

Gaming in Libraries

Building Relationships between Communities & Libraries



Colorado State Library

cde

COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

“Games are drawing attention in libraries as successful outreach tools for tweens, teens, and seniors. They are also gaining ground in schools as valuable resources that introduce and reinforce a variety of curricular, social, and life skills.” - LibraryGamer.wordpress.com

Gaming in School Libraries

“Students are interested in the gaming and freedom offered in this kind of club, and they tend to be interested in other aspects of the library while they are here (they check books out, learn the catalog system to find things, etc...)”
- Ryan Self, teacher-librarian, Wheat Ridge Middle School

Ideas for your school library gaming events:

- Zumba Fitness Kinect Aerobics Club
- Student/student government organized tournaments and fundraisers
- Minecraft Mondays - Safe and educational after-school activities and clubs/reward for students
- Let the student become the expert & teacher



Gaming in Public Libraries

“I hope that librarians and the general public know the importance of offering quality programs that meet both the educational and recreational needs of the community. I firmly believe that gaming programs do both.”
- Julie Zeoli, Yorba Linda Public Library, CA

Ideas for your public library gaming event:



- Minecrafternoons- establish a dedicated library Minecraft server OR set up computers and invite kids to play on their own servers
- Super Smash Brothers Tournament
- Senior or Senior/Teen Bowling Tournament
- Moms’ Just Dance Night
- “Retro” Gaming Night with classic gaming consoles

Minecraft in Libraries

Minecraft is an online gaming phenomenon that has exploded in popularity in recent years. Not only do children and teens find it highly engaging, it has numerous educational applications that libraries and educators can work together to leverage.

In a 2012 article for *The Digital Shift*, Erin Daly discussed many of the potential educational applications for Minecraft. She pointed out that Minecraft could be used to learn computing basics, mapping, mechanisms, economics, 3D modeling of cells or ancient civilizations, and more. “In the largely unstructured setting of my public library Minecraft group, teens have discovered the game’s potential at their own pace...Minecraft is versatile and fun. Played simply as an adventure game it is a satisfying activity for kids of all ages. When it comes to using it for educational or other structured activities, it has a growing number of possibilities to explore.”

MinecraftEdu is the product of a collaboration of a small group of educators and programmers coming together with the game’s creators to make the game more affordable and accessible for schools around the world. (<http://minecraftedu.com/page/resources>)



Check out Pixel Pushers, a project from Carnegie Mellon University, whose goal is to “make game-based learning...more accessible to students and educators alike” by creating a toolset that teachers can use to create lessons and track student progress. (<http://www.etc.cmu.edu/projects/minecraft/>)

Getting Started

Buying a Game System!

What you need

- Required Equipment
 - Console
 - Two Controllers (Minimum)
 - Games!
 - Projection screen & projector, or a TV
- Optional Equipment
 - Rechargeable Batteries (AA's)
 - Battery Charger
 - Power Strip
 - Extension Cord
 - Speakers or sound system

Where to buy

- Equipment & Games
 - Ask for patron donations
 - Search for used games on Amazon.com & Gamestop.com
 - Look for used games at locally owned game shops
 - Buy from national chain stores like Gamestop, Walmart, Toys R Us, and Target

Buying Tips

- Buy used to get the most out of your budget!
- Take advantage of the release of newer consoles to buy older consoles at a lower price.
- Consider purchasing classic game consoles like the Nintendo 64 or Nintendo Gamecube
- Look for a console bundled with games and/or extra controllers to save money
- Look for games bundled with the accessories needed to play the game
- Track usage of games in your non-circulating collection and utilize game trade-in programs available through retailers like Amazon and Gamestop or your local game shop
- Ask local game shops if they give discounts for educators or libraries and for ideas, promotions, and prizes for your gaming events



Sample Budget Proposal

Average Pre-tax Cost for Nintendo Wii:

\$139.99	New Nintendo Wii Bundle with Wii Sports and Wii Sports Resort
\$39.99	Just Dance 2014
\$9.99	Power Strip
\$7.99	<u>Extension Cord</u>
\$197.96	Total Cost

Example Music Bundles

- Rocksmith 2014 Edition (Cable Included) - Xbox 360 - \$49.99 from Amazon (Electric Guitar Not Included)
- Guitar Hero III - \$16.98 from Amazon & (2) Wii Extreme 2 Wireless Guitars - \$67.90 from Amazon



Example Console Bundles

- Microsoft Xbox 360 - 4GB Holiday Bundle with Kinect and 2 Games - \$299.99 from Best Buy
- Wii U Deluxe Set with New Super Mario Bros U and New Super Luigi U - \$305.00 from Amazon



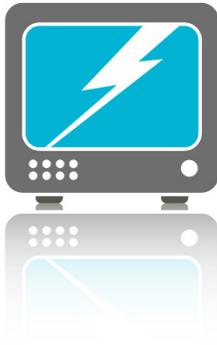
And Check out these Games!

