

Gaming

What is Gaming?

There are basically two types of electronic gaming, console games and online gaming. However, the line is beginning to blur, as the current generation of consoles also allow for online play. Console games refer to systems like the Sony Playstation, Microsoft's Xbox 360, and the Nintendo Wii; as well as their portable counterparts.

Online games are sometimes completely available online, such as Runescape, or are a hybrid of purchased software and online play, such as World of Warcraft. Online games also have a wide range of complexity from the previously mentioned MMORPGs (Massively Multitplayer Online Role Playing Game) to simple games of checkers or tic-tac-toe.

Table-top games are the traditional board and card games, such as Uno and Monopoly, as well as role playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons and Warhammer.

Why Include Games in the Library?

We maintain our relevance in the busy lives of teens by offering programs and collections based on their interests. Taking a mainly solitary interest, be it reading or gaming, and adding community, structure, and expertise, is the heart of programming. Gaming events are a great source of outreach, and are a good way to improve the relationship between the library and teen boys.

Additionally, gaming programs in libraries helps build developmental assets in teens by providing support from non-parent adults, sending the message that the community values youth, and providing opportunities for participation in activities outside of school. For more detailed information on using gaming programs to build developmental assets, see "Video Games as a Service: Three Years Later," by Erin V. Helmrich and Eli Neiburger in the June 2007 issue of VOYA.

How to Incorporate Gaming @ your library®

There are many different ways libraries can incorporate gaming, depending on the availability of both budget and equipment. Many times equipment can be borrowed from teens, staff, or a local gaming store. Here are a few ideas for getting started with game programs and services:

- Start a circulating video game collection
- Organize a tournament based on a single game title. Popular video game choices for these events include Mario Kart, Dance Dance Revolution, Madden NFL, Super Smash Brothers, and Wii Sports. There are many resources available for running board and card game tournaments as well.

- Offer a selection of table-top games in your teen area.
- Plan a meet-up for teens with portable game units such as the Nintendo DS or PSP allowing them to take advantage of the wireless multi-player modes available for many games.
- Offer a time, possibly after regular hours or in a separate computer lab, for teens to play Runescape or other online games that are popular in your area.
- Ask teens to submit game reviews in addition to book reviews for the library newsletter or website.
- Form a gaming or technology advisory group to involve more teens in the library and keep up on the latest trends.
- Hold an open gaming time at your library. The more spots available for playing the better, so pick games that have several players competing at once, or that don't take a long time to finish.
- Hold a family event and encourage teens to bring their siblings, parents, and grandparents. This seems to work especially well with Wii Sports Bowling, though any game that is relatively easy to pick up and has a wide appeal will work.
- Rhythm type games such as Dance Dance Revolution, Guitar Hero, or Karaoke are great for attracting teens who are not traditionally considered gamers.

For More Information

Beth Gallaway and Alissa Lauzon, "I Can't Dance Without Arrows: Getting Active@ your library with Video Game Programs," *Young Adult Library Services* 4, no. 4 (Summer 2006), 20-25.

Board Games with Scott. Video demonstrations of various board and card games.

Erin Helmrich and Eli Neiburger, "Video Games as a Service: Hosting Tournaments at Your Library (No MARC Records Required)," *Voice of Youth Advocates* 27, no. 6(Feb. 2005), 450-53.

Erin Helmrich and Eli Neiburger, "Video Games as a Service: Three Years Later," *Voice of Youth Advocates* 30, no. 2 (June 2007), 113-115.

Eli Neiburger, *Gamers in the Library?! The Why, What, and How of Video Game Tournaments for All Ages*. ALA. 2007. 978-0838909447

Beth Saxton, "All Thumbs Isn't a Bad Thing: Video Game Programs @ your library," *Young Adult Library Services* Vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 2007), 31-33.

YALSA Wiki: Gaming Lists & Activities. Contains a core collection of gaming titles to consider for purchase and information about gaming activities in libraries.