



Escape game

Game Master guide

Pedagogical objectives

- Identify the challenges of hyperconnectivity (digital footprint and information overload)
- Develop media and information literacy (misinformation, image manipulation)
- Understand how to protect personal data (adjusting settings, boundaries)
- Identify digital ethics and privacy issues (online safety and security)
- Identify the drawbacks of digital engagement (netiquette, civil behaviours)
- Understand the rights and responsibilities of digital citizens (activism, ethics, user protection, accountability)
- Understand the consequences of misinformation, harassment and cyberbullying and how to prevent and tackle them



Co-funded by
the European Union

Frame

Set-up: The escape game can take place in a single room with a computer and a series of physical documents spread around the room.

Duration: 30 to 45 minutes according to your adaptation and your group

Participants: Groups of 3 to 6 players

Skills required:

Game master:

- **Role play:** A youth worker or educator who was asked to help a friend, a DigiU professor who's not confident with technology but enthusiastic about protecting their students from harm.
- **Scheme awareness:** Being aware of the video game scenario and the purpose and stakes of the Escape Game.
- **Improvisation:** The last part of the Escape Game is a restitution phase, when the participants must share the alternatives of their answer to the situation and debate on which decision to make. The imagination of the young participants is infinite and there is no way to guide you in an exhaustive way through that phase.

Participants:

- **Social media and online search:** Knowledge of how social media and online research platforms work.
- **Group management and collaboration:** Understanding how to work together and communicate clues to reach common goals.
- **Critical thinking and problem solving:** Analysing information to identify the right combinations and solutions.

Game Master role

The Game Master (GM) could play themselves as a youth worker and establish that they have a friend who's a **passionate and old-fashioned professor** at DigiCity University (DigiU) who wishes to help Quinn, one of their students, receive justice after her reputation was severely damaged by a defamation campaign. The professor has a history of investigative research but, unfortunately, is **not very good with technology**, especially social media behaviours, and wishes to help identify the culprit and how to report them.

To do so, they asked the GM to recruit a group of students (participants) to help them solve this mystery, expose a hacker and save an innocent student's reputation. Based on the documents, evidence and research that the professor has provided, players need to figure out who edited and posted the photos and captions by analysing a variety of digital data.

However, they will have a **time limit**, as the hacker, who now knows that people don't believe their posts anymore, may be able to erase their tracks, remove data from accessible servers and thus avoid being caught and continue to target other people if the participants aren't able to identify and expose them within 45 minutes.

The Game Master will prepare and uphold the **hint system**, detailed in this document, and be ready to guide and assist the players if they get stuck. They can ask for clues or receive them if the GM notices they are struggling for too long with a certain puzzle.

Additionally, the GM is expected to confirm whether participants understand the goal of each enigma and the logical progression between topics: hiding hints for a password in plain sight, identifying the role of an IP address, understanding the importance of securing account data to ensure it can't be used against you, and finally, managing and reporting harmful behaviours to relevant authorities.

Inclusivity check

To ensure this escape game is inclusive and accessible for participants with learning disorders or disabilities, consider the following key elements:

- ✓ **Physical accessibility:** Ensure the venue is wheelchair accessible and that all the necessary items are reachable (not too high or far to access).
- ✓ **Visual and auditory support:** Ensure that the materials use large print, high contrast, or digital formats compatible with screen readers. If videos are involved, provide subtitles or interpretation.
- ✓ **Simple and clear instructions:** Use clear, concise language and visuals. Avoid complex wording to support participants with learning disorders.
- ✓ **Flexible participation:** Offer varied roles that cater to different strengths, allowing participants to choose tasks that suit their abilities and foster responsibility without becoming overwhelming.
- ✓ **Sensory considerations:** Avoid sensory triggers like loud noises or flashing lights. Provide a quiet space for participants needing breaks to refocus.
- ✓ **Support and adjustments:** Be ready to offer extra assistance, specific hints and guidance or tailored support based on individual needs.
- ✓ **Feedback loop:** Collect feedback from participants to continuously improve adaptability, accessibility and inclusivity.

Hints and solutions

PHASE 1

This phase is an exchange between the Game Master, playing the old-fashioned professor, and the players who are meant to be students at DigiU. No hints are necessary as this phase doesn't involve enigmas and simply introduces the context and stakes of the escape game.

PHASE 2 – step 1

Hints

- The players don't find the paper with the coloured code:
 - "Quinn has probably left a reminder somewhere."
- The players don't start the computer:
 - "I guess Quinn has worked on that case with her computer."
- The players don't see the relation between the coloured code and the computer wallpaper:
 - "The wallpaper is very funny... I like how the colours have been matched together."
- You chose the complex version of the password:
 - "This password looks very simple... I don't see Quinn that careless."

Solution

- ✓ If you chose the simple solution: **2859**
- ✓ If you chose the advanced solution: **BB9-H3R-C3P-Z3R**

PHASE 2 – step 2

Hints

- The players don't find the screenshot of Quinn's conversation with her friend:
 - "We should investigate what other documents can be found around the room."
- The players don't see that the accounts are different:
 - "All those accounts look the same... But the devil is in the details!"

Solution

- ✓ **Tur6o_Per5eku7or ; 477.222.656 ; Paul Steward, 96 Bloody Street, 77-12 CitySky**

PHASE 3

Hints

- The players don't find the description of the security codes:
 - "I remember that, when you create a DigiCityNet account, the company sends a long letter with the description of the rules... Most people don't read it, but there could be something about the codes there, right?"
- The players don't understand which codes are the best ones:
 - "I don't get the difference between those security descriptions... Which option provides the most protection?"
- The players don't find a relevant password:
 - "There must be an instruction somewhere for that password... Is there anything in the document that could help?"

