The Escape Room:

Supporting Student Success Through a Game-Based Immersive Experience

Justin Haynes
David Tully

NC STATE University Libraries

Who are we?

- ## NC State University
  - 35,000 students
  - 9,000 faculty & staff
  - 2.5 million annual visitors to the Libraries

- ## NCSU Libraries
  - Learning Spaces and Services
    - Student Success Division
    - Technology Workshops
    - Writing and Speaking Instruction
    - Library Technology Spaces
    - Shared Ask Us center supervision

Workshop Overview

- Virtual Reality, Digital Media & Makerspace (Fall '18)
  - 30 unique tech-focused workshops
  - 184 workshop instances made available
  - 872 individual students attended

- No workshop combined different categories of technologies together

Technology Lending Overview

- 156 unique tech items available

- Laptops, phone chargers, headphones, calculators by far the most borrowed items

- Popular items have greatest visibility at Ask Us

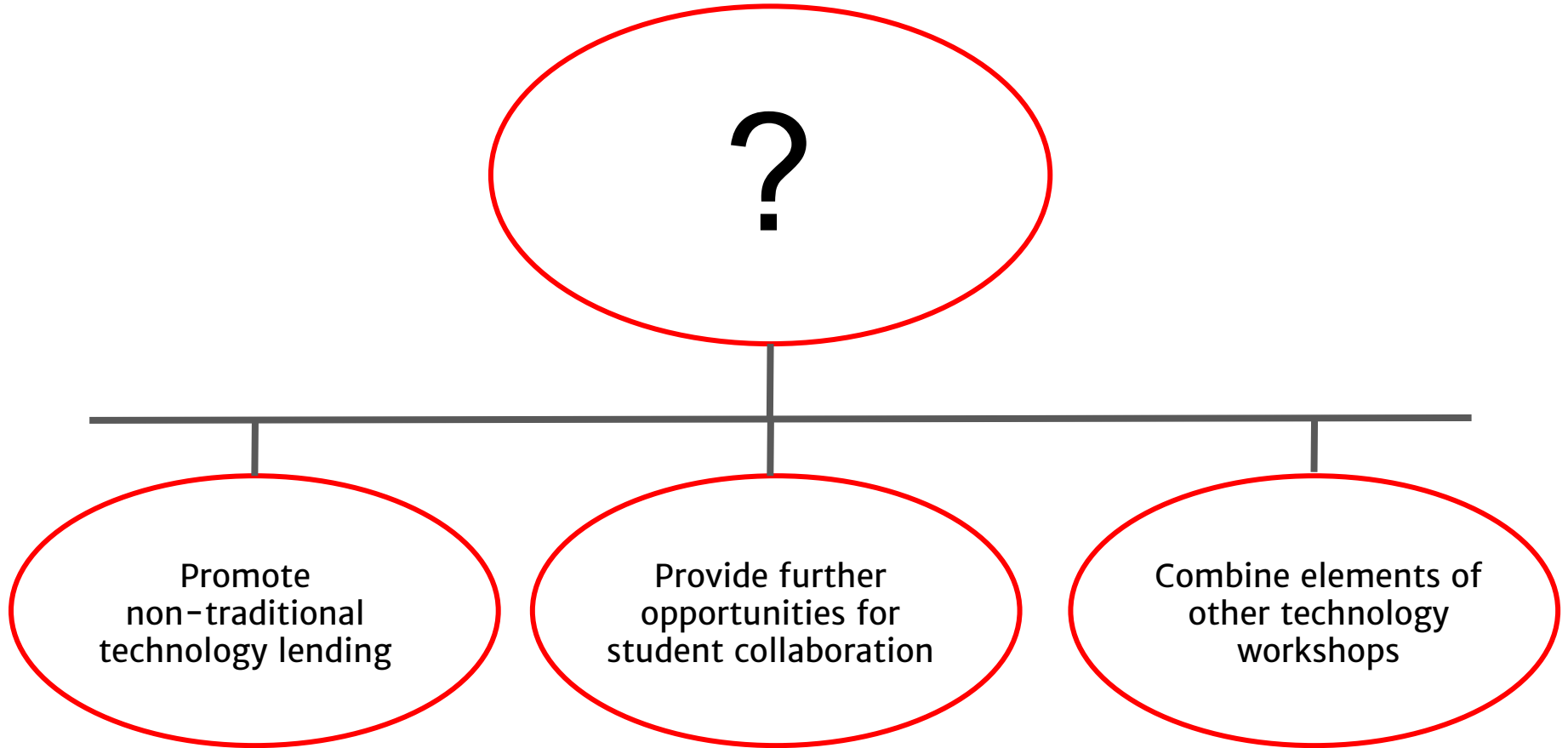- Shorter lending periods for day of use
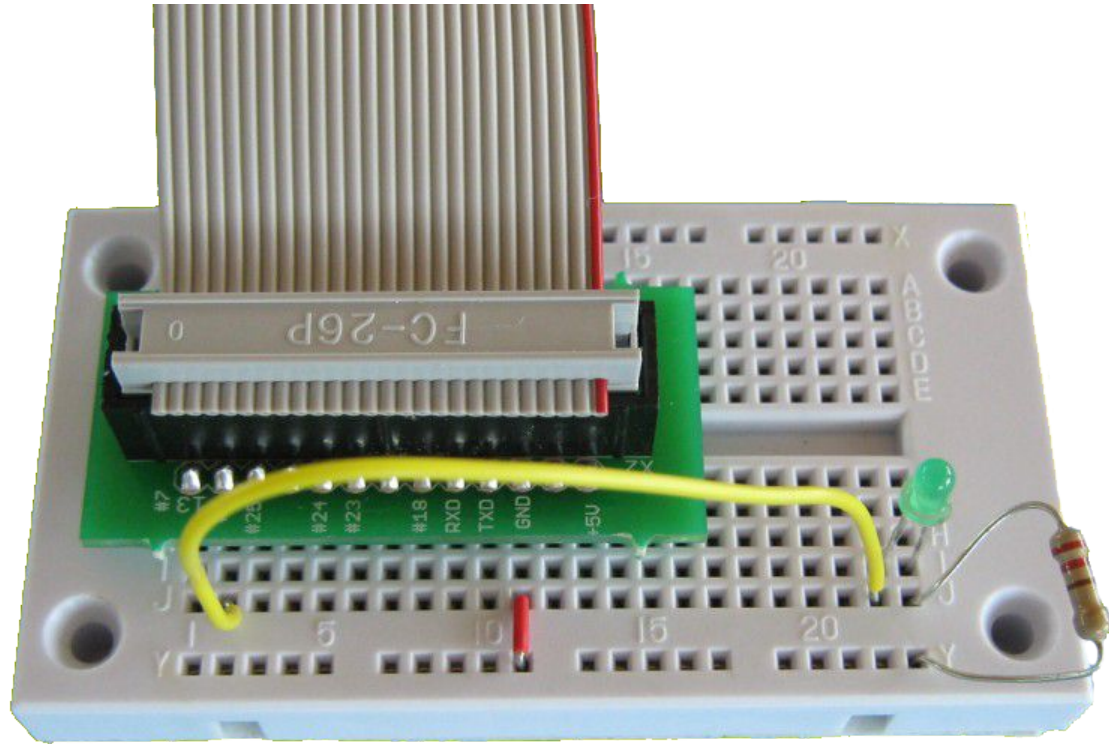
Non-traditional Tech Lending

