

2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

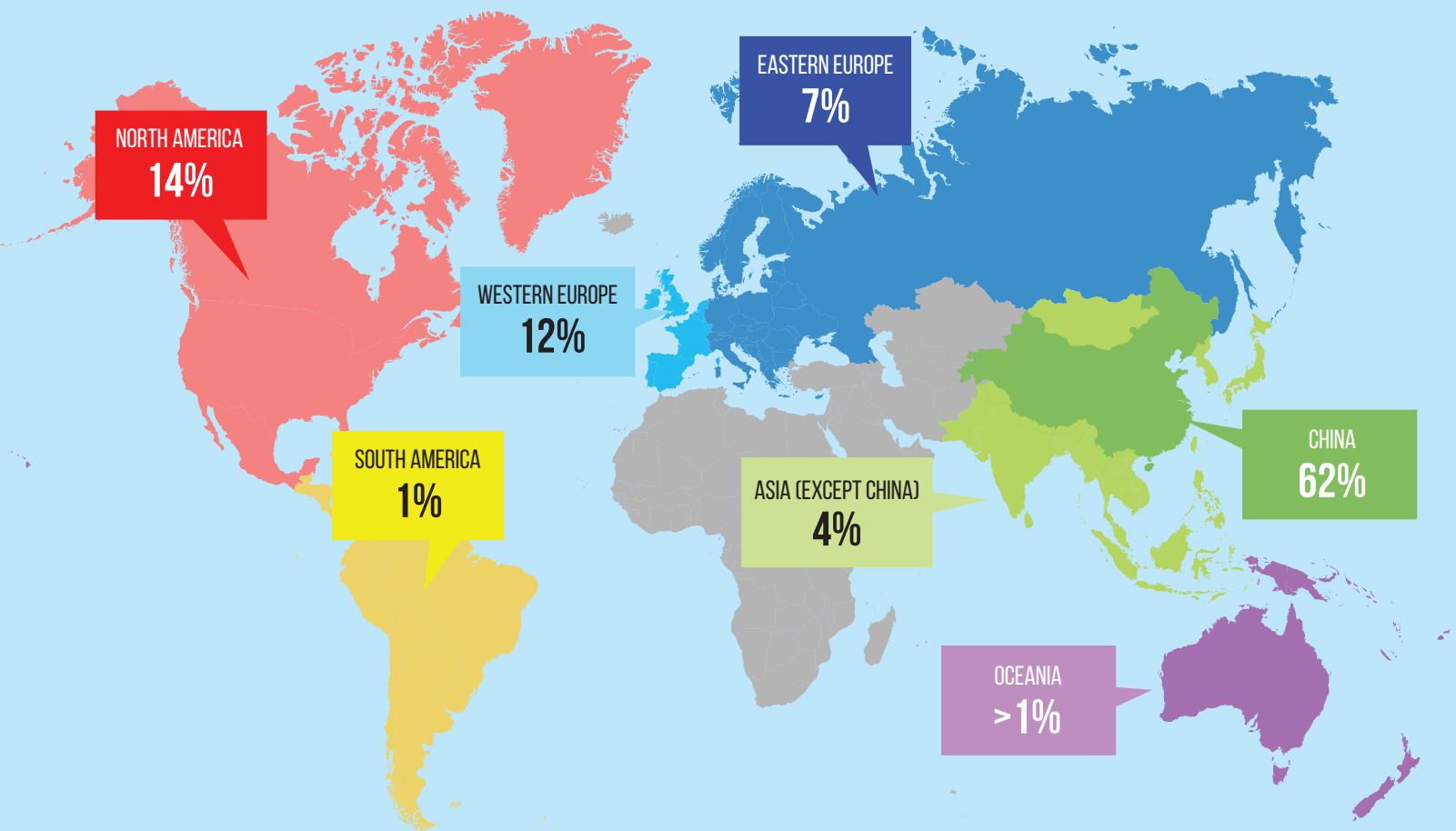
RELEASED DEC. 2019 - V1.2

3123
PARTICIPANTS

We surveyed escape room enthusiasts in August 2019 in 14 languages and 39 countries. We partnered with Mr. Daza, founder of the China Escape Games Alliance (China EGA), which tripled participation.

To see an interactive dashboard of this survey, visit EscapeRumors.com.

LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS



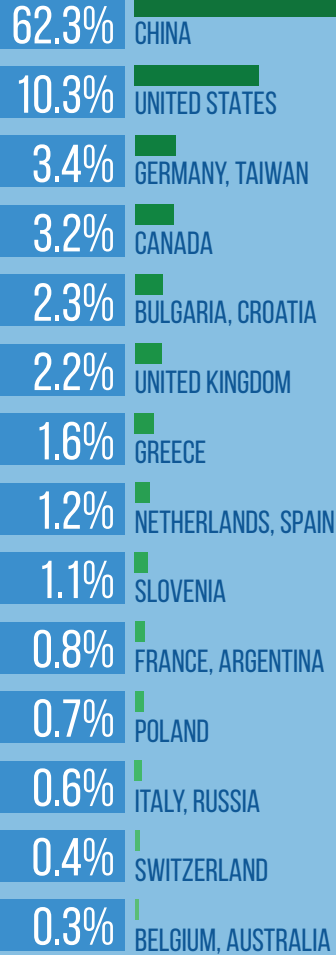
This survey was translated into thirteen other languages thanks to our wonderful volunteers: Janet Chan, Yolanda Chiu, Kristen Clarberg, Nadezhda Danabasheva, Bogdan Dascalescu of Puzzle Punks, Gilles Duchesne, Victor Es, escaperoom-guide.ch, Paolo Fraire of Bruum Escape, Venelin Gornishki, Itarillè, Lise Mortier, Tom Mortishire-Smith, Panagiotis E. Tsafos of www.foundintheattic.net, Ema Perišić of Enigmarij Croatia, Pim of escapetalk.nl, Nataša Potočnik of Enigmarij Slovenia, Dimitar Smilyanov, Hristo Tomov, and Pauline Zatonskikh. Thanks to the ER Slack members who commented on survey drafts and spread the word around.

The results of this survey was compiled by Lee-Faw Low, an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. This survey report was composed by Errol Elumir. Not all results are displayed in this summary. You can find detailed results and this document itself at <http://thecodex.ca>.

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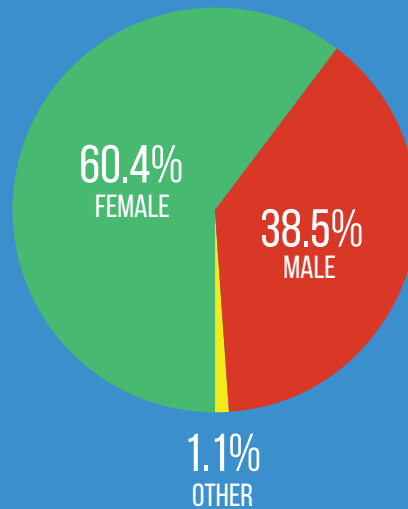
PARTICIPATION BY COUNTRY

AUSTRIA, BRAZIL, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ENGLAND, FINLAND, HUNGARY, INDIA, IRELAND, ISRAEL, MALAYSIA, MEXICO, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SERBIA, SINGAPORE, SLOVAKIA, UKRAINE WERE 0.1% OR LOWER.

