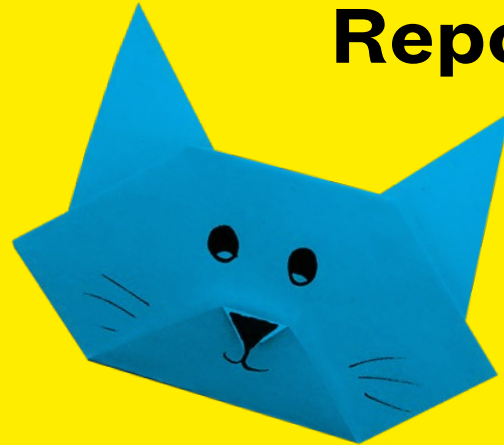


# ***THE JANUARY CHALLENGE 2019***

**Report**



**64 Million  
*artists!***

No. 365

Jamie Wreck

**THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE  
2019**

# A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

## What is this report for?

This report has been created to share some of the measurable outcomes of 64 Million Artists' self funded campaign The January Challenge. The free online campaign invites people across the UK to participate in a daily Creative Challenge for the 31 days of January. The report will use engagement analytics and reach across social media, web and email, the results of a survey of 400 participants, and insights from the 64 Million Artists' team to offer observations and conclusions on the campaign.

We want to contribute to the wider debate about participation in creative endeavours and the benefits that people observe for themselves when engaging with them. We want to share these insights with the thousands of Challengers that took part, the public, with our board members, with funders of our other projects and with organisations we partner with, with the aim to highlight and celebrate the potential in everyday creativity and creative participation.

## Who are 64 Million Artists?

At 64 Million Artists we believe that everyone is creative, and that when we are creative we can make positive change in our lives and the world around us. We use a simple, fun and free process: Do, Think and Share to support people who'd like to use creativity to express themselves, get a bit more of a spring in their step, or connect better with others. We aim to catalyse the creativity of everyone in the UK.

As well as running The January Challenge, we work with all kinds of people and organisations. We have been involved in projects with organisations from YoungMinds, the BBC, London Borough of Waltham Forest to NHS mental health trusts, King's College London, Parkinson's support groups and many more. We also work with the arts and cultural sector to encourage everyday creativity and cultural democracy, and in other sectors to promote wellbeing, innovation and employee and community engagement.



DAY 11

**FRUITY  
FRIDAY**

*Make art out of fruit!*

# WHAT IS THE JANUARY CHALLENGE?

## The idea is simple.

Each day in January we sent out a short Creative Challenge which only takes 5 or 10 minutes to complete, using materials that should be easy to find (a pen, paper, random junk in your recycling bin, a sense of humour, etc). The Challenge might be to create art out of fruit, recreate your favourite album cover, or learn something new about your local area. Participants are encouraged to follow the Do, Think, Share model - Do the Challenge, Think about what they created, how they approached it and how it made them feel, and Share their creative endeavours with others online or in person. We are active in reposting, supporting conversations and encouraging participation, and often other Challengers praise and promote their fellows and welcome newcomers.

This year also saw the launch of our Workplace Package. The January Challenge is free to take part in but we offered a package of tailored support to help get workplaces geared up and ready to take part in the programme to promote mental wellbeing, collaboration and strong company culture.

The January Challenge is a self-funded initiative and has run since the organisation was founded. 2019 was the 5th time the Challenge has run and over 15,000 people took part. This is inclusive of those signed up on email, those who received the challenge via social media and those who engaged via their workplace. This means that engagement figures have more than doubled each year since its inception.

## What is impact?

This report looks at two different types of impact:

1. The distribution of The January Challenge message and its engagement from people, via email, web and social media. Impact in this area is measured by the numbers in quantitative data: emails opened, web page views, posts to the hosted Facebook group, Twitter and Instagram, and levels of engagement through likes, comments and retweets. The more people engage with the challenges, the further the campaign spreads and reaches new people. Increasing engagement also enhances the second type of impact:
2. We believe that spending some of your time being creative has benefits, and we use feedback from The January Challenge to assess what benefits people perceive for themselves. The January Challenge exists because we receive feedback that people enjoy it and gain things from participating, and we love to discover what experiences people have.