- Little visibility outside of Libraries' website

- No opportunity for students to get hands-on unless checking out

- Previous attempts at "petting zoos" have been unsuccessful

- Longer lending periods allowing users time to explore
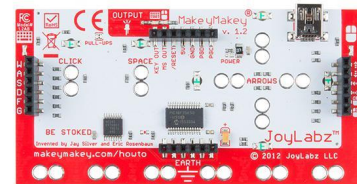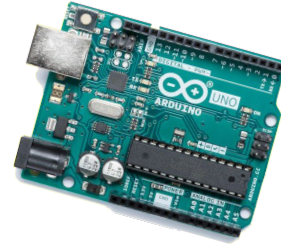
Our own puzzle

The Idea

Why create a Library Escape Room?

- New and exciting
  - Promotes the Library as a campus destination
  - First workshop to have a "game" element
- Allows users to get hands-on with emerging technologies
  - Promotes the technology lending program
- Provides a platform for students to meet and connect
  - Supports student success mission
- Encourages attendance at other workshops
  - Students register via the same route as other workshops

Funding & Organization

- Funded by internal "Good Idea" grant
  - Spend to date around $2,500
  - Hired a student worker to facilitate evening hours Escape Rooms

- Identify and organize stakeholders into a project team
  - 4 Staff
    - Makerspace, Digital Media, First Year Instruction
  - 3 Librarians
    - Virtual Reality, Digital Media, Student Engagement

Field Trip!