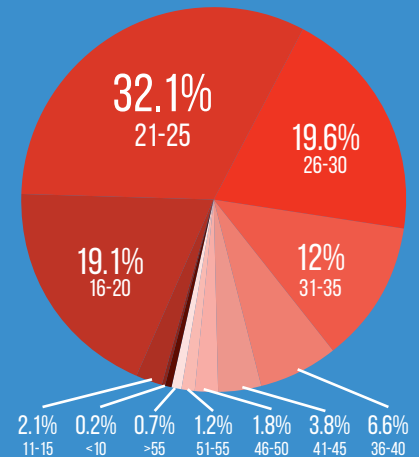


ENTHUSIASTS REPORTED HAVING AN AVERAGE OF 15 YEARS OF EDUCATION (RANGE 1 TO 29 YEARS, STANDARD DEVIATION = 2.5)

GENDER



AGE



ENTHUSIAST



ROOM OWNER



GAME MASTER



ROOM DESIGNER



PUBLIC MEDIA*



PROP, TECH, SET MAKER



OTHER

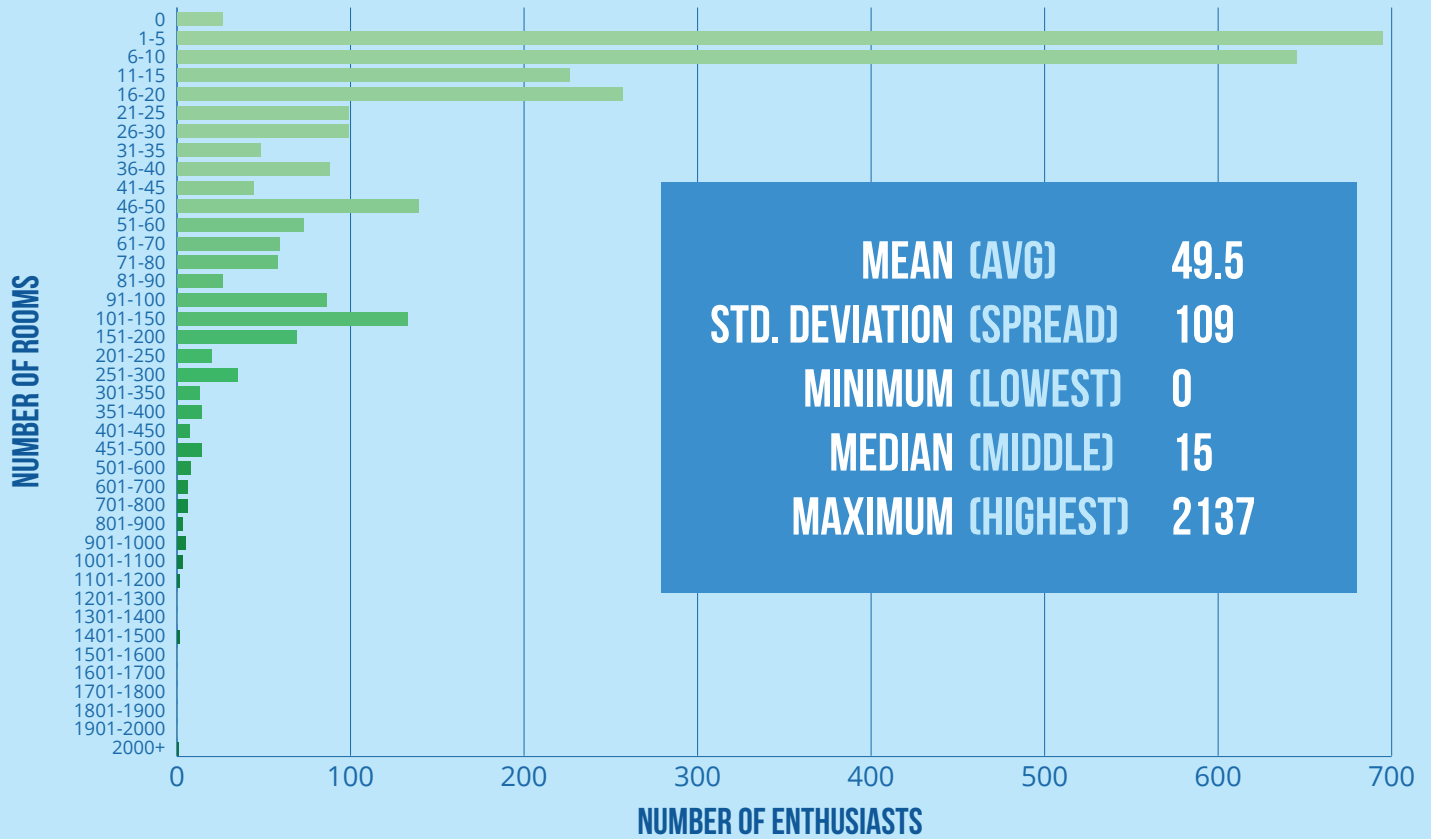


PRIMARY ROLE IN THE ER INDUSTRY

* PUBLIC MEDIA INCLUDES BLOGGERS, REVIEWERS, AND PODCASTERS

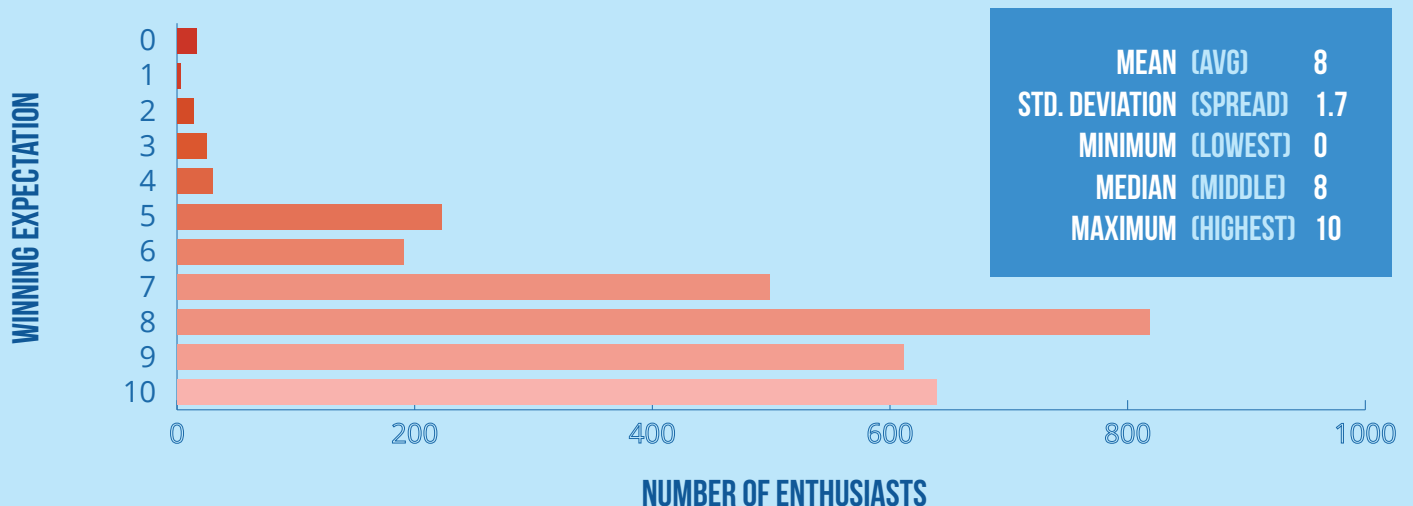
2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

HOW MANY INDIVIDUAL ESCAPE ROOMS HAVE YOU DONE?



EXPECTATION OF WINNING AN ESCAPE ROOM

0 (NO CHANCE OF WINNING) - 10 (100% CHANCE OF WINNING)



2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

MOST ESCAPE ROOMS PLAYED BY AN INDIVIDUAL



In a 24 hour period, the rooms played ranged between 1 and 22 rooms, with the average being 3. The Guinness Book World Record for highest number of rooms in 24 hours is 22.

