GAMIFICATION
APPS
IN
LIBRARIES
RACE
TAGAMES

Brittany R. Jacobs
Niche Academy Webinar

Dear Reader,

The world is in a perpetual state of change and in order to stay relevant libraries need to be able to keep up with the times. "Libraries have always been places where people could discover new knowledge in books, but in the last ten years, libraries have been reinventing themselves as places for communal discovery, conversation, and exploration" (Felker, 19).

Self-improvement apps such as Duolingo, Habitica and Epic Win have tapped into the exciting trend of gamification, and word on the street is that game-based learning is here to stay. From personal experience and observation, I've seen that implementing game mechanics into programming is a unique and accessible way that librarians are keeping up with trends.

I set out to research the role that gamification can play with engaging minds with literature, information access and a positive life-long relationship with the library. This zine is meant to give you an insight into the wonderfully wild and diverse world of gamification in libraries.

Happy Gaming!

Brittany R. Jacobs

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1. WHAT?

Gamification: the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g., point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service. (Oxford)
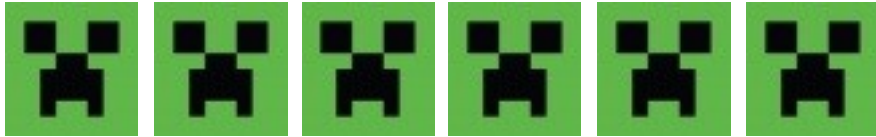
Though the term "GAMIFICATION" is relatively new, first coined by game developer Nick Pelling in 2003, the concept has been around for ages. Using game mechanics and theories to increase engagement with services and information has long been done in classrooms, boardrooms and everywhere in-between.

What are game mechanics???
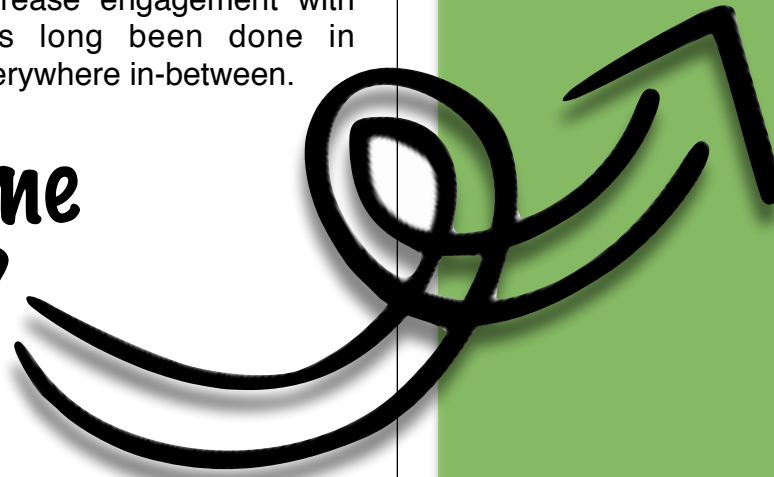
ELIMINATION   RISK

CARDS   POINTS

CARD DRAFTING

BIDDING

REWARD

DICE

CAPTURE

PLAYER TURNS

PUZZLE SOLVING

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2. WHY?

Simply put: games are fun. On a more complicated note; games have proven to release dopamine in the brain - they literally make us feel better. Infusing game mechanics, like the ones mentioned on the previous page, can help to exponentially increase user-engagement as well as user-enjoyment. "There is a bevy of educational research showing that people learn better when they are active participants in the learning process, and when knowledge is presented in a contextualized framework, so that they can see how and where knowledge is applied. Games can do both" (Felker, 20). Critical thinking skills are required for game-play, and when paired with educational content or user-services these skills can carry over from the game to real-life scenarios.

WHY NOT???

There are a few who disagree with the idea of gamification on the grounds that incentives, or external motivators, will take away from the intrinsic motivation to do a task.

On the Toyota Prius dashboard there is a small digital plant. As you conserve energy by driving more sustainably the plant grows leaves, illustrating the reduction of your carbon footprint on the planet. Were drivers concerned with this? Sure, that's probably a big factor in why they chose to buy a Prius in the first place. However, the game mechanics behind the reward system of 'growing your plant' got many people to change their daily driving habits. For more on this check out Jesse Schell's TED Talk When Games Invade Real Life

3. WHERE?

The nature of gamification allows for this trend to take place anywhere - that's the beauty of it. To infuse game components into non-game contexts opens the door wide open for infinite possibilities. Below are a few examples of where and how gamification is being used outside of the library setting (chapter 4 will deal with libraries).

THE BATHROOM!

Potty Training >
sticker chart for going on/in the pot
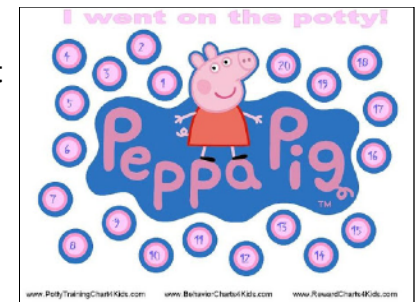
THE GROCERY STORE!!