- * Super Smash Bros Brawl - \$29.99 at GameStop
- * Mario Party 9 Pre-owned - \$44.99 at Gamestop
- * Zumba Fitness 2 - Wii - \$29.16 from Amazon

Program Tips

For teen programs, allow the teens to run and organize events as much as possible.

Talk to your audience to find out what types of games and/or tournaments they would like to have, every community will be different.



Be prepared to play the games with the participants. Many players will want to “**challenge the librarian!**”

For a low cost alternative, host a **PC-based gaming program** using the library’s patron computers and free downloadable or web-based games.

Keep your collection up to date: Although expensive, this practice will ensure that your patrons keep coming back to enjoy the latest video games out there. (OEDb.org)

Have books that relate to gaming, or **similar themes and titles to the games offered, displayed near the gaming areas.** For example, a display of fiction titles with a strong gaming element, i.e. *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline, R.A. Salvatore’s *Forgotten Realms* series based on video games, *Gamer Girl* by Mari Mancusi, or *Z* by Michael Thomas Ford

Consider offering **pizza and/or snacks** (candy, juice boxes, chips, or cookies.)

Concerned about disturbing other patrons during gaming events? - Consider offering **events after hours.** This is also a draw for teens, who see this as a special privilege.

For new events try to have one volunteer or staff member on hand for every 10 gaming participants. This will help you stay organized. After hours programs should have at least two staff members.



Use projectors instead of TVs - especially for tournaments - to project the game onto a bare wall and turn off all of the lights.

More Tips

Plan ahead - at your first gaming event, be prepared to tell them when your NEXT gaming event will be - they will ask!

Organize tournaments with the “**GT System**”, a free online tournament program developed by the Ann Arbor Library District in Michigan - <http://wiki.gtsystem.org/>



Use social media - create pages for your gaming programs or use the library’s social media presence to promote your gaming events so participants can communicate in between events...

The Arapahoe Library District (Arapahoe County, CO) has a Facebook page specifically for its gaming program - ALD Gaming: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ALD-Gaming/161461010554067>

Promote your events online using social media and the library’s website, in local and school newspapers, and in library bulletins. Post fliers around the library, at local schools, and stores and other places teens in your community frequent.

If your gaming draws a large crowd, try breaking it into events **by age groups**. Have 11 to 13 year olds one night and 14 to 17 year olds another night.

Create a **Gaming Policy** to supplement your budget proposal (i.e. who will be allowed to play, permitted game ratings, etc.).



Meeting rooms work well, but many libraries hold their gaming events in more public areas, which will **attract questions and the interest of others**. Use the opportunity to promote the library to non-users.

Try different formats: play involved tabletop games (*Settlers of Catan* or *Risk*) or classic board games, craft your own game show, or host a card tournament for *Pokemon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh*, or *Magic* players.

Gaming is more than just video games!

- Lafayette Public Library (Lafayette, CO) hosts Kids Coder Workshops, where children and teens in grades 3-12 can learn to code their own games using open source software.
- St. Johns County Public Library (St. Johns County, FL) hosts a regular “Family Game Time,” where the whole family is invited to the library to play board games, including Monopoly, Connect Four, Candy Land, Scrabble, Chutes & Ladders, Uno, and more.
- Arapahoe Library District (Arapahoe County, CO) offers many gaming options in addition to their video gaming programs for teens, families, and 20-somethings. Many of their branches have collections of board games available for use within the library, including *Pokemon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, or *Magic* card events, and tabletop gaming sessions.



“I never have to remind them to share and in fact they offer their spots to anyone who hasn’t played yet! Amazing how generous and respectful teens can be to one another when you loosen up and give them responsibility.”

- Erwin Magbanua, Weingart City Heights Library, CA

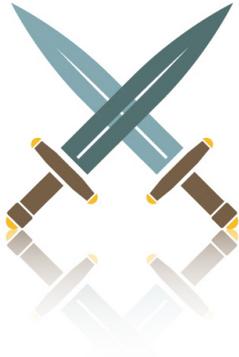


“It can be difficult to find funding, so I would definitely recommend looking into gathering as much support as possible from local Friends groups, charities, businesses, and even the gaming corporations. Pasco County recently received a grant of three complete Wii systems, for example, from Nintendo of America and their PR firm, GolinHarris, based on a write-up and presentation on our gaming.”