Enthusiasts reported having an average of 47 local rooms (using their own definition of local; range 0 to 1500 rooms).

Enthusiasts have travelled between 0 and 17,391 kms (an Australian male) solely for the purpose of playing escape rooms, with an average of 535 kms, and a median of 50 kms.

17,391 KMS TRAVELLED SOLELY FOR ESCAPE ROOMS



AVG # OF ROOMS PLAYED
49

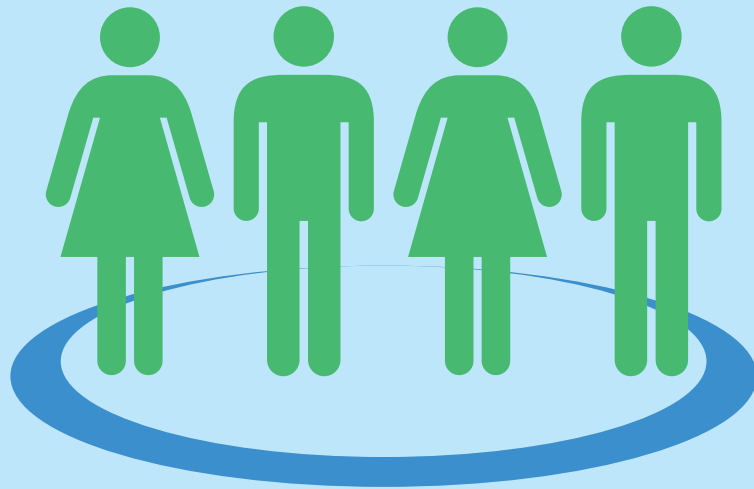
AVG # OF LOCAL ROOMS
47

22 DONE IN
ESCAPE ROOMS
24
HOURS

AVG KMS TRAVELLED
535

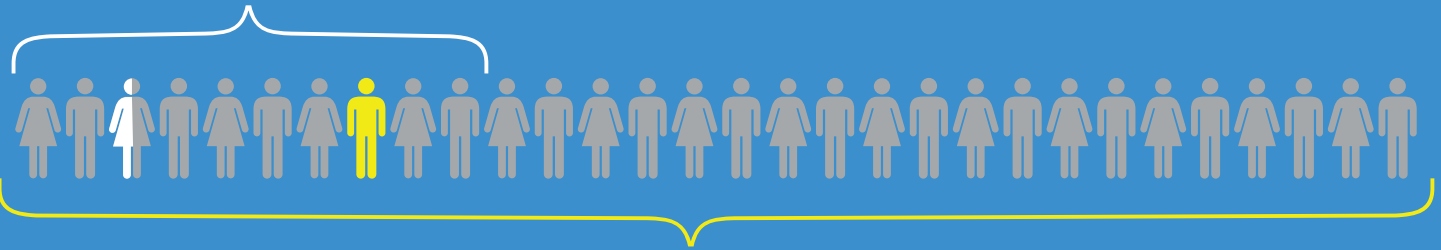
AVG # PLAYED IN 24 HOURS
3

2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY



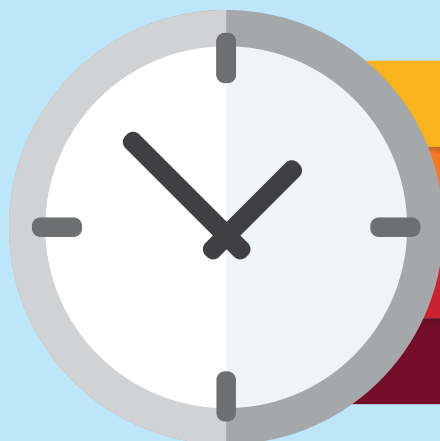
4 IDEAL
TEAM
SIZE
(RANGE 1-12)

The smallest team that enthusiasts had played with ranged from 1 to 10 people (average of 2.5 people) with enthusiasts who had only played with teams of 10 having played a relatively small number of rooms.



The largest team they had played with ranged from 1 (for a few enthusiasts who had only played 3 games) to 30 (for several enthusiasts from China, Taiwan and the Netherlands), with an average of 8 people.

PREFERRED ROOM LENGTH



20 | MINUTES
MIN PREFERRED ROOM LENGTH

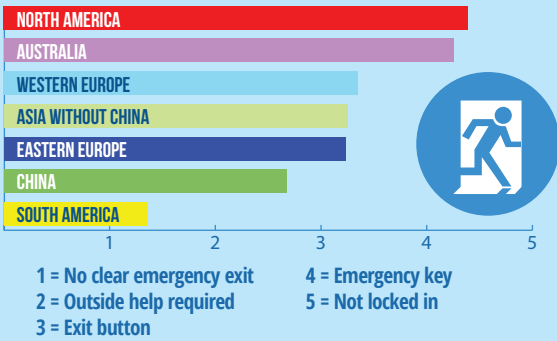
88 | MINUTES
AVG PREFERRED ROOM LENGTH

4 | HOURS
MAX PREFERRED ROOM LENGTH

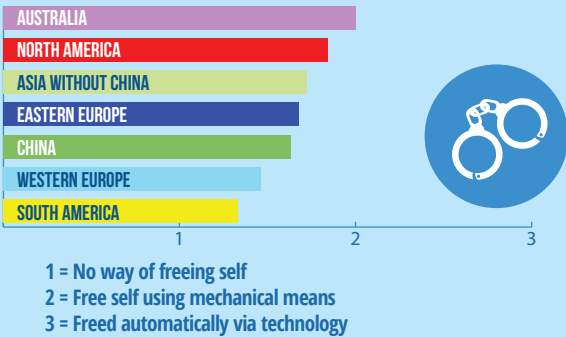
PLAYERS WITH MORE ROOM EXPERIENCE WERE
STATISTICALLY MORE LIKELY TO PREFER LONGER ROOMS.