Jewel Osco Monopoly>
game board and pieces for shopping. The more you spend the more you play and the greater your chances of winning (or so they say)

THE CAR!!!

4. HOW?

Libraries of all sorts have been gamify-ing their services and programs for several years. Think to the children and youth **SUMMER READING PROGRAMS**. They've taken the game mechanic of 'rewards' and applied it to the amount of books that kids read over the summer. This is where we run into the issue of incentivizing a task, for many children have fallen into the habit of only reading books for which they will be rewarded. The internal motivator for reading a book has gone by the wayside for those kids, trumping the desire to read with the desire to play. A balance needs to be struck between rewarding reading habits and encouraging reading without an incentive.

Library **APPS** have been another great tool for implementing gamification. Apps such as Mozilla Open Badges have been paired with reading programs to reward and track user participation. Mobile apps for libraries have gamified the way patrons interact with their libraries, by keeping track of books checked out and 'leveling-up' or awarding points/badges.

Hosting **GAME/TRIVIA NIGHTS** isn't necessarily 'gamification' per say, but it's a great way to get people in the doors. Several children and youth librarians have taken to hosting **VIDEO GAME TOURNAMENTS**, providing the bracket, game console/controllers, game and food. This has been a big hit amongst youth and children, for it takes what is ordinarily an individualistic activity and turns it into a social event.

Utilizing gamification in your **PROGRAMMING** is another way to get in on this trend. In academic libraries they have created games that get incoming students searching through the stacks and databases to solve a mystery, all the while familiarizing them with the resources available (Head Hunt).

PUBLIC LIBRARY

REWARDS

↓

READING + LITERACY ACTIVITIES

↓

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

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Kids are drawn to the game-play of SRP as well as the incentives (prizes). With a relatively low programming level, this is an easy and accessible way to utilize gamification.
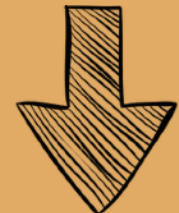
ACADEMIC LIBRARY

PUZZLE SOLVING

↓

RESOURCE AVAILABILITY + ITEM LOCATION

↓

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

↓

Depending on whether or not you create and code your own digital game, or use a platform that allows for information to be plugged-in, turning orientation into a game is a great way to engage incoming students and faculty.

> "Don't underestimate the effect that gamification-enhanced experiences can have on your institution's overall image by helping you brand your services as innovative, engaging, and exemplary of state-of-the art learning" (Pun, 12)

5. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alvarez, Vivian. "Engaging students in the library through tabletop gaming." *Knowledge Quest.* Vol. 45, no. 4. Mar/Apr 2017, pp 40 - 48. Web. EBSCOhost.

ABSTRACT:

Students today are surrounded by digital devices and experiences, yet they are still in need of those analog moments where they work cooperatively with their peers. One way that libraries are hosting those types of events while also instilling life-long learning habits and 21st century skills is via table top games. By infusing makerspaces with games, the educational content and learning opportunities are increased all the while engaging students.

Bigdeli, Zahed, Gholamreza Haidari, Alireza HajiYakhchali, Reza Basirian Jahromi. "Gamification in library websites based on motivational theories." *Webology.* Vol. 13, no. 1. June 2016, pp 1 - 12. Web. EBSCOhost.

ABSTRACT:

By breaking down the various elements that make up gamification and the motivational theories behind them, this article delves into what goes into creating a game-based learning environment, with a focus on library websites. Using examples such as Lemon Tree, Bigdeli argues that user engagement and enjoyment significantly increase when game elements are implemented into library websites. With Generation G being heavily dependent on digital devices, transforming current digital experiences within the library seem to be a logical and necessary step in the right direction.

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"Gamification in Education and Libraries." *Library Technology Reports*. Vol. 51, no. 2. Feb/Mar 2015, pp 20-28. Web. EBSCOhost"

ABSTRACT:

This article addresses gamification as a helpful tool for educators (both formal and informal alike) to use when trying to increase interest and/or impart some knowledge. Helping to draw the line between gamification and games, Kim illustrates successful gamified programs in the classroom, the boardroom and the library setting. Using game mechanics, the exemplars listed were able to increase knowledge retention and participant registration in a variety of programs ranging from new-hire trainings to summer reading programs.

Harris, Christopher & Brian Mayer. "Child's play: The value of board games in your library." *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service for Children.* Vol. 8, no. 3. Winter 2010, pp 47 - 50. Web. EBSCOhost.

ABSTRACT:

With digital video-games dominating the user experience when it comes to libraries and games, Harris and Mayer insist that there is much to be learned from table-top modern board games. Referring to the first chess club in the United States being hosted at a library, this article gives a brief background into the long-standing tradition of game-play in the library setting. Harris and Mayer are quick to point out the social, emotional and educational benefits of games in child-development thanks to the open-ended and communal play practices in modern board games.

