Why Create Digital Breakouts?

Opportunities for Libraries

Libraries today are constantly transforming in alignment with advances in technology and adapting to new cultural inclinations to provide patrons with unique learning opportunities. Breakout games, just like live escape room adventures, offer plenty of prospects for libraries to inform, instruct, and enlighten library patrons while at the same time providing them with an engaging pastime.

These new breakout challenges can be used for library outreach to patrons of all ages as a fun way to learn about the library. They can also be used as a teaching tool to offer exciting information literacy instruction, classroom support, youth programming, and even staff training.

Information Literacy and Bibliographic Instruction

What better way to spice up a staid information literacy curriculum than with a tantalizing online game? Librarians can engineer puzzles that challenge library patrons to locate items in the catalog, explore online databases, practice identifying fake news, find peer-reviewed articles, learn how to cite sources, and so much more.

Because they reside entirely online and are most often devoted to a single player, these types of games are even better positioned for teaching valuable lessons in information literacy and use of the library than live escape games.

Curriculum Support

Digital breakouts are an excellent tool for providing curriculum support and faculty partnerships. They can be designed explicitly for a single class or to support the subject-area curriculum within a university or school setting. Digital breakouts can serve as a vehicle for librarians to forge relationships with faculty and departments as they partner to create these effective games. As you will see in the following chapters, digital breakouts can quite easily be tailored for any subject area, and puzzles can be created using a variety of tools and applications for all levels of difficulty and subject depth.

Staff Training

In addition to providing fun and engaging learning opportunities for library patrons, digital breakout games are a fantastic means of conducting or supporting staff training. Rather than offering handouts at the end of a training presentation, why not challenge staff members to play a game? Or perhaps skip the presentation altogether in favor of designing a gamified learning instrument with a digital breakout. Retention levels of information are sure to be higher when presented with the incentive of fun and gameplay along with an interactive experience.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Breakout games—just like their real-world equivalents, escape room games—offer a plethora of critical-thinking and problem-solving opportunities within their puzzles and game structure. Players must reason their way to victory in these single-player games,

making logical leaps, inferences, and deductions in order to complete the tasks at hand. Players try and fail, adjust their strategy, and try again. From these games they learn that failure is inevitable but it is a learning opportunity that also inevitably leads to success for those who endure.

Library Outreach

Portable by nature, these online games make an excellent outreach tool. They can be distributed to large numbers of people via the web for a free source of library marketing and outreach. Digital breakouts are an excellent mechanism to use to inform people about the library and its resources without spending any money out of the budget. Let players know about all of the great services and programs the library has going on through engaging puzzles. Perhaps choose a theme such as an upcoming holiday that may reach prospective patrons who may not know about the library and its programming.

STEM Learning Opportunities

In addition to teaching about the library and its services, the games are great instruments for providing learning opportunities in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). These inquiry-based learning games reside completely online and are perfectly positioned for teaching subjects such as computer coding and presenting challenges such as math puzzles while exciting players about winning the game.