SAFETY

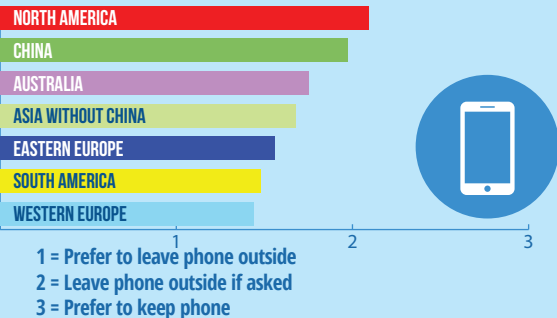
EXITING DUE TO EMERGENCY



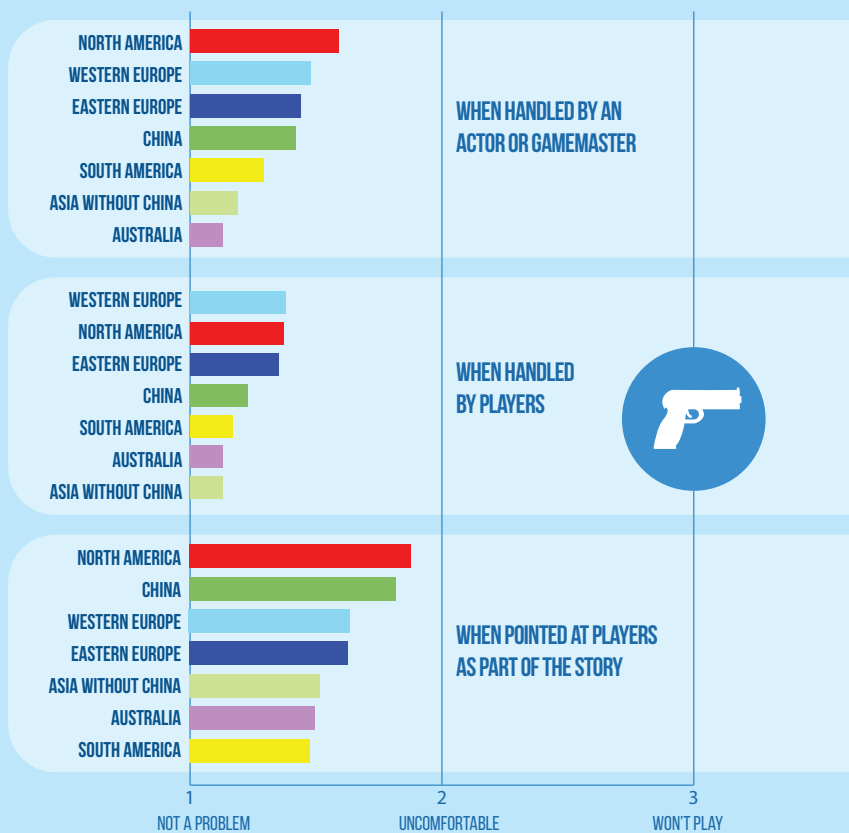
PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS



PHONES IN AN ESCAPE ROOM



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT FAKE GUNS?



There were significant differences between regions on how enthusiasts rated the safety of local rooms in terms of ability to leave in an emergency. North American enthusiasts gave the highest safety ratings with the majority saying they are not usually locked in the room. In contrast, the majority of enthusiasts from South America said that there was no obvious emergency exit and the majority of enthusiasts from China said that players would need outside help to exit.

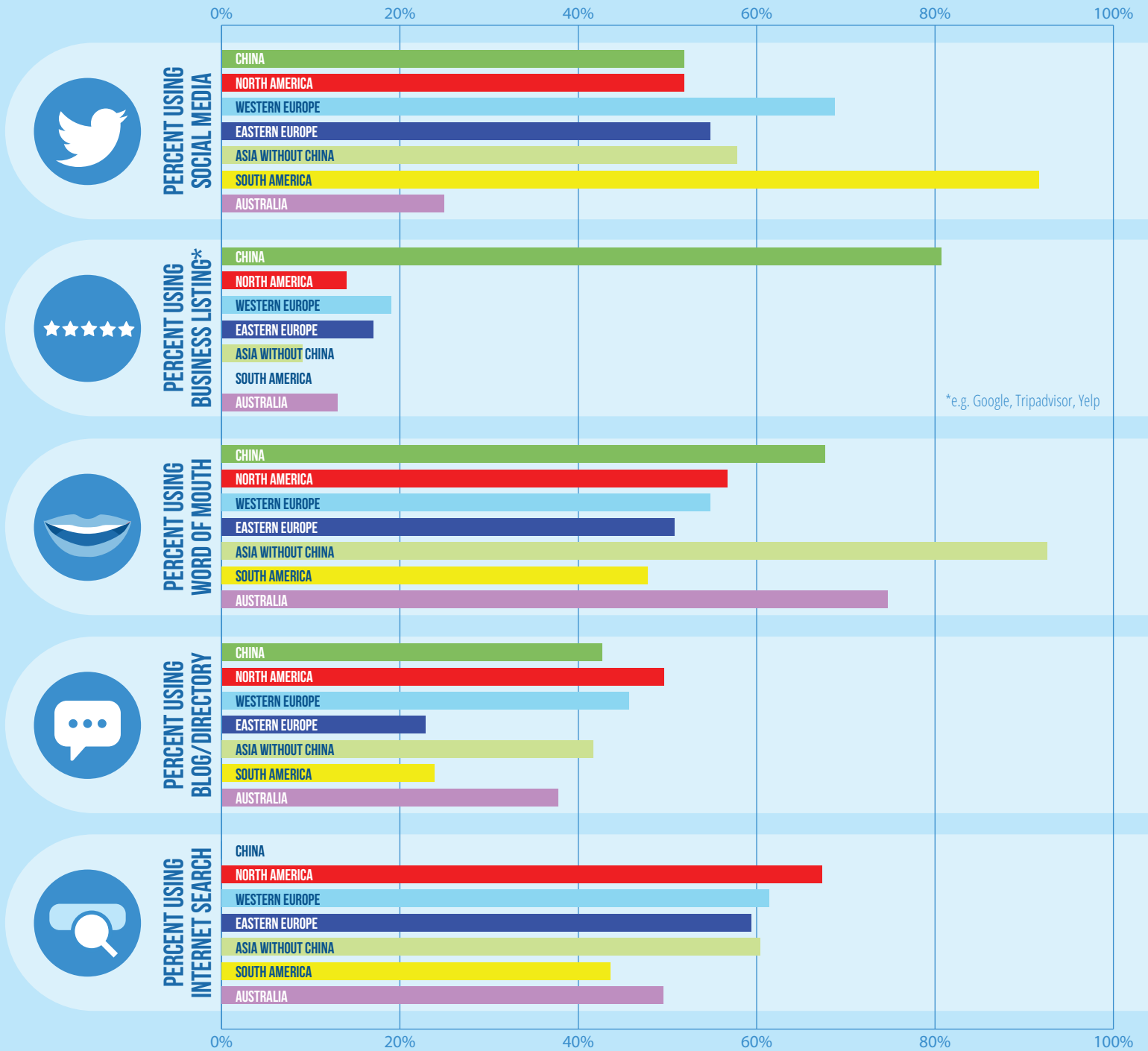
There were significant differences between regions on how enthusiasts rated local safety practices when physical restraints such as handcuffs were used. Most of North American and Australian enthusiasts said players could free themselves using mechanical methods, however most enthusiasts from South America and Western Europe said players had no way of freeing themselves from physical restraints during an emergency.

There were small but significant differences between different regions on how comfortable enthusiasts were when there were guns in games. Across the three conditions, North American enthusiasts were the most uncomfortable with playing games with guns, and Australian players were most willing to play games with guns.

Safety needs to be improved in rooms: 8% said the common practice in their region was players had no way of escape, and 39% said players would need outside help to escape.

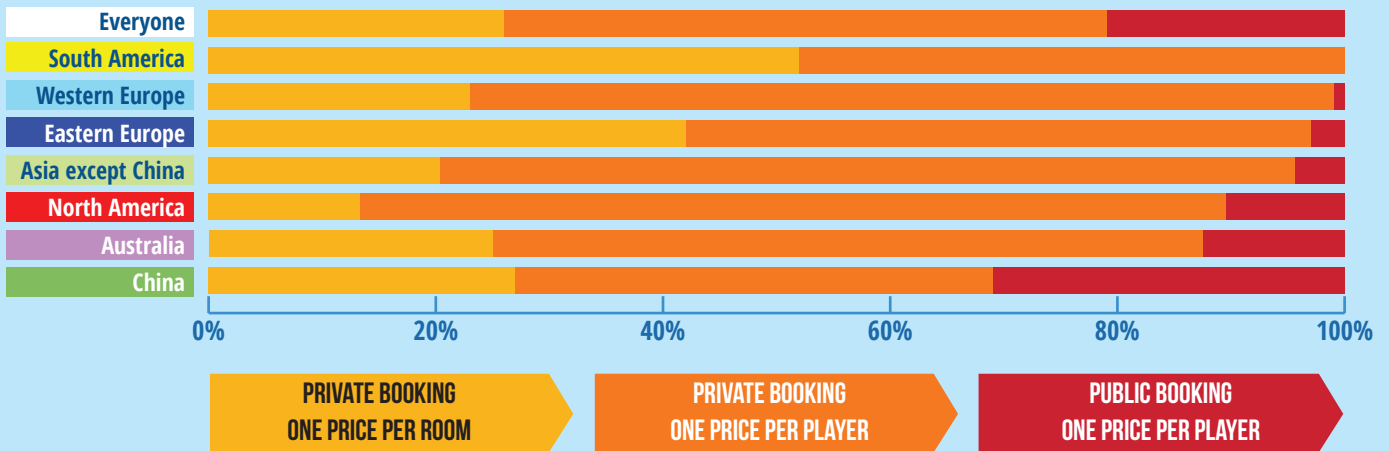
2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

