

Escape the Library... using archives!

by Mary Rubin, Senior Archivist
University of Central Florida



Escape the Library
Part of Library's Welcome Week
Wednesday, August 22, 2018 from 2pm to 4pm
UCF Libraries, Main Floor

"Do you have what it takes to be a Knight?
Venture into the John. C Hitt Library where you will use your research savvy to find clues & solve puzzles, all while trying to escape. On your quest to knighthood you will discover the hidden secrets of UCF's past and the skills you need to succeed. Highly trained Knights should be able to make their way out within 20 minutes. All Knights who escape will be rewarded with a snack and be entered to win prizes!

The first 150 students to escape earn an exclusive UCF Libraries construction rubber duck and an Insomnia Cookie."

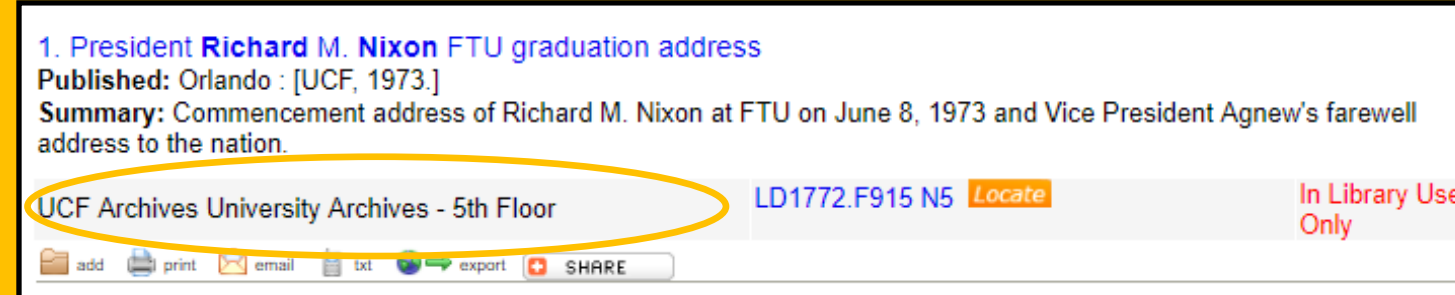
Author's Notes:
This was the verbiage used for marketing the event. UCF is home of the Knights so that contributed to our story. And due to traditions, UCF rubber ducks are highly coveted prizes.



Things to consider:

1. What do you want them to learn?
2. Is there a story in your archives that could be used?
3. What will entice them to complete it?
4. What other areas will be impacted?
5. Be creative!

Stop 1. Originating Table



"Dear Knight,

A friend needs your help. You see, back in 1976 when UCF was known as FTU there was an innovative student who discovered the secret of time travel. Unfortunately, a lot has changed since then and the landing was a little...rough.

Knowing this might happen, our intrepid time traveler left clues throughout the library with the key to returning to 1976. Can you help find them?

If you choose to accept this mission your first clue is this:

Richard Nixon gave the commencement address in 1973, our time traveler's first year on campus. There is a DVD of that speech in the library, but we need the call number to find it. Look it up in the library's catalog and make your way to its location.

If you run into trouble the librarians at the Knowledge Commons desk can help.

*Hint – Where you are going requires stealth (actually, it requires that you be quiet but we implore you to be stealthy like ninjas!)"

Author's Notes on Stop 1. Originating Table:

For this first clue, we wanted them to learn how to use the library catalog. We were also able to introduce two facts about UCF: it was not always called UCF and that Richard Nixon gave a commencement address. We also recognized that the librarians at the Knowledge Commons may be impacted by the event so we let them know about the event beforehand. If they searched correctly, they'd end up in SCUA.

Stop 2. Special Collections & University Archives (SCUA)

Escape the Library
Clue #2
(This crossword is your ticket to Clue #3)