DAY 25

## DRAW WITH YOUR DRAWERS

*Make art out of the content  
of your drawers. Draw  
with your 'stuff'!*

# THE REACH OF THE JANUARY CHALLENGE

## The most direct way to quantify impact and reach is by looking to our social media and digital platforms.

The more people who see the Challenges, and the results that Challengers create, the more people can engage in our work and be supported to embrace their creativity. This year had the highest engagement levels throughout the month that we have seen so far, with a real mix of new and returning Challengers.

Although the survey is not representative of all Challenger's experience, it gives us a good idea of emerging trends and the logistics of participation in the Challenge. The survey and social media analytics inform the following sections, which look at each communication platform and the data we have for it.

## E-mail

Potential participants are invited to sign up to an email mailing list to receive the daily challenge at 7am each morning. 84.1% of participants received the daily Challenge by email (as opposed to the Dothinkshare site (2.6%) Facebook page/group (8.3%), Twitter (2.5%) and Instagram (2.5%)). This has been a major way of distributing the challenge since its inception. Due to GDPR regulations in 2018, we restarted our distribution list which quickly grew from 0 to 5,377 (3000 people joined in December alone!), and the list continues to grow.

## Do Think Share

The [do think share website](#) is our site for free creative activities, and a space for people to share their responses to The January Challenge and The Weekly Challenge that we run throughout the year. Although some people posted directly to the site, we also pulled through all of the responses from social media through Juicer (our aggregator) so that people could see all of the posts in one place here.



## Google Analytics Global Heat Map

83% of web visits were from the UK, but all other populated continents sent some visitors our way.

# SOCIAL MEDIA - REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

## Celebrating everyday creativity

The January Challenge is an online campaign and sharing is both an intrinsic part of the methodology, and a chance to celebrate and highlight everyday creative practice. It allows participants to see other contributions and interact and connect with others around the UK and the rest of the world. Social media therefore plays a key role in the reach of the Challenge and is a means of finding and engaging with new and diverse audiences.

## Twitter & Instagram

Twitter and Instagram are the most 'broadcast' focused platforms of The January Challenge. We see lots of engagement but less commenting and sharing than the Facebook platform. Anecdotally we can see that, as might be expected, participants on Twitter are more professional and often come from culturally focused jobs, and Instagram attracts more professional or self-professed amateur artists. This year was the most popular year for Instagram so far, with a 20% increase in posts from 2018. With Instagram fast becoming the most commonly used social media platform, this is a trend we expect to continue next year.

## Facebook

The January Challenge Facebook group grew by nearly 800 people throughout The January Challenge 2019 campaign, and remains the most popular place for Challengers to share their work. Several members commented that although they didn't personally share in the group, they enjoyed observing the activity, commenting, liking and encouraging others.

The Challenge group is a chatty community indeed. There were nearly 10,000 comments on over 4,500 posts, and several people told us how much they enjoy cheering each other on - in fact, the 'like' button was hit nearly 80,000 times!

*" A benefit is the sense of community in a world where social media can end up not being that social. I appreciate the opportunity to see other people's contributions - it motivates my own creativity and I hope that in turn sharing my creativity motivates other people's creativity. "*

A Challenge participant

## Over the month we saw:

### Impressions

**11M+**

### Posts on Twitter

**4000+**

### Posts on Facebook group

**4500+**

### Posts on Instagram

**2000+**

## This year we specifically aimed to engage workplaces to take part.

Although we have had several workplaces participate informally in previous years, the focus has mainly been on individuals.

The January Challenge is free to take part in but we offered a package of tailored support to help get workplaces geared up and ready to take part, with aim to promote conversation and action around mental wellbeing, collaboration and strong company culture.

## Who took part?

Over 15 hospitals, an NHS Foundation Trust, 2 major Arts venues and a school formally took on the Challenge, meaning that over 25,000 employees received each daily prompt. Sharing happened largely within workplace intranet systems, organised by the wellbeing champion within the building and supported by 64 Million Artists. Several libraries, classrooms, community groups, cultural organisations and businesses also took part informally (that we know of!).

