Creating Digital Escape Room (Choose Your Own Adventures)

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What Are our Virtual Escape Room?

- Google Forms that are choose your own adventure based stories (can include puzzles)
- User friendly, patrons can play anytime and anywhere as long as they have internet access
- Easy to track, ongoing stats (we keep them going after we have created them)
- Full of fandoms and tropes.
Step One

Choose a Subject and do your research. We often Choose Fandoms but have also many unique ones.
How do we choose a theme?

- We ask the teens! We ask what fandoms they think might make a good escape room. We also have teens review the escape rooms for service hours to check for mistakes.
- TAG Survey: Our virtual TAG survey is how we get tons of information. They talk about the fandom they are interested in and genres they like. We get great data from our TAG surveys.
- Social Media: We follow the trends on Tiktok, Twitter and Instagram. We want to see what teens are doing. Social media trends can be a hit or a miss sometimes since the trends can die quickly.
Choose a Subject and Do Your Research. Part 1

1. Pick your topic based on teens and social media trends.
3. Fandom Wikis are your best friend. People have done the work for you. This was a must for our Jurassic Park escape room because the dinosaurs in the more recent movies are different from the original movies.
4. Respect the sandbox: You are playing in someone’s world. Your teens will be fans of the work so be respectful of it.
Choose a Subject and Do Your Research. Part 2

- **Historical escape room**: Primary sources are very useful if doing a historical escape room. You can find great gross facts to add to the escape rooms. Teens love gross stuff.
- **Photos**: If your escape room is based on a real place, look at old photos from the time that your escape room is taking place. When I did the Jack the Ripper escape room, I looked up book stores from that time/area.
- **Nature facts**: We have done a lot of escape rooms that involve nature. I look at information of the animals and plants that live in various regions to go along with the escape room.
Step Two

Write the story.
I am a pantser (I let the story come to me)
I use all of my research as I go while writing the story. I do what the characters tell me to do, this way, I know if something is wrong in the story right away.
I view these escape rooms as writing fan fiction
They are basically choose your own adventures with more death.*
If death does not make sense to the fandom, I will not include death (Animal Crossings, for example)
I run on vibes!
I write my escape rooms in a google doc and I break down each section as follows:

1. Story

   Choice A

   Choice B

Every part of the escape room is in sections to make it easier to navigate. Google Docs makes this easier to tell if I missed a choice. I can look on the side and see if the choice is listed on the side of the doc.
Write The Story (Faith’s Way)

- I am an outliner. I like to outline the story.
- I come up with a basic plot, then plot a path from there, writing in the story as I go.
- I decide the routes, choices to be made, paths to take, bad endings, good endings, and write a story that goes with it.
- I research terms, characters, and other information to see how it fits in.
- I name all my paths and decide how many choices there are then start writing what happens.
- If outlining, be flexible to changes or additions. Sometimes when I write, I realize that writing in a new choice could make it more fun.
- Note: Writing escape rooms is not for everyone. If you love fanfiction, you will do well writing escape rooms.
Step Three

Edit the story.
Edit the Story

1. Faith and I are not great at this part. We both like to capitalize everything. That is why we have people who did not write the escape rooms help edit them. Shoutout to Cindy’s Mom, a retired librarian who enjoys editing.

2. Wait to edit until you are done writing everything. It is hard to keep going if you are editing the whole document as you are writing.

3. Check spellings of names. (If you misspell a name the same way multiple times, use the find and replace feature on Google Doc. We use it a lot!)

4. Do a quick edit as you add it to the Google Form. Once you are in the Google Form it takes longer to edit the document.
Step Four
Create the Google Form.
Create the Google Form

- Name the Google Form like so: Fandom Virtual Escape Room
- Add a header image. We tend to use images from Google.
- Choose color.
- In the first section where it says form description introduce your library, who the escape room is for, the basic plot and their first choice. If the escape room is scary we tend to put warnings just in case.
Create the Google Form

- Type in first choice as a question.
- Change question to require.
- Click on three dots, select “go to section based on answer.” This will allow players to go to different sections based on their answer.
- As you add sections you will have to format each choice to the correct section.
Create the Google Form

