s consultancy (albeit with smaller budget).

He still likes pencils, crayons and watercolours. He’s undecided about pipettes.

Find out more at <http://www.donpowellassociates.co.uk>