HOW ENTHUSIASTS FIND NEW ROOMS



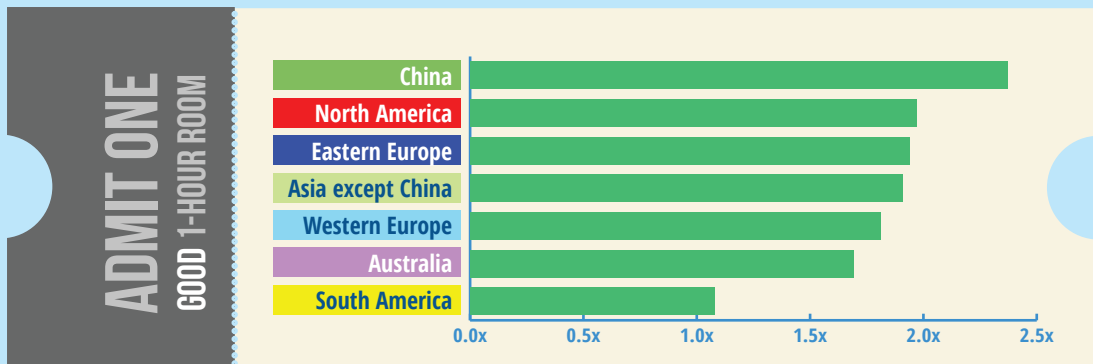
There were significant differences between regions on how enthusiasts used a particular method (e.g. internet search, social media) to find out about new rooms. The survey for China did not include 'searching the internet' as an option.

PREFERRED TICKETING SYSTEM

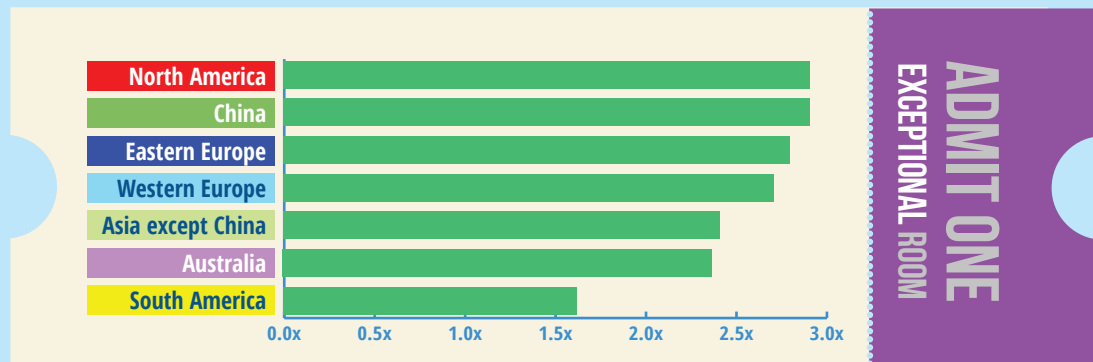


European and American enthusiasts had a strong preference for private bookings, particularly the price-per-player booking model. While preferring private bookings, Chinese enthusiasts had a stronger preference for public bookings.

WILLINGNESS TO PAY COMPARED TO A MOVIE TICKET



When asked what price they would expect to pay for a good 1-hour room in their local area relative to the price of a movie ticket, on average enthusiasts said they would pay over twice the price of a movie ticket.

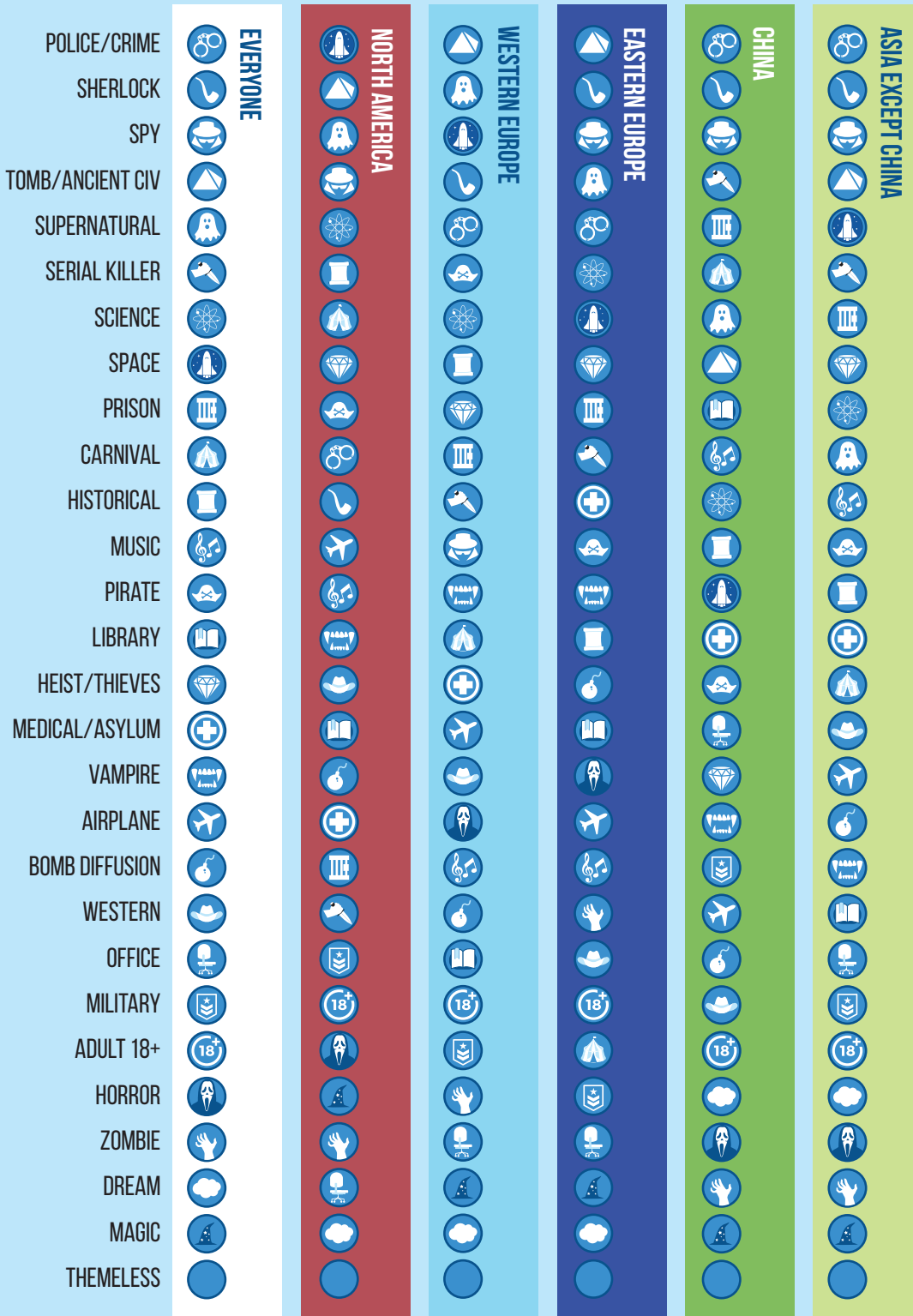


When asked what price they would be willing to pay for an exceptional room relative to the price of a movie ticket, on average enthusiasts said they would be pay almost triple the price of a movie ticket.

