Games, Learning and Libraries

Cordula Nötzelmann

Education and Libraries in the Digital Age
Athens, Nov 15-16, 2013
The Library System
A library is more than books...
Areas of activity of Cologne Public Library

- leisure time
  communication and
  meeting people

- education
  reading promotion &
  lifelong learning

- culture
  events and public relations

- information &
  electronic services

- integration
  intercultural library work
Analysis I: the Debate on Games

Lively discussion in schools, sciences, politics, arts, and the media:

• Social activity vs. isolation
• Improvement of social interaction vs. increasing inclination to violence
• Addiction and crime vs. character building
• Debate about
  – The technical and aesthetical aspects of games (design, ergonomics, software development)
  – The content of games (narration, plot, pedagogical and educational capabilities, “serious games”)
• Culture of gaming, playful approaches to learning
“Serious“ Games

– Games designed to convey skills or content
– Best serious game 2011: „Winterfest“ – a learning game developed by the German Adult Education Association
– Best serious game 2012: „Vom fehlenden Fisch“ a game for kids visiting the Kunsthalle Bremen and learning about paintings and art.
– Best serious game 2013: „Menschen auf der Flucht“ (refugees/ on the run) by Missio, a charity organization
Analysis II: Gamers and gaming industry

• In Germany
  – Most gamers are older than 30
  – 1/3 of the population are gamers
  – Both male and female
  – 70% of our libraries‘ users grow up with video games
  – An important consumer good
  – Strongly growing economic sector – Gamescom Fair in Cologne (World‘s largest trade fair concerning Games)
Eli Neiburger "Neue Spiele - Neues Lernen - Neue Bibliotheken"
Analysis III: Games in Libraries

- **GB/ USA**
  - Long Tradition in public libraries: Board and Card Games, annual National Gaming Day at the Library
  - Since launch of Wii console also programming with video games for kids and juveniles

- **Germany:**
  - Circulating video games is quite common
  - Main concerns:
    - How can games be integrated into the library’s strategic concept, collection management and processes?
    - Can games serve to approach new patrons?
    - Youth protection issues?
    - Staff qualification?
More and more libraries

- acknowledge the potentials of media education regarding games in terms of cultural activity.

- recognize that computer games play a major role in the everyday lives of their patrons

- realize that a library is a place you can also have fun in!

- open themselves to innovative program formats which attract different groups of people (e.g. geeks@cologne)
Position of Cologne Public Library

Regarding the irritating and ongoing public debate on video games, public libraries are reliable and safe places as well as trusted partners for parents and teachers when it comes to their children’s and pupils’ gameplay.

Gamers of all ages are very welcome at the library!

Every game, used in the right context, can be a “serious” game.
GAMERS ... in the LIBRARY?!

The Why, What, and How of Videogame Tournaments For All Ages

Eli Neiburger
Gaming Roadshow
How to establish a learning and gaming zone

• Strategic goals:
  – Library as third place, community meeting point
  – Embrace social Web tools, geek culture and community building
  – Be a place not only for eduction and learning, but also for leisure time and fun
• Find a partner:
Periodicals reading room
before... ...and after
Programs

Special interest events
Geeks@Cologne
(Geeks in Education)

Co-operation with innovators
Gaming Roadshow
German-American Gaming League

Working with Parents
(„gameskompakt“, Institut Spielraum FH Köln/ Team Spieleratgeber NRW/ Bundesprüfstelle f. jugendgefährdende Medien)

Family Events
(Gaming generations; Dr. Ghosthacker u.a., Father-Son-Tournaments, Silver Gamer)

Games tester group
The Game Connection
(Team Spieleratgeber NRW)

Games Tournaments
Kalk kickt!
(soccer, FIFA)
Kalk rockt! (Guitar Hero, Street Band)
Kalk spielt! (Game of the week)

Alphabetization
playful reading promotion for adults
Further Information

• Gaming activities at Stadtbibliothek Köln: www.stbib-koeln.de/gaming

• Report (in German) about Opening of gaming zone in Library Branch Köln-Kalk: http://oebib.wordpress.com/2012/07/18/spiel-und-lernzone-games4kalk-am-6-7-2012-in-der-stadtteilbibliothek-koln-kalk-eroffnet/


• Games4culture facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/games4culture/ Currently ~450 members from libraries, museums, cultural institutions
ευχαριστώ!
Hope to see you again in the workshop!
Games, Learning and Libraries - Workshop

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Why Video Games in the Library?

• Video games and libraries belong together.
• The public debate about video games leads to irritation amongst parents and teachers.
• Libraries can enable knowledge exchange and provide parents and teachers with reliable and unbiased information about this type of
• Gaming activities in the library are a signal that libraries accept and value their patrons‘ and staff‘s habits and environment.
games4kalk – Opening Day
Learning Toys

www.ravensburger.de

www.ting.eu
Programs

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Testing games with a teacher: ‘The game connection’
Champions! - FIFA Tournament
Generations getting together
Easymotion - Silver Gamers
Emerging: Bibcraft
Minecraft Event at
Wolfsburg Public Library, Oct 2013

Photo/Concept: © Kelvin Autenrieth
Choose a word, build it, let the audience guess!
“Winterfest” - an adventure game for functional analphabets

Download: www.lernspiel-winterfest.de
Gameplay: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0xk57mcjrk
Mein Name ist Marc. Ich lerne im Lernportal, weil mir das Lesen und Schreiben im Alltag oft schwerfällt.
What would you like to have in your library or school?

- My library could use...
- In my school there could be...
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• Eli Neiburger – Games and Libraries: Talk at Stadtbibliothek Köln (in English):
  http://vimeo.com/60248907

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Questions?