

What is the MIT Mystery Hunt?

A weekend of intense puzzle-solving

Every year for the last 33 years, teams of students and alums have gathered at MIT for a long weekend of solving puzzles and trying to find a hidden “coin” somewhere on campus. The puzzles begin at noon on Friday and continue to be revealed to teams gradually over the weekend—sometimes as many as TKTk puzzles are solved. Each year’s Mystery Hunt is written and organized by the team who was first to find the previous year’s hidden coin.



Puzzles vary in topic area and in difficulty. (vertexillonomy was easy) (that recursive coding problem took N hours to solve) (Permuted relied on group theory from abstract algebra) (others just require knowledge of the MIT campus or Cambridge.)

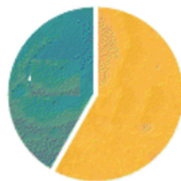
National interest has increased in the last few years. Last year’s hunt was mentioned on TKTk radio show and TKTk website.

... that doubles as a get-together for students and alums

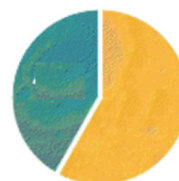
Participants come to MIT for the Mystery Hunt from as far away as TKTk, but most are MIT students, people based in the Boston area, or people who fly in from SFO. Participation increases every year, and 2012 participation is estimated to be TKTk.



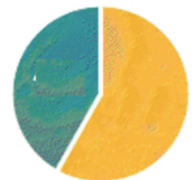
SF / Bos / other



women / men



programmers / academics / other

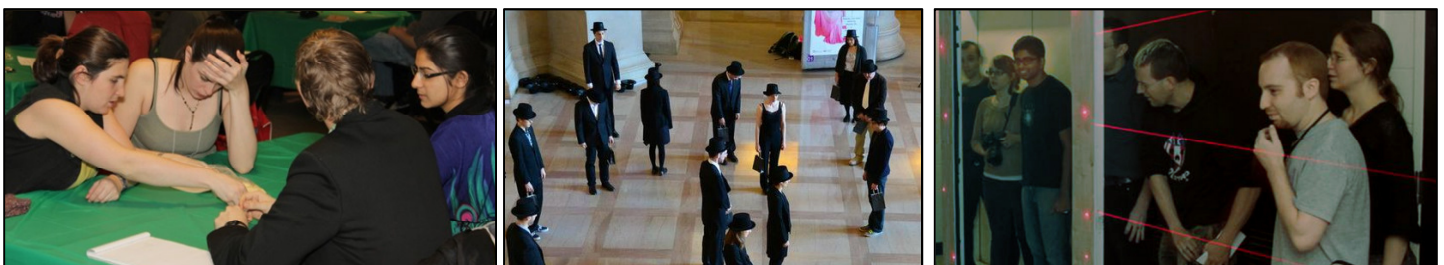


“Nothing makes me feel like an MIT alum like coding Rubik’s Cube solutions with old dorm-mates at 3 am.”
- mystery hunter

Annual attendance: XXXX

... punctuated by problem-solving challenges and events .

Mystery Hunt is all about being clever—devising puzzles that are elegant and require insight or deep knowledge to solve (or both), and also setting up situations that require participants to put performance or group problem-solving skills to use. The 2013 hunt included an event inspired by the movie *The Thomas Crown Affair*, door locks made of Rubik’s cubes, and laser-trip mazes. Participants come to Mystery Hunt to solve problems with old friends and to see what the organizing team has created.



What's the prize?

As a team gets close to finding the coin, <final runaround>. The “coin” is different every year <but is just a token>. Teams compete in the Mystery Hunt for the fun of it, and for the thrill of solving. In addition to the glory of winning the hunt, the team to find the coin gets the honor of writing the next year's Mystery Hunt. We are realizing more and more how much work that is.

close-up of
this year's coin

picture of the
CD from the
Matrix hunt



What goes into the MIT Mystery Hunt?

Writing dozens of puzzles for hundreds of the smartest people you know to solve is no small task; neither is constructing new physical challenges each year, or including interactive events to delight and entertain Mystery Hunt participants. We have been told to expect team members to spend over TKTK hours writing puzzles, and to spend over TKTK more hours test-solving those puzzles as a team. <this tone could sound more excited.>

stats in neat little graphics: resources used during
the hunt:

e.g. phone calls, server use, puzzles solved per hour
on friday evening at MIT

<pic. at right: is filler and can be removed.>



(another picture of the laser maze) (picture of the coin-weighing contraption) (picture of the coin lock-box)

prose: ... high-tech puzzles including Rubik's cube locks (programmed on iPhones), a remote control car maze, and a tip coming from a hunt organizer hidden in a fake ventilation duct. ...

