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Remote³: Public Engagement over 1 km underground –and beyond

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The Remote³ (Remote Cubed) project is an STFC Public Engagement Leadership Fellowship funded activity, organised in collaboration between the University of Edinburgh (UoE), and STFC's Public Engagement Team, Scientific Computing Department, and Boulby Underground Laboratory –part of STFC Particle Physics.

Remote³ works with school audiences to challenge teams of young people to design, build, and program their own LEGO Mindstorms “Mars Rover”, which will be tested at the Boulby Underground Laboratory's Mars Yard, 1.1 km underground. Teams, with the assistance of mentors from UoE and STFC, will design their rover to complete various space-exploration themed challenges –ranging from taking a panoramic environment scan to navigating the Mars Yard landscape looking for LEGO brick samples. The project aims to engage with audiences who do not usually interact with STFC Public Engagement, such as more remote locations or areas of higher deprivation and give them the opportunity to work hands on with engineering and computing, whilst learning from and interacting with real scientists and engineers.

Since its inception in 2019, Remote³ has flourished in a wide variety of different environments and through multiple mediums, from entirely virtual during the lockdowns of 2020-21, deep underground, in schools and storytelling at libraries, and in tents in fields at festivals.

This year Remote³ is building on the lessons learnt through this varied programme to deliver a series of engagement activities in conjunction with STFC's Rutherford Appleton Laboratory Public Open Week, which has an expected audience of 20,000 people.

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