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Levine, Jenny. "Gaming & Libraries: Intersection of Services". *Library Technology Reports.* Vol. 42, no. 7. Sep/Oct 2006, pp 5 - 68. Web. EBSCOhost.

ABSTRACT:

Using the Worth Public Library, Ann Arbor District Library and Bloomington Public Library as exemplars, Jenny Levine breaks down the how and why for public libraries to embrace the gaming world. With relatively low initial investment costs, hosting video-game tournaments can have a high return in increased attendance — especially among the 'elusive male-teen' demographic. By pointing out the myriad of benefits that are inherent in game-play, Levine encourages libraries to join in the fun and embrace the gaming world.

Mallon, Melissa. "Gaming and Gamification." *Public Services Quarterly.* 9 (2013): 210 - 221. *Taylor & Frances.* Web. 15 Apr. 2017.

ABSTRACT:

This article gives a brief overview of nine virtual gaming programs designed to engage users with information in a fun and non-traditional way. Beginning with a brief introduction to the idea of gamification, as well as a solid case arguing for the use of game-based learning, Mallon makes a convincing case for these nine programs to be used in the library, academic and corporate world. Objectivity gives a realistic view to these programs and their potential down-falls, giving the reader a sense of practicality. Unfortunately, this article dates from 2013 and a few of the links/resources listed are no longer in existence.

Phetteplace, Eric, and Kyle Felker. "Gamification in Libraries."
    Reference & User Services Quarterly, vol. 54, no. 2, Winter 2014,
    pp. 19-23. Web. EBSCO*host.*

ABSTRACT:

This article discusses the basics of what gamification is, and gives a brief introduction to how it can be applied to libraries. The infusion of gamification into programming is one way for libraries to keep users interested. The benefit that libraries have in creating games is that they are simultaneously infusing the "play" with educational content, making the game a double-whammie; it's fun and you'll learn something new along the way. Felker is quick to point out that while gamification in the library sounds too good to be true, it comes with a hefty price in the form of lots of work that librarians aren't typically trained to do. Game theory, graphic design and programming are just a few components to creating lasting games that librarians have little to no training in. Potential partnerships with game designers is one way around this dilemma. With the landscape of libraries changing at a rapid pace, gamification may just be the answer to the user engagement problem.

Pun, Raymond. "Winning ways to gamify your library services."
    Computers in Libraries. Vol. 36, no. 9. Nov 2016, pp 12 - 15. Web.
    EBSCOhost.

ABSTRACT:

This article discusses how several libraries have used gamification to enhance their users' experience while driving participation and increasing interaction with the library materials and services. Citing several exemplar's successful programs, Pun suggests different programs that lend themselves to gamification as well as pointing the reader in the direction of other resources for kick-starting the gamified creativity juices.

Spina, Carli. "Gamification in Libraries." *Games In Libraries.*
    Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014. 62 - 79. Print.

ABSTRACT:

This chapter from *Games In Libraries* is a comprehensive look at gamification and the strengths and weaknesses that come with it, with a focus on the library setting. There are many advantages to infusing gamification into the library setting, yet Spina is quick to point out that there are several potential pitfalls as well. After clearly lining out the pros and cons to gamification, several exemplars are given that illustrate both the rewards and the set-backs that gamified elements can have. The chapter ends on a practical note, encouraging readers to determine whether or not gamification would be right for their library as well as offering some starter points on implementing game-based mechanics in their library.

Swiatek, Cecile & Myriam Gorsse. "Playing games at the library; seriously?" *Liber Quarterly: The Journal of European Research Libraries.* Vol. 26, no. 3. 2016, pp 83 - 101. Web. EBSCOhost.

ABSTRACT:

This article gives insight into the French academic libraries and how they are utilizing gamification with their users and staff. Shedding light on both the positive and negative aspects of playing games in the library gives readers an objective view on this popular trend. Unlike American libraries which are heavily focused on digital gaming, French academic libraries are focusing on the more traditional types of games and game mechanics. In addition to giving an overview of what gamification is and how it is being implemented, this article also gives the reader a brief introduction of how to create your own games, or host game events in the library. From convincing board members to approve game-based programming, to presenting a framework for management of the rules, Swiatek and Gorsse lay out practical tools to get gaming in your library.

Image Resources:

Hungary Cards: By Takkk - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9746996

Minecraft Image (slime): By Markus Persson - Original text : * Immediate source: facebook.comUltimate source: Minecraft), Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48872583

Minecraft Image: By José Tarouca - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=53835570

Monopoly Photograph: By Horst Frank at the German language Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3627036

Fowler, H. W., F. G. Fowler, and J. B. Sykes. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976. Print.

Peppa Pig Potty Training Chart: http://www.pottytrainingchart4kids.com

Brittany R. Jacobs
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