## How was it perceived?

In a busy, fast paced working environment, The January Challenge provides opportunity to pause, reflect and engage with colleagues through a shared creative experience. Feedback from Workplaces that took part this year suggests that this has valuable impact both within the team and within the wider culture and environment of the building. For example, students taking part in crafting Challenges with their teachers, flash mobs breaking out in offices and medical teams using Challenges to engage in “the privilege of creative moments” with their patients:

*“ Two things have happened for me while introducing this to the NHS trust I work in. The honesty and openness that staff bring to the challenge and the vulnerability they are happy to share through the creative projects they embark on. Wow! And then today as the challenge has been taken to our Dementia patients ... ! I love it, my family love it, my workplace love it and we are laughing at the ideas we are coming up with... ”*

Melanie Walker, Employee Engagement Manager,  
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

## What did we learn?

1. Our Workplace Package is something that we are keen to build on in 2020. As always, we need to start earlier with aim to ensure systems are in place and avoid teething problems.
2. The programme works really well when it is visibly championed within the building, so the more posters, flyers and Challenge examples that are around - the better!
3. The face to face workshop element of the experience is important. The workshops should be a part of the programme itself to engage staff in the values and ethos behind the programme, and inspire champions within the workplace Bring on 2020!

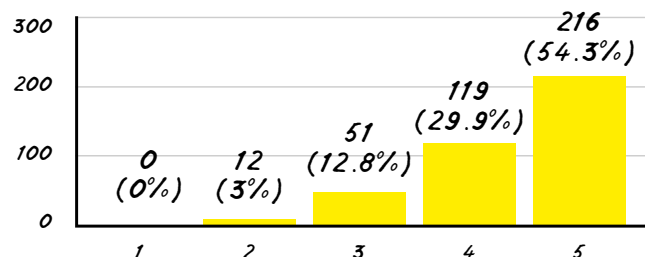
# HOW WAS THE CHALLENGE PERCEIVED, AND WHO TOOK PART?

## Emerging themes

1. This year had a stronger wellbeing focus than previous years. Several people quickly commented on the positive impact that the strong community spirit and focussed creative time had on their wellbeing and mental health.
2. Challengers enjoyed the opportunity to bond and connect with others. People took part with their families, young children and friends, and enjoyed incorporating it into their daily routine.
3. The sharing element remains a rewarding experience for Challengers. They really enjoy giving and receiving positive feedback to others.
4. People loved using their brain differently, challenging themselves and stepping out of their comfort zone.

**Overall, people got a lot out of the challenge and had a lot of fun. Here's what they said:**

*On a scale of 1 to 5 how much did you enjoy The January Challenge? – 398 responses*



**64 Million artists!**

## Who are the Challengers, and what do we know about them?

The online nature of The January Challenge means that it quickly snowballs to reach people and communities across the world in ways and with impact that is difficult to quantify. People shared anecdotes of Challenges happening in rural India, East and West Australia, across Europe, America and Canada. So, to explore what we know about the Challenge community, we look to our survey of 400 people, social media insights and shared testimony - although this is not representative of all Challengers experience, it gives us a good idea of emerging trends and demographics. This enables us to build on the programme and strategy, and catalyse the creativity of a larger, broader demographic next year.

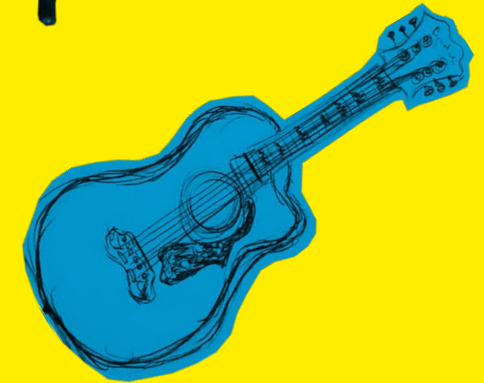
1. There are over 2,300 members in the Challenge Facebook group, and although London remains the most popular city, 89% of Challengers came from outside of London. We engaged people from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, covering all the Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile (IMD ranks all postcodes in England by deprivation). On the survey the representation from outside the capital was even broader. [See the map here.](#)
2. There was a huge spread of ages from under 12 to 75+. As expected, ages varied across social media platforms, but there was particularly high engagement from 45-54 year olds with over 27%. This year we saw an increase in 25-34 year olds taking part, especially on Instagram, from 8.5% in 2018 to 12.9% in 2019. This is something we were aiming for, and hope will continue to rise.

3. Our Challengers are predominantly female - 74-87% across platforms.
4. From the small fraction of those who took the survey, 11% were from BAME backgrounds. This is something we are very keen to broaden out and by investing extra time, money and resources, this will be our focus for the 2020 campaign.
5. 12% of Challengers who took the survey have a disability.
6. A large number of people said that they were experiencing mental and physical health difficulties or dealing with issues around grief, separation and caring



95%+

**FOUND THE CHALLENGE  
HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT  
ON THEIR WELLBEING**



“

**Instead of scrolling through my phone, I spent time thinking about creative projects.**

And when I completed a challenge, I had something to show for it - something tangible in many cases, but also a lift in mood, and a sense of wider horizons and possibilities. I also felt a connection to all the other people doing the challenge - it felt like being part of a like minded community, even though I didn't know any of them or have direct contact with them.

