Escape Pod Optimal Group Composition

Danielle Curet, Erin Conner, Sean Dafter, and Jameson Dozier
Mentor: Dr. Allen Wilhite, Dept. Chair of Accounting, Finance, and Economics

Overview

• Live escape room new to Huntsville
• Trying to assess optimal group composition for escaping the room
• Advantageous initial conditions?

• Data collected:
  • Age
  • Gender
  • Puzzle duration
  • Connectedness as a group
  • Timing & directness of hints
  • Puzzle contributors

Explanation

• There is a large body of research on live escape room game design, but very little player strategy
• Initial conditions, strategy choices, and the technician’s hints can increase a group’s probability of escaping the room

Impact

• Escape rooms help with:
  • Teamwork skills
  • Critical thinking
  • Group bonding
  • Productivity/efficiency
• Promote local business, showcase our research to university and community at large

Key Findings

• Observed 17 of our goal of 30 groups
• Completion rate so far: 22%
• Minor adjustments made to room based on puzzle difficulty/ambiguity
• Data analysis in progress
• Current record: escape with 8 mins, 30 secs to spare!

Acknowledgements

Jason Steinhauser, Escape Pod Co-Owner; Jennifer Steinhauser, Escape Pod Designer & Co-Owner; U.G. Wilson, Escape Pod Engineer; John Anglin, Katherine Johnson, and Charity Pounders, Managers and Room Technicians; Zac Dickson and Lexie Gilmore, Technicians; Emily Bearden, Interior Designer; Dr. Allen Wilhite, Project Mentor; Dr. Robert Scherer, Interim Dean of the College of Business Administration; David Mayo, Beta-tester; Niall W. Rogers, Beta-tester and helpful brainstormer