- How can you design an Escape Room if you've never been to one?

- Visited a commercial Escape Room
  - Understand the mechanics
  - Look at flow of clues
  - Stakeholder buy-in

Escape Room Puzzles

- Figure out the clues
  - What technology made sense?
    - FLIR Thermal camera
    - Arduino
    - Oculus Go
    - LittleBits mp3
    - Augmented Reality Snapcode
    - Amazon Alexa
    - Reverse Audio
    - MaKey MaKey
    - Sphero
  - What library literacy skills aligned with the room?
   - Call Number
    - Journal Search

Designing the Escape Room

- Linear, somewhat linear, or nonlinear?
  - Figure out your end goal and work backwards
- Find your theme
  - Every Escape Room needs a story
  - Student Relevancy

Designing the Escape Room

- Get organized!
  - Whiteboard
  - Sketchboard
    - Free
    - Limits to 5 accounts (free version only)
  - Lucid Chart
    - Free with Google Apps
    - Limitless accounts

Designing the Escape Room
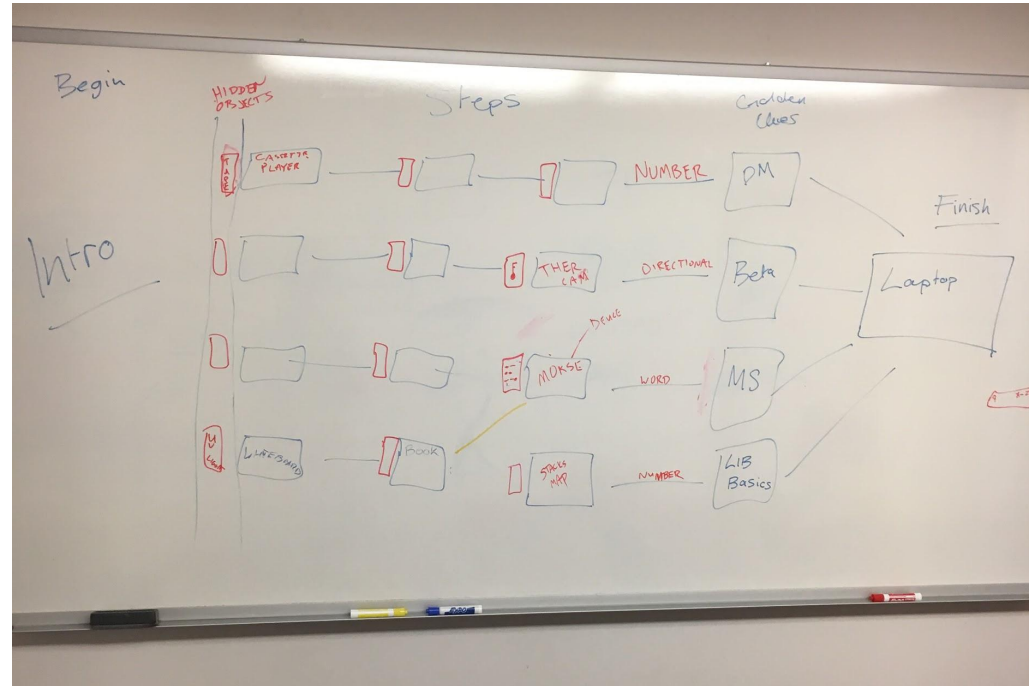
User Testing

- User testing was essential
  - Length of game
  - Difficulty level (we want them to win)
  - Students interaction with the technology
  - Students interaction with each other
  - Feedback
    - Frequency of scheduling
    - What type of clues did they like/not like

- Visited by a commercial Escape Room
  - Test-driven from a critical perspective