Solution

- ✓ **Actions against suspicious accounts:** CT5555
- ✓ **Actions against unapproved accounts:** CT8675

- ✓ **Location visibility:** CT5540
- ✓ **Authentication requirements:** CT6723
- ✓ **Password:** to be created by the participants according to the rules in the Excel (minimum 1 number, 1 uppercase, 1 lowercase, 12 characters).
Players may try to look for hints of an existing password; the GM must thus confirm that they need to come up with an authentic password that matches the indicated requirements and should be validated by the GM.

PHASE 4

Hints

- “So, what do you think we or Quinn must do?”
- **Common answer 1:** “Justice by yourselves: expose the culprit on social media.”
 - **Pros:** Ensures a quick and efficient spread of the truth, restoring Quinn's reputation and saving her internship, while rightfully putting the hacker's job and reputation in jeopardy.
 - **Cons:** Risks of backlash and legal issues with the corporation involved for potential defamation and sharing private information (such as the culprit's IP and postal address).
- **Common answer 2:** “Justice by society: report the culprit to the company and let the authorities prosecute them.”
 - **Pros:** Would involve an internal investigation, during which the hacker would be suspended with no way of targeting other people, and potentially lead to an arrest and criminal charges against the hacker.
 - **Cons:** May not result in immediate action and could cause the victim to continue facing backlash from people who believe the defamatory posts, including the company that could revoke her internship without adequate evidence.

Some players may try to pick both options. In that case, the DM must insist that both cannot be done: publicly exposing the culprit, especially by revealing evidence, could compromise any formal investigation by the

company or authorities, lead to legal issues related to doxxing or defamation, and prevent real evidence from being admissible in court, thus causing more trouble to the victim and not achieving any justice.

Note that key sections of “**Annex 8 - Tips & tricks about key concepts**” can help assist this task as well, specifically the policies and laws.

Based on the information provided, the “safest” option would thus be to report the culprit to the relevant authorities and refrain from posting any evidence or data online, in the hopes that justice is adequately served. This avoids normalising online vigilantism and opens discussion about digital rights, due process and legal responsibility.

Don't hesitate to write the participants' opinions and arguments on a board and guide their discussion with the pros/cons mentioned above.

PHASE 5

Suggestions

- The GM concludes with a debriefing session, going back to the different concepts and digital citizenship issues that have been tackled and learned throughout the escape game:
 - “Which skills did you use during this game? How did you analyse the information and identify the right elements?”
 - “Which strategic and ethical decisions did you make?”
 - “How important do you think digital privacy is? How would you prevent misinformation and privacy breaches?”
 - “Do you understand what an IP address is and how it can be used? Do you understand what a digital footprint is and its impact?”
 - “What could be the impact of your actions online, whether on social media or when sharing information on an app or website? How can the lessons and skills from this escape game be applied to your life?”
- The GM can then close the game with a reflective discussion:
 - “How do you think technology could be used more ethically?”
 - “What do you think of community engagement and social media interactions? What are the positive and negative aspects of it?”
 - “What do you think it means to be a responsible digital citizen? How important do you think it is for you to be one?”
 - “How do you think the digital world should change to be better and to avoid the negative aspects of hyperconnectivity? What do you think you and your friends could do to improve it?”

Our conclusion proposal

“There are neither easy nor painless answers to face harassment, even on social media, but there are ways to protect yourself and reduce the risks of someone being able to use your data against you.”

Troubleshooting checklist

To make sure that the escape game is adequately implemented, follow this checklist when preparing the activity. More details are provided in the “Puzzles and conception” document.

- ☐ Set the computer wallpaper as “Annex 1 – Lockscreen wallpaper”.
- ☐ Set the computer password to 2859 (easy) or BB9-H3R-C3P-Z3R (advanced).
- ☐ Print “Annex 2 – Computer password” and cut out the table.
- ☐ Write the code on adhesive paper with the correct colours: **5** (blue) **2** (red) **9** (purple) **8** (green) and place the paper under or near the computer.
- ☐ Print “Annex 3 – Defamatory post”, cut out the screenshot, crumple it and place it in a bin.
- ☐ Print “Annex 4 – Screenshot of a chat with a friend” and cut out the screenshot.
- ☐ Print “Annex 5 – Correspondence IP addresses” and cut out the table.
- ☐ Print “Annex 6 - DigiCityNet Letter page number 56”.
- ☐ Download “Annex 7 - DigiCityNet Security account”, rename it “DigiCityNet Security account” and place it on the computer desktop.
- ☐ Hide or place the annexes around the room accordingly and ensure they remain accessible to all participants.
- ☐ Test the enigmas and ensure that the relevant annexes and solutions are identifiable.
- ☐ Set up a timer to 45 minutes, starting right after the introduction, visible for all participants.
- ☐ Keep the solutions in mind and be prepared to provide hints, advice and guidance in case players get stuck.

Integration

Briefing (Phase 1)

A proper briefing is very important before entering an escape room. It is the moment where you explain the rules and how it works for those who don't know the game. It also allows you to set the context and universe of the game, introducing the beginning and explaining to the players their mission.

Debriefing (Phase 5)

A full debriefing will allow you to receive feedback on the activity and see what needs improvement. It will also allow you to see what players learned and remembered from this game session, to ensure that they learned the right lesson and developed the expected skills.

A good practice is to take notes from players' and your experience, so that you can go back to it later and adapt your next activities accordingly.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National agency Tempus Foundation. Neither the European Union nor the National agency Tempus Foundation can be held responsible for them.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Project code: 2023-2-RS01-KA220-YOU-000170562