”

“

**It surprised me how uplifting it was to create for the fun of it,**

not for critical evaluation, not for hanging on a wall, and not for potential monetary reward. This must be how it felt to play as a child, completely immersed in the task itself.

”

“

**Initially, I was a little apprehensive about participating**

and certainly about sharing my contributions - as I felt I wasn't good enough. Pretty soon though, a warm and encouraging community began to emerge, and I felt so thrilled to be a part of it. The structure of having something to do - to create - each day also became very important. It really lifted my spirits, helped boost my confidence, and gave me something positive to focus on.

”

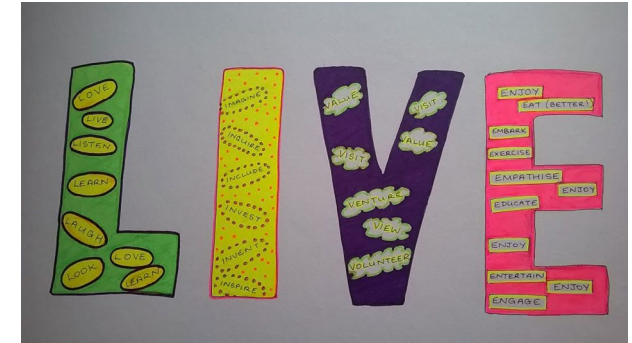
# WHAT ABOUT NEXT YEAR?

## What can we do better?

We are always reflecting on our processes and are keen to make The January Challenge experience the best that it can be.

*Here are our top tips and top learnings from this year!*

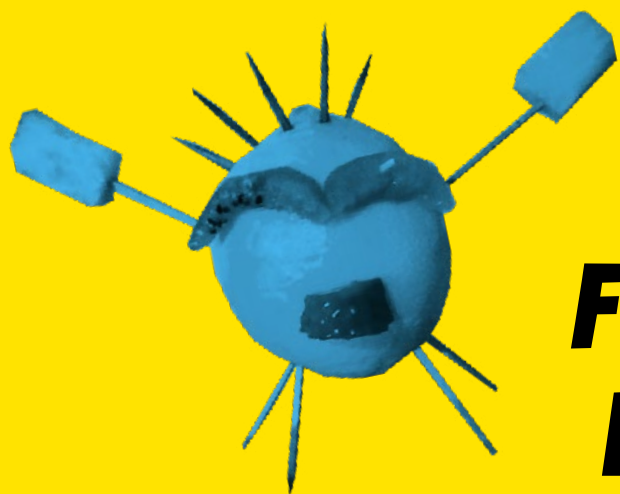
1. We want to broaden the range and demographic of people that take part. Although we see a huge range of locations, ages and socio-economic backgrounds, we hope to engage with a more diverse set of ambassadors and widen the reach of the Challenge. To do this successfully, we need to start a lot earlier (as always!) - and spend focussed time building our audience and relationships with new sectors, areas and community groups. We are hopeful that with a growing team, and by exploring funding options, we can develop more partnerships and focus on recruitment. Every year so far we have doubled our engagement numbers - next year we are aiming for 30,000!
2. We want to expand the Workplace Package to develop the processes and logistics of rolling out the Challenge in large teams and buildings. Again, this means starting earlier, and using workshops and tailored support to enable employees to effectively champion the Challenge in their teams.
3. We want to enable as many opportunities to share and be social as possible, including connecting people in their local areas, encouraging interaction (online and in person) and giving away ownership wherever possible.
4. The community that builds up around the challenge is special. We want to build on that community and harness its strength as a supportive, encouraging and inspiring unit for people to explore their creativity.



### DAY 1

## YEAR OF THE...

What is your word for 2019? Create word art, calligraphy, or even take a photo that captures that word.



# ***THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE JANUARY CHALLENGE 2019.***



***Join us next year by  
signing up here:  
[dothinkshare.com/sign-up](http://dothinkshare.com/sign-up)***



**If you want to find out more  
about the January Challenge  
or how 64 Million Artists can help you  
contact: *Jemima Frankel, [jemima@64millionartists.com](mailto:jemima@64millionartists.com)***



**64 Million  
*artists!***

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