Implementation

- Permanent Space established
  - Quick set up/breakdown
  - Control the space
  - More authentic and immersive
- Available Monday & Thursday evening's during Fall & Spring semesters
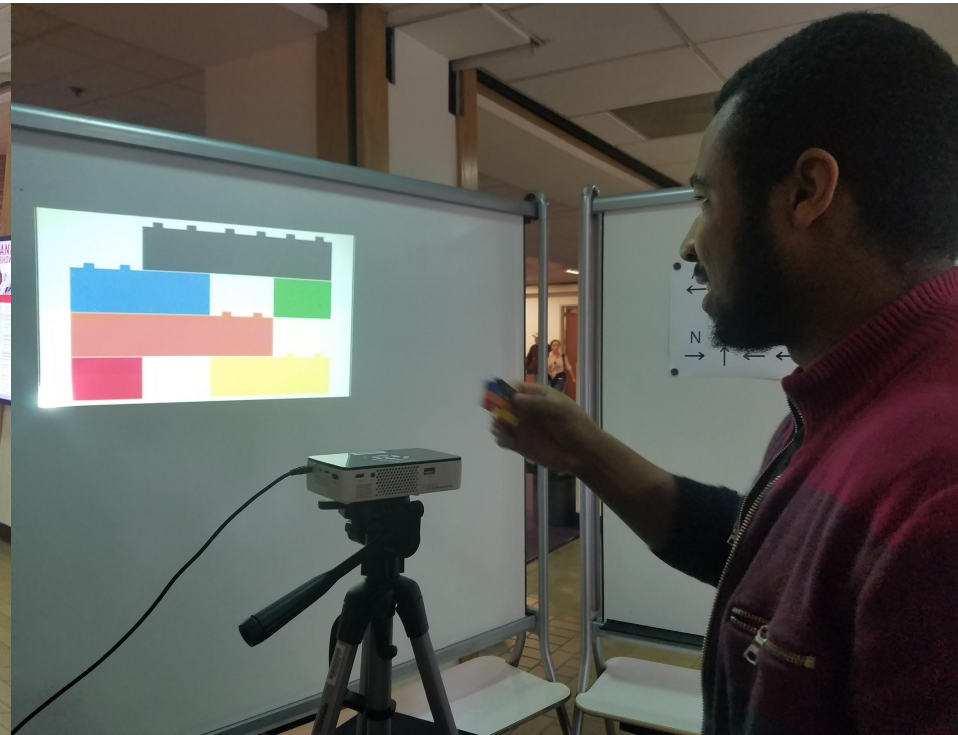- Students register as individuals or as part of a group (max 5)

E-Boards

Pop-Up Tasters

Social Media push

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THE LIBRARIES HAS AN ESCAPE ROOM? Oh yes! Get locked in with your friends and solve a series of puzzles involving some of our best tech in order to get out. Can you do it in under an hour?

The escape room is in D. H. Hill's East Wing, second floor, and runs Monday and Thursday evenings at 5:30 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. REGISTER NOW at www.lib.ncsu.edu/events/escape-room

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‹   Photo   ↻

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D. H. Hill Library

THE **ESCAPE 🔒 ROOM**

You're trapped in the library, and you have to use our technology resources—and your smarts!—to escape. Escape Room (D. H. Hill Library East Wing, second floor) Mondays & Thursdays @ 5:30 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.
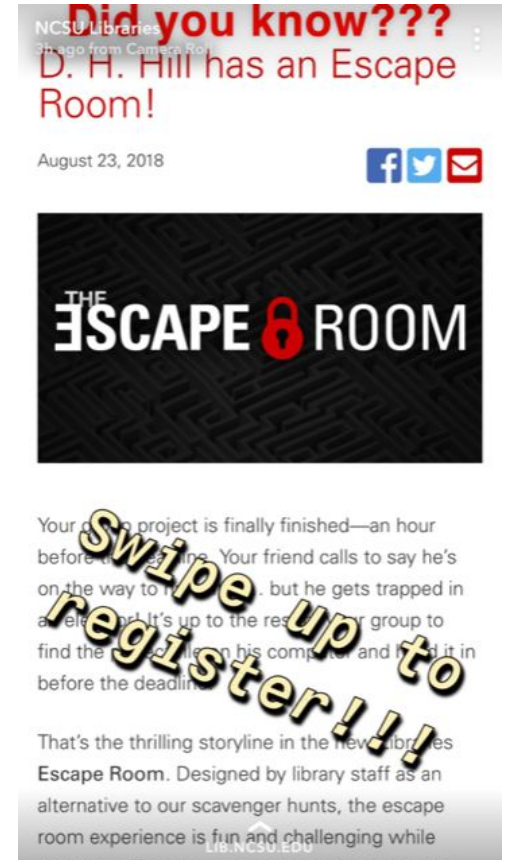
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ncsulibraries THE LIBRARIES HAS AN ESCAPE ROOM? Oh yes! Get locked in with your friends and solve a series of puzzles involving some of our best

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NCSU Libraries
3h ago from Camera Roll

Did you know???
D. H. Hill has an Escape Room!