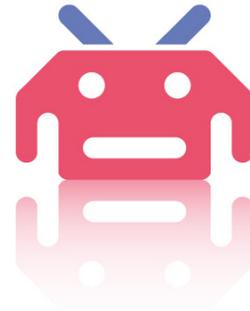
- Paul Stonebridge, Pasco County Library System, FL

Online Gaming Resources

- TED Talk: Daphne Bavelier: Your Brain on Video Games - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FktsFcoolG8&list=LLf_u0vsxwToKnfNPJJGNijQ



- Indie Statik: 10 Free Game Development Tools and Other Resources: <http://indiestatik.com/2013/11/04/game-dev-tools/>
- OEDb (Open Education Database): Bringing Gaming (and Gamers) to Your Library: 100 Tips and Resources: http://oedb.org/ilibrarian/bringing_gaming_100_library_resources/
- MinecraftEdu: Bringing Minecraft to the Classroom: <http://minecrafteu.com/page/resources>
- Edutopia: Using Minecraft as an Educational Tool: <http://www.edutopia.org/made-with-play-game-based-learning-minecraft-video>
- Pixel Pushers - Educational Minecraft Resource - <http://www.etc.cmu.edu/projects/minecraft/>
- Pasco County Library System, FL “Gaming Events Policy” - <http://pascolibraries.org/files/policies/GamingEvent.pdf>
- GT System - <http://wiki.gtsystem.org>
- Gaming in Libraries - Includes links to the 30 videos that make up Scott Nicholson’s one-month Gaming in Libraries course for Syracuse University’s School of Information Studies- <http://www.gamesinlibraries.org/>
- The Library Gamer - <http://librarygamer.wordpress.com/>



Need Convincing?

Video Games, Literacy, and Learning

Numerous proponents of gaming argue that video game play enhances all types of literacy skills. Neiburger (2007) discusses how, in an increasingly visual society, the ability to interpret on-screen stimuli is a valuable new form of literacy. Video games, he argues, help players develop visual literacy and spatial reasoning. In a 2012 interview with *Forbes*, Dr. Alan Weiss, President and CEO, NCH Healthcare Systems, stated, “Being immersed in a video game...can encourage creative solutions and adaptations [which] can then be applied to real life situations. The results can be surprisingly positive for individuals, communities, and society as a whole.”

Gee (2004) identifies dozens of learning principles good video games incorporate. Among them are: identity (good games require players to take on a new identity in order to master a new domain); risk taking (because the consequences of failure are low, players are encouraged to take risks, explore, and try new things in a safe environment); systems thinking (players are encouraged to think about relationships - not isolated facts and events); and lateral thinking (players must think laterally to conceive goals and solve problems).

Brain scientist, Daphne Bavelier discussed her discovery that those who played fast paced action video games (like Call of Duty) versus non players had better vision, were better at multitasking, and able to keep track of and react faster to multiple moving objects. Overall, she concluded, playing action videogames improved the functionality of the brain: “Action video games have a number of ingredients that are really powerful for brain plasticity, learning, attention, vision” (Szkolar, 2013).

“What I have noticed is that once the video games get [teens] in the door, they look around and see other cool things that we have going on here.”
- Toni Weller, teacher-librarian, Falcon Bluffs Middle School



Games in the Classroom

Teachers and educators who have used video games in their classrooms have important insights as well. MacKenty (2006) found students are willing to expend considerable energy to understand and play games successfully; students learn how to work together to solve common challenges in games and are enthusiastic about the material.

Reaching the Disconnected

Neiberger (2007) advocates gaming as an opportunity to bridge “the yawning chasm” between libraries and teens/young adults, many of which do not see the relevance of libraries in their own lives. Gaming events could also be useful for outreach to the 3.8 million young people Degyansky (2008) identifies as “the disconnected” - 18-24-year-olds who are neither employed nor enrolled in school.

“From personal experience, I can tell you that gaming events are among the most popular programs that we offer across all age groups and have really helped to bring in more long-term library users who have discovered our books, computers, research services, etc. during their time in our buildings for gaming. **If you play it, they will come.**”
- Paul Stonebridge, Pasco County Library System, FL

Games in a Social Context

A highly publicized study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that not only is gaming ubiquitous among teens (97 percent of respondents play), it’s a major component of their social experiences. Three-quarters of respondents play video games with other people in the room or connected to others via the Internet - often with people they know in their off-line lives (Lenhart et al., 2008).



According to the study, many teens’ gaming experiences parallel civic life (such as helping others, learning about problems in society, and/or making decisions about how a community should run). Civic gaming experiences are more equally distributed than other civic learning opportunities, and some aspects of social game play are related to civic participation (Lenhart et al., 2008).

Selected Resources for Further Reading

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