2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

THEME PREFERENCES BY REGION

STACK RANKING WHERE TOP IS PREFERRED



HORROR?

HOW DO ENTHUSIASTS FEEL ABOUT HORROR THEMED ROOMS?

43.7%

I'M OK WITH THEM AND PLAY THEM SOMETIMES.

24.2%

I LOVE THEM AND SEEK THEM OUT.

21.1%

IM SCARED OF THEM AND AVOID THEM.

11%

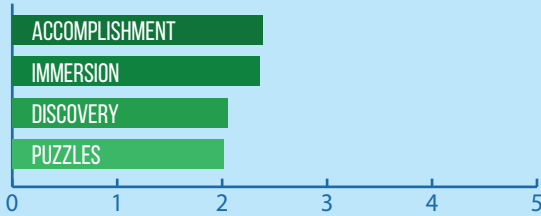
OTHER

There were significant differences between regions on how much they preferred each theme. Australia and South America are not listed due to small numbers.

2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

MOTIVATION TO PLAY

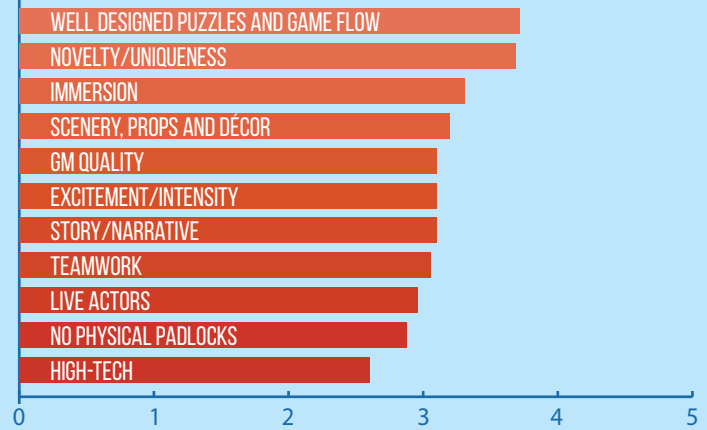
1= NOT IMPORTANT TO 5 = VERY IMPORTANT



In all regions, enthusiasts rated the feeling of accomplishment as being the strongest motivation to playing escape rooms, followed by immersion, discovery, with puzzles being the weakest motivator for play. There were significant differences between regions on the strength of motivation, but not on the order.

ELEMENT IMPORTANCE

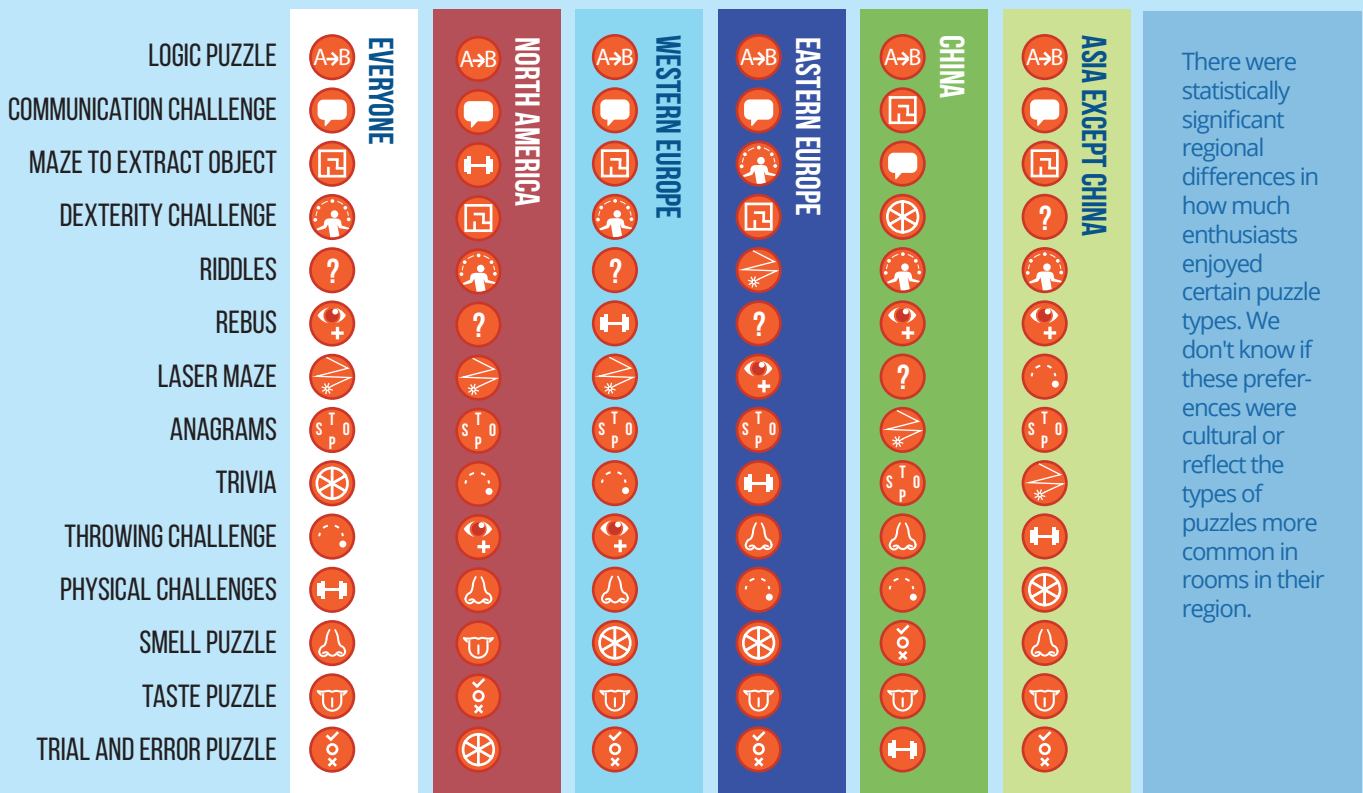
1= NOT IMPORTANT TO 5 = VERY IMPORTANT



Enthusiasts from all regions rated well-designed puzzles and game flow as most important for an ideal game experience, and high-tech games as least important.

