

Hack the Internet

The escape room “Hack the Internet” was developed by the Technology and Media in Education Laboratory (SUPSI), in Switzerland. It was developed in order for the participants to:

- learn some key elements of the internet physical architecture, in particular protocols, data centers, internet cables, IP addresses.
- develop the idea that the Internet is a physical infrastructure.

Particularities

The escape room is addressed for a middle school class that is already working on an introduction to informatics and the net. The participants of this escape room have to stop one of the biggest terrorist attacks of the century: a hacker group by the name of hack4humans announced they are going to shut the internet down. To stop them, players would have to find the hints left by hack4humans and find where they are hiding. During the first phase of the game, the game master splits the players in four groups and starts the storytelling by the means of the hacker letter. Then, participants have to solve the crosswords found on their table. The keyword they find has to be inserted online for phase 3 to start. This phase involves solving a puzzle online. The key found is then inserted in the appropriate input field on the webpage. If the key is correct, hints to find the hackers will appear. During the last phase, groups share the hint they found and together they work on the map to find where the hackers are hiding. The name of the location should be entered in an online form to “send the police”.

What distinguishes the particular escape room, is that in the last phase all groups have to work together and all the ‘puzzle pieces’ have to be recollected. In this way, the students share each single group’s aspect of the Internet physical infrastructure in order to understand “what is the internet”.

Why is it relevant to teach languages

The escape room, related to digitalization and the internet infrastructure, constitutes an excellent opportunity for students to familiarize with vocabulary on the above topics. In this way, it could effectively promote cross-curricular teaching framework in school contexts. Moreover, apart from the playtime (30-40 minutes), the game also involves a debriefing session (about 45 minutes). Therefore, the debriefing phase can further improve students’ foreign language competences, due to their exposure mainly to listening material (short videos) and their extended engagement in speaking practice.

Resource

School break 2021 Available at: <http://www.school-break.eu/escape-rooms> (accessed 7 March 2021)

