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# Escaping traditional outreach: digital escape rooms to engage potential students.

MARTIN, K., WRIGHT, R. and ZARB, M.

2022

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# ENHANCING FOR IMPACT

RGU'S ANNUAL LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

## 'Escaping Traditional Outreach' Digital Escape Rooms to Engage Potential Students

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*Rebecca Wright – School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences*

# Key Learning Points

- This session will discuss the impact of a collaborative approach between two Schools in the creation and implementation of a digital escape room for their Access To programme
1. We describe the development of a digital escape room to consolidate learning conducted during Access To outreach activities.
  2. We discuss the impact of the digital escape room based on feedback from staff facilitators.
  3. We reflect on the outcomes of this outreach exercise as a collaboration opportunity between different schools within the university

# Access To Programme

- Part of the Widening Access Programme
- Subject focussed 6-week programme for S5/6 pupils
- Mix of in-person/hybrid

## Access 2021

Access To 6 week online programme for S5/6 pupils delivered through MS Teams (Classroom)

- *Business Management*
- *Journalism & Media*
- *Computing*
- *Engineering*
- *Health Professions*
- *Law/Law & Management*
- *Life Sciences*
- *Nursing, Midwifery & Paramedic Practice*
- *Tourism, Hospitality and Events*

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# Methodology

- Online asynchronous collaboration on MS Teams over an 8-week development period.
- Leveraged PALs domain-knowledge and SoCs experience building interactive systems.
- A digital escape room was created using iterating prototypes to allow contextual input from the Course Development Team.

# Escape Room Demo

The image shows a web browser window displaying an escape room demo. The browser's address bar shows the URL `hub.io/escape-room/`. The page content includes a logo for "ESCAPE from RGU" and a large heading "Come to Escape from RGU!". Below the heading, there is text describing the escape room: "This room designed to recap on some of the things you have learned over the course of the day while having fun." and "The way to solve individual rooms is not always obvious. Try to use them and use all the resources on the page to help you find a few tips and tricks before you start on your adventure:". A recording overlay is visible in the foreground, showing a video player with a red stop button and a "Record | Stop" button. The recording settings are as follows:

- Video Source:** Full Screen
- Video Encoder:** FFmpeg (selected), Gif, SharpAvi, Stream, Discard
- Video Encoder Settings:** Mp4 (x264 | AAC)
- FPS:** 10 (with a "Limit" checkbox checked)
- Quality:** 70%
- Audio:** Webcam (selected), No Webcam (selected), Record Webcam to separate file (unchecked)
- ScreenShot:** Imgur (selected)

The recording overlay also shows the output folder path: `C:\Users\Kyle\Documents\Captura\Lectures` and the copyright notice: © Mathew Sachin.

# Feedback

- *“The pupils were highly engaged with the activities and Rebecca’s vision and collaborative work with colleagues from the school of computing ensured that learning was had in a fun and imaginative way. This approach of combining clinical expertise with technological expertise, is definitely the way forward for engaging future RGU students with STEM subjects.”*
- *“As members of staff working together to create the best experience for the students, we could all see that the use of an escape room was an intuitive way to combine active learning by encouraging a dialog and it would draw together the students’ previous learning.”*
- *“The pupils loved it.”*

# Reflecting on the Outcome

- We felt:
  - Impact of escape room demonstrated benefits of multidisciplinary collaboration across schools
  - Created a fun & educational way to conclude PALS Access To Programme.
  - Demonstrated what can be achieved when delivering online practical skills.
- Most importantly, the students and staff involved enjoyed it and felt it contributed to a positive access experience

# Conclusion

- Highlighted the positive outcome of schools coming together to solve a challenge
  - Maintaining engagement in a hybrid access programme
- Demonstrated a potentially scalable method for concluding outreach programmes
  - Escape room framework being pursued within SoC
- Evaluated and reflected on the outcome to show staff and students enjoyed it