

Get Your Game On: Collection Development Roundtable Notes
June 11, 2009

Libraries from the Western and Central Regions attended the Roundtable at WMRLS Headquarters and shared rewards, resources and heartaches of providing games for their users. Along with sharing information, one goal of the roundtable is to encourage all members to offer games to their user base and to make them available to other libraries reciprocally.

Starters:

Look through and post to the American Library Association's Gaming Toolkit: <http://librarygamingtoolkit.org>. It's the Librarian's Guide to Gaming and includes history, resources and best practices. It the starting point for library based gaming.

Check http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.jsp for appropriate ages and ratings for games. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) offers definitions of the ratings symbols and is searchable by title, platform, rating level, and content category.

Idea: Keep a binder of game cover photocopies (including barcode). Gamers, parents, etc., can see what you own and it's really easy to scan the barcode to place a hold for them if the item is in circulation.

Consider including copies of the rating criteria for general information.

Gamers come in all sizes and ages. It's a growing clientele for libraries and will attract new users. It's a great way to attract teens, tweens and the illusive 20 – 35 year old age group.

Display games with books about games and gaming together.

Gaming is experiential. If you don't try it, you won't get it. Get staff on board with some staff trials and gaming times. Get your director to try it first.

Game tournaments and demos are incredibly popular programs.

Try sport game tournaments for all ages.

Encourage parents to game with kids.

Family game day – Rock Band, Wii sports.

Conduct midday Wii bowling tournaments for elders.

Most libraries circulate games for 1 week.

Use the platform as part of the call number to keep games of like type together.

Vid/game

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PS3
Ghostbusters

Xbox360
Halo 3

A disk cleaner (which can be used for CD's, DVD's, as well as games), is a good investment. The really good cleaners and buffers are expensive.

Some of the participating libraries do a visual inspection of games before discharging them so that they can bill patrons for damage if necessary. These libraries also do a check on all CD's and DVD's.

Gamer volunteers can be used to clean and buff the games.

There is some possibility that trying to copy a game may erase the original. No one has verified this yet, but two libraries have had Wii disks come back erased.

Computer games:

Some libraries have a few.

Computers are more powerful than gaming systems. Can have better effects.

Internet games:

Have to install the games. There may be a limit to number of downloads. May need a serial number to download. Put the serial number in the MARC record so you can find it.

Adding or creating a collection:

Baker & Taylor – 10% discount. They only sell games to libraries. Tends to have only most recent stuff. Order quickly. They run out fast.

Ingram – has some older games.

GameStop – take gamers with you to help you select.

Buy the same game in multiple platforms so that gamers with different equipment can use them.

Many libraries buy used games and accept donations to build their collections.

GameSpot.com includes reviews by gamers and professionals.

GameTap.com – a \$60/year subscription provide access to a wide variety of games on up to 8 workstations with no loss issues. The access can be restricted by rating level.

Teen advisory groups are helpful in selection, programs, and advice. “If you’re willing to ask, they’re willing to help.”

To play the games, you need a console and a TV. Now that people are disposing of their TV's to replace with HD is a good time for quality donations.

Suggestion: Become conversant with FreeCycle (freecycle.org us). It's a nonprofit exchange for free material. Let them know you are a public library or institution. People seem very willing to help libraries.

The downside:

Most libraries keep games behind the circ desk and just keep cases (or the binder) on display. This alleviates the high loss issues. Apparently adults as well as teens try to steal them. Games have a street value in some communities. Other libraries have not yet had a problem. Using gamer advisors may help protect the collection – peer pressure to protect a community resource for gamers.

Some libraries report significant losses (40% billed or missing.) They continue to buy since games are so popular and are used so heavily. Even diminishing collections will boost circulation.

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