- For each new choice add a new section. Title it after your choice to make easier to plot the paths.
- Click the plus icon to add a question.
- If you have the same path, but for different reasons ex: choice between Romance and Non-Romance, We use Parentheses to note difference
Create the Google Form

- You can make your escape rooms more traditional with players having to solve riddles and clues.
- For this option simply add the correct question format and make the answer a requirement. Players will be unable to move on unless answered correctly.
- You can add a choice to this option or once they answer correctly they will move on to the next section.
Create the Google Form

- After formatting the escape room, you want to do a few things to make sure people will be able to use the escape room.
- Go to the setting options and click responses.
- For our Gmail, it automatically restricts sharing ability to White Oak emails only. We have to turn this off every time. This might not be the case for you.
- Collect emails is also auto off and we keep it this way for privacy sake.
Create the Google Form

- You can also edit the response players see once they finish.
- This is in the setting tab under presentation.
- You can edit the confirmation message.
- We tend to include a link to our other escape rooms as well, just in case they found the escape room from a platform outside of White Oak Library. (this helps increase our stats!)

- FORM PRESENTATION
  - Show progress bar
  - Shuffle question order

- AFTER SUBMISSION
  - Confirmation message
    Thank you for using the White Oak Library District’s Mandalorian escape room! We hope you had fun! Check out more of our awesome escape rooms here: [link]
  - Show link to submit another response
  - View results summary
    Share results summary with respondents. [link]

- RESTRICTIONS:
  - Disable autosave for all respondents
Step Five

Having people test it.
Having People Test it!!!!!!

1. Test the Google form as many times as possible. You want to have your coworkers check the pathways. If the pathways do not work that is a huge problem for the escape room, because they are what keep your story going. We post them in our libraries Workplace All Staff group so everyone can test them. We love to have our circulation staff help us. This is a great way to collaborate with other departments and across the district.

2. Find people who will tell you that you made a mistake (this can be hard) People want to be polite but we would rather know that we got something wrong before the public sees it.
Step Six

Release.
Release Day

1. **Release Day:** Our marketing person (Kiya) makes us a graphic for each escape room and she uses Canva to do this.
2. **Posted on all library social media.**
3. **Added to library webpage.** *(We have an ever-growing number of escape rooms on our webpage!)*
4. **Check social media to see if anyone finds errors on the escape room.** *(We have had to make sure people out of the White Oak network could use them)*
Step Seven

Promote escape rooms.
Promote Escape Rooms

1. I love promoting the escape rooms but this is a choice on how you do it. I often use my personal social media to share them. Do not do this if you are not comfortable.

2. Facebook Groups: I use all the local mom and parent groups, I share on the local residents groups and to the towns nearby. I also look for groups that are related to the fandoms used. I also post to library programming groups and let people share any of our escape rooms with their teens.

3. Tumblr: I add them to my personal tumblr and tag them. Sometimes this works really well for older fandoms suchs as *Twilight*, *Shadow and Bone* and *Shrek*.

4. Reddit: I use local groups such as: Romeoville Il , Chicagoland Suburbs, Escape rooms, etc. I suggest looking for reddit groups that relate to the escape room and post there.
Promote Escape Rooms

- Schools: You can email them to your local schools (depending on the content) A lot of our local schools have used the escape rooms as a classroom activity.
- Programming in person: You can use the escape room not just as virtual program, but as an in person or zoom program. You can do them as a group and let teens choose their paths.
- QR codes: We use QR codes all the time now! (The pandemic has really brought the QR code back into popularity) We like to put signs with the QR codes in our displays that are related to our escape rooms.
- Service Hours: We let teens get service hours for checking pathways and looking for grammar mistakes.
Step Eight

Stats for escape rooms.
How keep track of Stats: Cindy’s Method

- Feel free to find a better method
- I take screenshots at midnight on the first of every month of all of the escape room statistics in the Google Form.
- When at work, I take the new month and subtract it from the current month of uses and I get the correct number for our stats.
- Again, you can come up with your own method, this is just mine!
Contact Us

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Our escape rooms http://whiteoaklibrary.org/teen-promotional-events-two