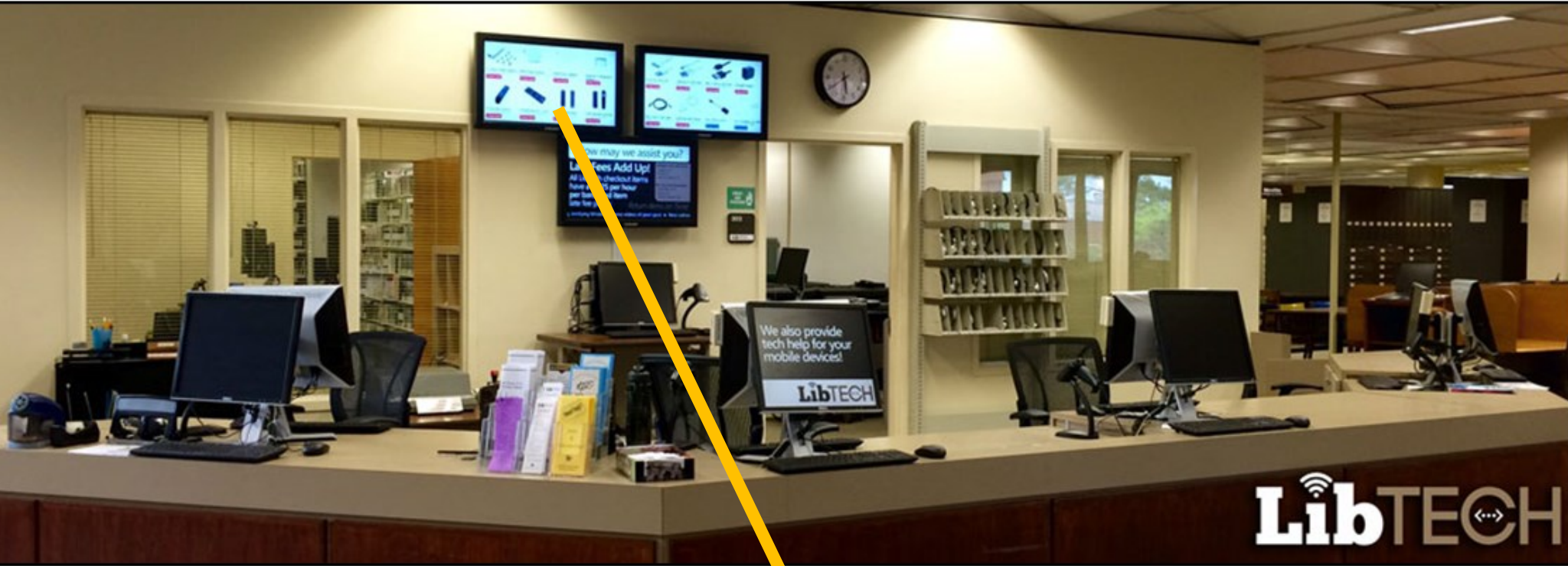
- 1 On 9/3/1970, Florida Tech _____ was dedicated by Orange County and FTU.
- 2 In 1975, Leonard _____ spoke at FTU's Village Center.
- 3 On 5/24/1970, _____ became the first National Fraternity on the Florida Tech campus.
- 4 On May 13, 1974, the _____ was selected. The lyrics and melody were composed by FTU faculty member Dr. Kurt Stabo.
- 5 On 3/20/1967, construction of the library and _____ buildings began.
- 6 On 10/7/1968, the first day of classes at FTU, there was a _____ and Dedication of the University.
- 7 From February 11th through February 13th, 1971, the first _____ took place.

Author's Notes on Stop 2. SCUA:

For the second clue, we wanted to introduce them to Special Collections & University Archives (SCUA). We created a fake collection of newsletters that answered the crossword puzzle (created in Microsoft Excel) that they were given when they entered SCUA. While the collection was fake, the newsletters were copies of real newsletters. We had to create multiple copies of the same fake collection to accommodate the numbers we were expecting. If they filled in the crossword correctly, they'd end up at the LibTech Desk.



Escape the Library students in SCUA



Author's Notes on Stop 3. LibTech:

For the third clue, we wanted them to learn about the technology that they could check out. We overlaid letters and numbers on the different items and created a code to be deciphered. We recognized that the staff at LibTech would be impacted by the event so they were well aware of the event beforehand. If the students deciphered the digital signage correctly, they'd end up in Circulation's Reserves.



Stop 3. LibTech

Escape the Library
Clue #3

1. Decode the following using LibTech's digital signage:

2. Go to the Circulation Desk and request the reserves material for the class code you decoded above.

Author's Notes on Stop 4. Circulation's Reserves:

For the fourth clue, we wanted them to learn that some of their textbooks are on reserve at the Circulation desk. We also recognized that the staff at the Circulation Desk would be impacted by the event so we let them know about the event beforehand. If they used the clue and searched correctly, they'd end up in a study room.

Stop 4. Circulation's Reserves.

"The pieces of the puzzle are coming together, soon we should be able to return our new friend back to where this all started, but first we need to know what is on that DVD! I heard a rumor that a secret society was watching it RIGHT NOW in one of the study rooms.

1. Go to the library's website
2. Click on the 'Study Rooms' link
3. Click on the 'General Study Room' link
4. Select 'View Confirmed Books'
5. Find the room being used by the Knights of Pegasus"

Author's Notes on Stop 5. Study Room:

For the fifth stop, students were rewarded by discovering the secret society. They were given a key, which represented the completion of the escape room, that they could turn in for their cookie and rubber duck.