August 23, 2018   f 🐦 ✉

THE **ESCAPE 🔒 ROOM**

Your photo project is finally finished—an hour before the deadline. Your friend calls to say he's on the way to help... but he gets trapped in an elevator! It's up to the rest of your group to find the photos on his computer and send it in before the deadline.

Swipe up to register!!!

That's the thrilling storyline in the new Libraries Escape Room. Designed by library staff as an alternative to our scavenger hunts, the escape room experience is fun and challenging while

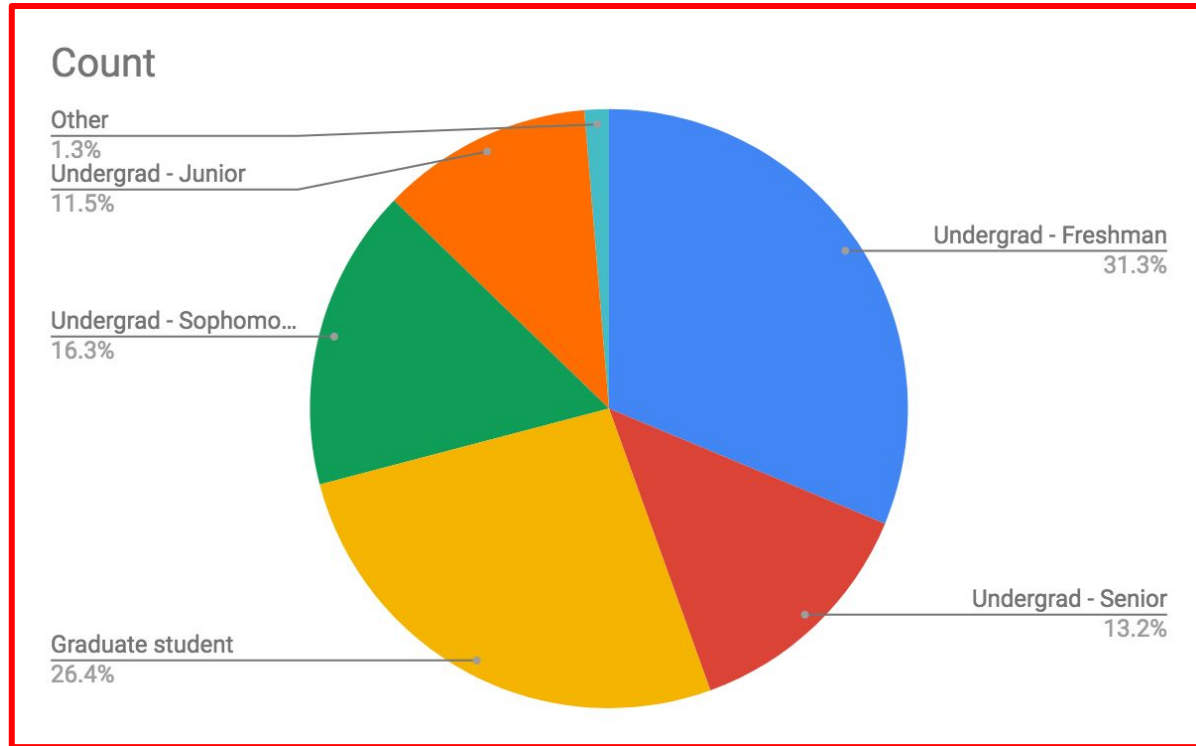LIB.NCSU.EDU

Reaction from campus

- 80 "regular" Escape Rooms (Fall '18 and Spring '19)