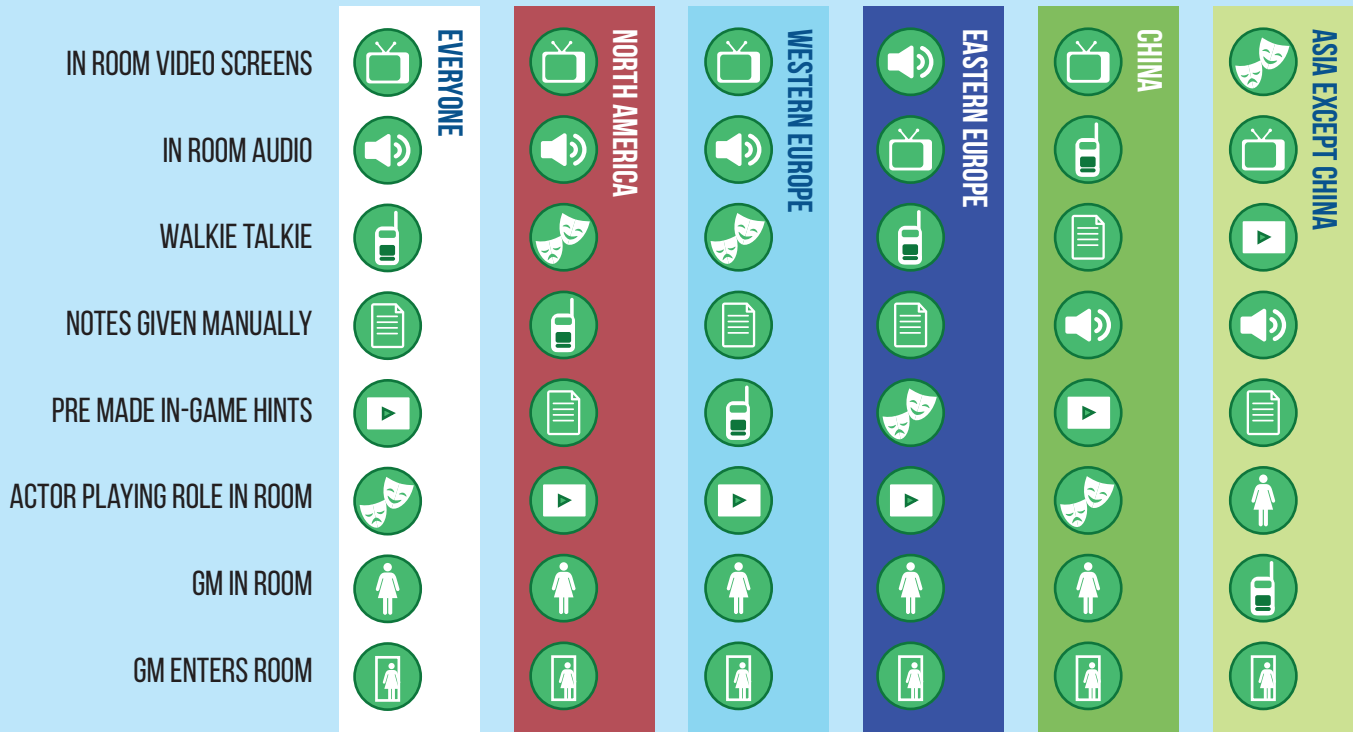
PUZZLE TYPE RANKING

STACK RANKING WHERE TOP IS PREFERRED



HINT SYSTEM PREFERENCES

STACK RANKING WHERE TOP IS PREFERRED



MONITORING AND SUPPORT EXPECTED



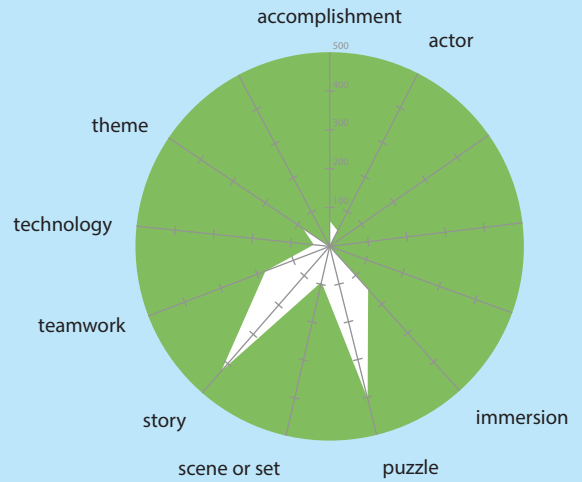
2019 ESCAPE ROOM ENTHUSIAST SURVEY

WHAT MAKES A GREAT ESCAPE ROOM EXPERIENCE?

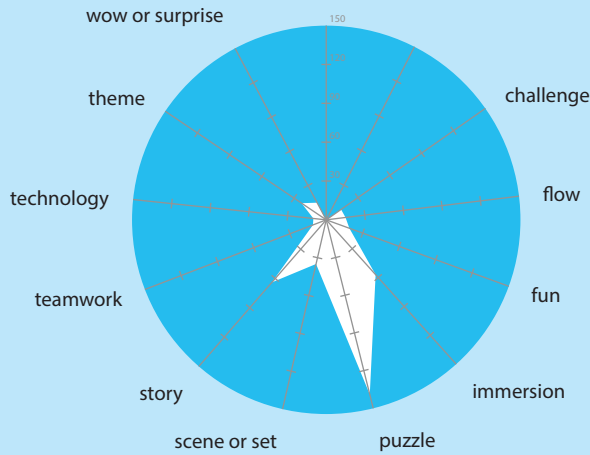
The open question "What makes a good escape room" was coded by reading through the responses (translated using google translate when needed), followed by a word frequency search combining words with similar meaning (e.g. story or stories or plot or narrative).

In China and Asia, escape rooms are known as a "Chamber of Secrets". In parts of Europe they are sometimes known as "Exit Games".

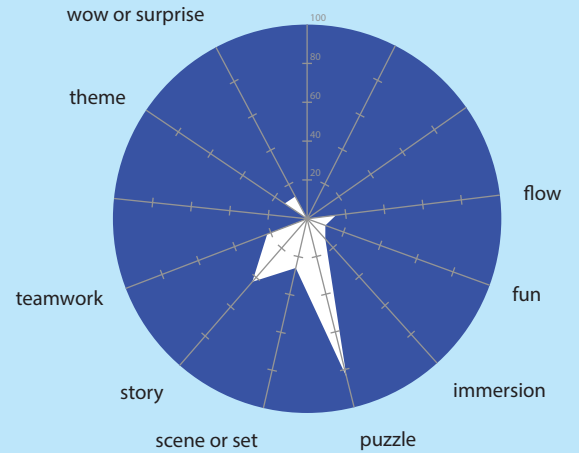
CHINA - 1131 RESPONSES



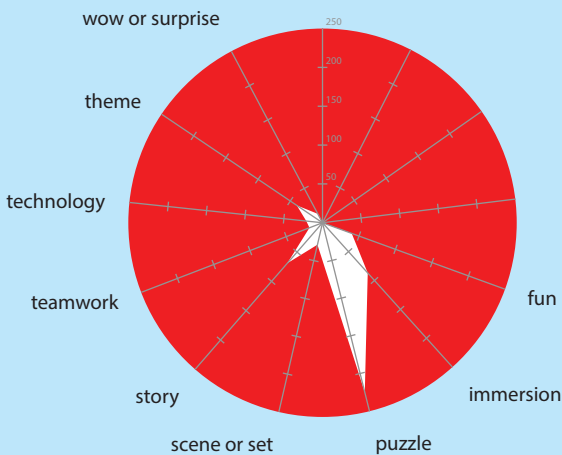
WESTERN EUROPE - 281



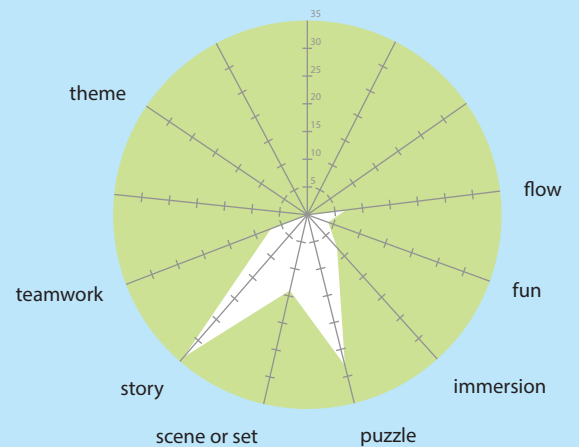
EASTERN EUROPE - 183 RESPONSES



NORTH AMERICA - 337 RESPONSES



ASIA EXCEPT CHINA - 82 RESPONSES



A FEW COMMENTS AND FUNNY STORIES

I think the industry does not think about people with restrictions or disabilities enough. For example, I have food allergies, and was not told I was supposed to eat something in the room. Therefore, we failed as I did not touch the stuff. I can also imagine it is difficult for people with visual impairment (color blind, blind, ...) or other disabilities. It would be nice to see rooms keep this in mind for the information on their website or specially designed rooms.

