

# HOW TO CREATE AN OUTDOOR ESCAPE ROOM

## Improve player's immersion by focusing on presence, narrative, and puzzles.

The main goal of this project was to answer the question: "How can immersion be achieved in an outdoor experience, using synergy between narrative, puzzles and location?". To answer this question a definition of immersion is formed:

"A state where the player feels as if they were located in a different reality or world with an overarching specific theme. The narrative, interactions and location each connect with each other and form a synergetic relationship."

With this definition formed, a case study was designed to see what factors would influence player's immersion the most in and outdoor escape experience, and what kind of interaction are the cause of decreasing immersion?



The case study was held at the NDSM Wharf in Amsterdam, where players would be introduced to the narrative. They would hear that objects are glitched to the NDSM, which they need to find, and defuse. The game starts with them picking up their gear and finding the first location. After having solved the puzzle at the location, they'll move on to the next, making a total of 5 stops in the timespan of one hour.

Various game elements and challenges come to play, such as perspective puzzles, working together as a team, finding missing clues and using their surroundings.

There are not just puzzles at those five locations. Each time they need to go to the next, a route finding puzzle needs to be solved, in order to find the next location to go to. They will use maps, satellite views and charts.

If they are successful with solving the challenges, they will save Amsterdam from doom, and chaos.

To conclude, there are strong relations between puzzle and location as the puzzles should be included into the story, and hold a reference to it. Also, as an outdoor experience involves walking from location to location, a pathfinding puzzle works best as the

walking was therefore not experienced as a chore. The study proved that the puzzle with a weak connection to the narrative was not considered the least immersive one. The fact that players needed to work together to solve it was enough to keep them invested in

the game. Thus the alibi of a puzzle is less important than the interaction itself. If players enjoy the puzzle, they unconsciously are forgiving and stay immersed. These insights, along with others are concluding this thesis on immersive experiences.



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