  - 4 per week

- 80% sign-up rate
  - 77% of registered users actually attend

- Special Escape Rooms
  - Campus student success programs

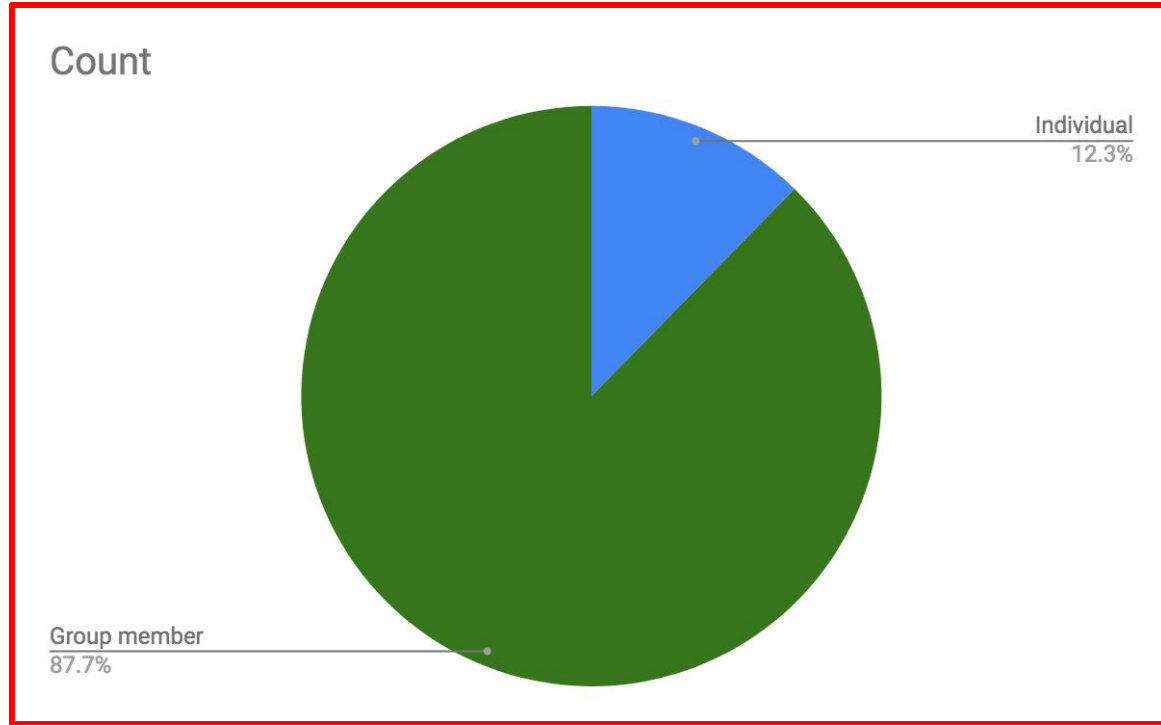- Other departments
  - Team-building

Assessment

- Students are asked to provide feedback post-Escape Room
  - Rate the experience out of 5
    - Average rating currently 4.75
  - Comments
    - 50% had strong praise
    - 10% specifically requested a second Escape Room experience
    - 5% had criticism
      - Technology not working
      - Repeat users impacted experience
      - Space too small
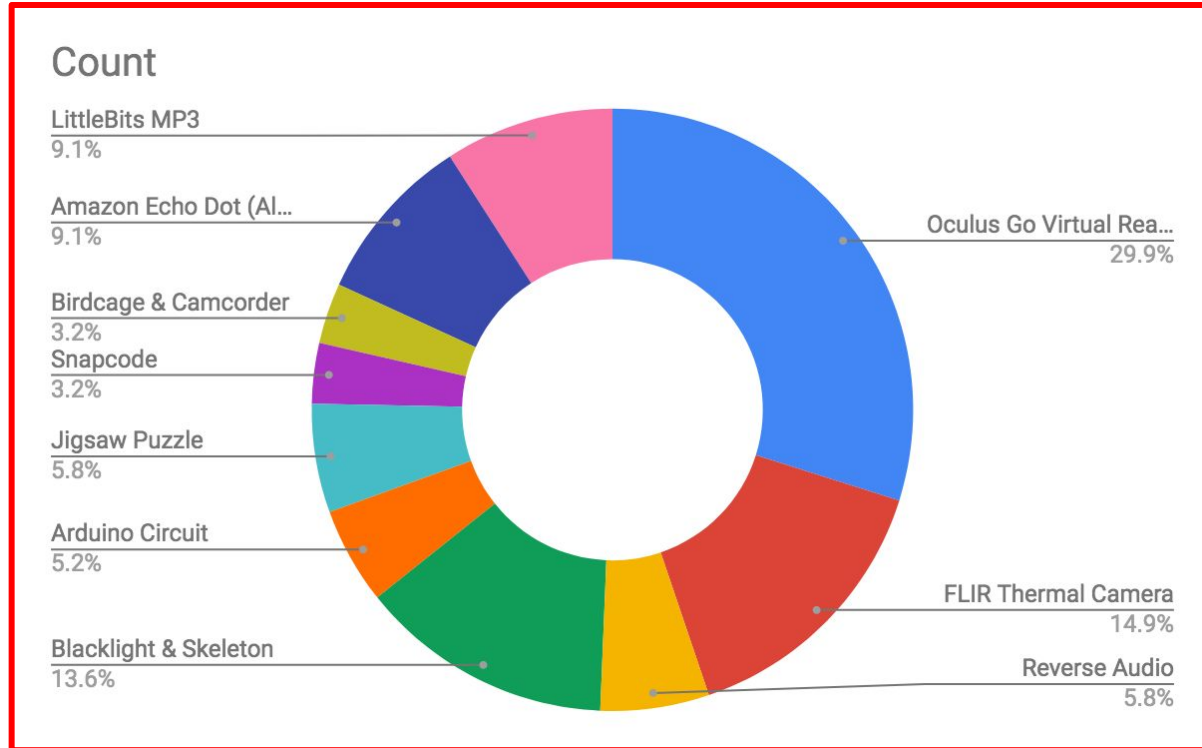
Who is using the Escape Room?