One question you left out is "How do you feel about live animals in your escape room?" I had to reach into a box of live cockroaches to obtain an item needed to escape...

Errol, please stop dinging that bell please.

That is an unreasonable request! - Errol

I feel like the genre has still got so much room to grow and I'm so excited for the future of rooms that evoke a truly emotional reaction, with humor, suspense, sentiment, awe, etc. I'm thrilled to have found this community where I can share and contribute to my new favorite passion.

There is a direct correlation between the standard of the toilets (restrooms) and the quality of that company's escape rooms, as it reflects the level of customer focus. So I always go when I get there to gauge how good the room will be!

I wish escape rooms were cheaper.

Just wanted to tell how much I hate math in rooms. That's it.

The worst people who come into escape rooms are "enthusiasts" who don't care about the room and just only care about winning and being clever.

I proposed to my wife-to-be in an escape room...luckily we made it out and she said yes.

...I was so keen on not missing an escape room that the owners bought me a disposable biohazard suit, two sets of gloves and a mask and I stood in the middle of the room with my hands folded, breathing shallowly and trying to solve puzzles from a distance, because the room had real-life shellfish (in a tank), the contaminated water of which will have touched just about every surface of the room (for reasons) and I'm acutely anaphylactic (any contact and I stop breathing in ~3 mins). It was perhaps then I realised this was more than just a gentle hobby.

As a GM: last week, we had a group play our horror room. Their first task is to retrieve an out of reach trolley on a chain. Most people use the standard things provided in the room. Not this group. No, in true Saw style, one guy takes his leg off. His actual (prosthetic) leg. And throws it to his friend, who used his leg to hook the trolley. We were absolutely crying in the control room. Ridiculous!

I played a horror-themed escape room in Taiwan this spring. There was a freaky jump scare about 10 minutes in - the type where you need to focus hard on a task and then BOOM a scary face jumps out at you. We all shrieked.

Afterwards we were chatting with the creator about it and he showed us the playback from the video of us screaming. "But do you want to see something really scary?" he said. He opened up another video, this time of a group of schoolgirls doing the same puzzle. We braced for the inevitable, but when the jump scare happened: NOTHING. No reaction at all from the team of girls, not even a twitch of their eyelids.

That group of girls was the scariest thing I've ever seen in an escape room. I hope I never meet them in real life.

I fart in every escape room I play

I once snatched a puzzle out someone's hand as they were solving it, I think I'll be taking that shame with me to my grave. Thanks for putting in the hard work of making this.

When my brother searched my wife's purse in the corner for 5 minutes thinking it was a prop.

We took our 11 years old boy to his 100th room (in an Arab village), and in the middle of the game the owner comes in and offers us Authentic Turkish Coffee.

I was doing a room with 5 other enthusiasts, who probably had fairly low expectations of my skills since I was old enough to be a mother to most of them. They had all attempted and failed to solve one particular puzzle, and finally I was able to get the clue into my hands so I could look it over. Within a few seconds I just "saw" the answer, told the person holding the cryptex what word to enter, and everyone looked at me like I could not have possibly worked it out that quickly. I had to convince her to enter the word rather than asking the game master for a hint. When it worked, everyone stared at me again and started high fiving me. Oh, that feeling of solving a challenging puzzle, I never get tired of that moment! This is not about being smarter than the other players, because we all have our moments of glory, but being smarter than the puzzle.

I LOVE EGGS! (and you should bring back the "I LOVE EGGS!" bot on the Slack)

Ha! This time, I know for sure I didn't write this! I love eggs too! - Errol

I wish it was easier to find fellow enthusiasts to play with!

Quite a few Customers peeing in my horror games

CREDITS

For this year's 2019 Escape Room Enthusiast Survey, we have translations. Thanks to the amazing translators who helped out!

- Svenska (Swedish translation: Kristen Clarberg)
- 中文版 / 簡體中文版(微信適用) (Chinese translation: Yolanda Chiu and Janet Chan)
- Nederlands (Dutch translation: Pim of escapetalk.nl)
- Français (French translation: Lise Mortier and Gilles Duchesne)
- Deutsch (German translation: escaperoom-guide.ch)
- Български (Bulgarian translation: Dimitar Smilyanov, Nadezhda Danabasheva, Hristo Tomov, Venelin Gornishki)
- Italiano (Italian translation: Itarillè, Paolo Fraire of Bruum Escape)
- Español (Spanish translation: Victor Es, Tom Mortishire-Smith)
- Ελληνικά (Greek translation: Panagiotis E. Tsafos of www.foundintheattic.net)
- Limba Română (Romanian translation: Bogdan Dascalescu of Puzzle Punks)
- Slovenski Jezik (Slovenian translation: Nataša Potočnik of Enigmariium Slovenia)
- Hrvatski (Croatian translation: Ema Perišić of Enigmariium Croatia)
- Русский (Russian translation: Pauline Zatonskikh)

China Escape Game Alliance, founded by Mr. Daza (打杂大人) October, 2012, is the biggest community of the Chinese escape room industry with over 2,000 owners and 100w enthusiast members. The mission of China EGA is to facilitate China's real-life game industry growth by integrating resources and sharing knowledge. The annual Chinese Escape Game Alliance Industry Summit is the one and only conference in China held for the past three years. Occurring March 15th, owners and industry experts gather and share fresh perspectives and trends. During this event, EGA also hosts the National Escape Room Awards with over 45,000 enthusiasts voting. The award highlights games specializing in different aspects (tech, narrative, actors, etc.) and commends unique creativity. It helps promote underrated good games and encourages more innovation in the industry.



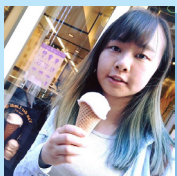
To learn more about China EGA, please contact:

- Official Wechat ID: chinaega
- Email: msc@chinaega.com
- Official Site: chinaega.com



Randy Hum started www.EscapeRumors.com in 2017 to share his passion with others and to help grow the escape room community. He has played over 300 escape rooms with the goal of connecting to fellow enthusiasts and introducing people to this new genre of entertainment. Outside of escape rooms, Randy is a Business Strategist by day and on the tennis court or on the road for a run at night!

His visualization of this survey is available on the EscapeRumors.com website.



Yolanda Chiu is a former escape room owner in Taiwan from 2012 to 2017. As a speaker at the 2017 Up The Game conference, she connected the eastern and western escape room industry. She is now a project manager working in the internet industry, and hardly has time to update her blog asiaescapegame.com. If you want to know more about the Asian ER industry, Yolanda is willing to help with the connections and translations you may need. She helped to bridge the communication with China EGA and provide input for the localization of China survey.



Lee-Fay Low is an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney and an avid enthusiast of escape rooms. Known in her faculty as 'Prof Fun', Lee-Fay led the biggest study of humour therapy worldwide.

She compiled all the results and provided commentaries and insights written here.



Errol Elumir is obsessed with escape room puzzle design and has designed large scale escape events and puzzle hunts. He also co-hosts the podcast Room Escape Divas.

More information about this survey, as well as raw data, can be found on his website:

<http://thecodex.ca>