Review

Everyone Plays at the Library:
Creating Great Gaming Experiences for All Ages

Scott Nicholson. Medford, New Jersey: Information Today, Inc., 2010. 232 pp. ISBN: 978-1-57387-398-7. $39.50.

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Offering games programming in your library is a great way to strategically advance the mission of the library and serve your community in a new and dynamic way. Whether you work in an academic or public library, games programming can be used to reach out to targeted groups of users including those groups who are underserved by traditional library programs and resources.

Joining a small set of books published on the subject, *Everyone Plays at the Library* focuses on a relatively renewed conversation being held today by librarians who want to host gaming programs for their community but don't know where to start. This book will help librarians to think outside the box and to drive their mission in an exciting way.

Scott Nicholson, associate professor, librarian and founder of the Library Games Lab of Syracuse, brings together his deep understanding and knowledge about games and the gaming experience in a well-structured and informed monograph. The book is divided into thirteen chapters, which are arranged into three parts.

Part One introduces gaming to the library setting and provides the context and rationale for the thesis of the book: gaming programming can provide support for the library mission and a positive experience for users. The definitions and background discussions about the value that the gaming experience offers are edifying. Similarly, the questions to consider and pitfalls and common errors sections deliver useful information.

Part Two presents a handy overview of the gaming archetypes of multiplayer games. The archetypes are knowledge games, strategy games, actions games, narrative games, and social games. Each chapter covers a number of game profiles and includes reviews of some common games of that model.

The third and final part of the book will be the most practical section for librarians and others who are ready to start putting their gaming program together. These five chapters focus on the applied realities of library programming.   From discussions about the ways to facilitate the gaming experience, market the program, and partner with others to the all important assessment and justification of the program, these essential sections should be read closely.

Not just for librarians, any individual who wishes to start games programming in other service or agency groups such as a neighborhood or church organization should also read this book. I agree with Jenny Levine, The Shifted Librarian, who is quoted on the book jacket: "Everyone Plays at the Library is the single most important starting point for any library that wants to start or expand a gaming program."