Count

- Other — 1.3%
- Undergrad - Junior — 11.5%
- Undergrad - Sophomo... — 16.3%
- Graduate student — 26.4%
- Undergrad - Freshman — 31.3%
- Undergrad - Senior — 13.2%

Who is using the Escape Room?

What Clues have been popular?

Count

Clue	Percentage
Oculus Go Virtual Rea...	29.9%
FLIR Thermal Camera	14.9%
Reverse Audio	5.8%
Blacklight & Skeleton	13.6%
Arduino Circuit	5.2%
Jigsaw Puzzle	5.8%
Snapcode	3.2%
Birdcage & Camcorder	3.2%
Amazon Echo Dot (Al...	9.1%
LittleBits MP3	9.1%

Challenges & Solutions

- Attendance (ensuring students show up to take part)
  - Shorter window of time to register
  - Personalized greeting
  - Early e-mail reminder

- Staffing
  - Cross training staff to cover absence

- Technology (or when things didn't work!)
  - Back-up supplies
  - Alternatives that can be subbed in

- Campus publicity
  - Don't assume that if you build it they will come

- Attention to detail is key
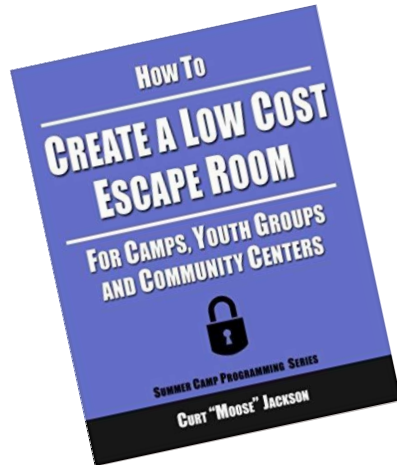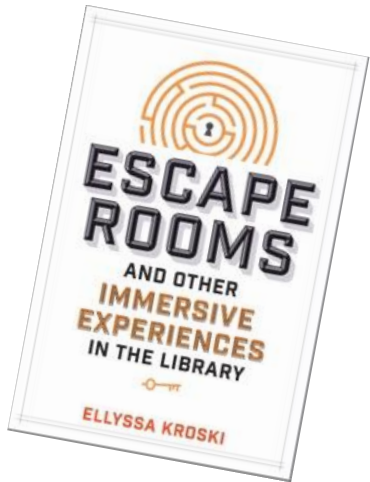 - One mistake can compromise entire game

Next steps

- Escape Room 2.0
    - Encourage return users
    - Incorporate new technologies

- Escape Room Days
    - Multiple Escape Rooms
    - Support larger student programs

- Mobile Escape Room
    - Classroom-based Escape Rooms

- Finals Week Escape Room
    - Stressbuster Activity

Suggested Resources

- Guidebooks
- YouTube
- Commercial Escape Rooms
- Libraries with Escape Rooms
- Breakout EDU

Questions?