FINDING A PLACE FOR VIDEO GAMES ON YOUR CAMPUS

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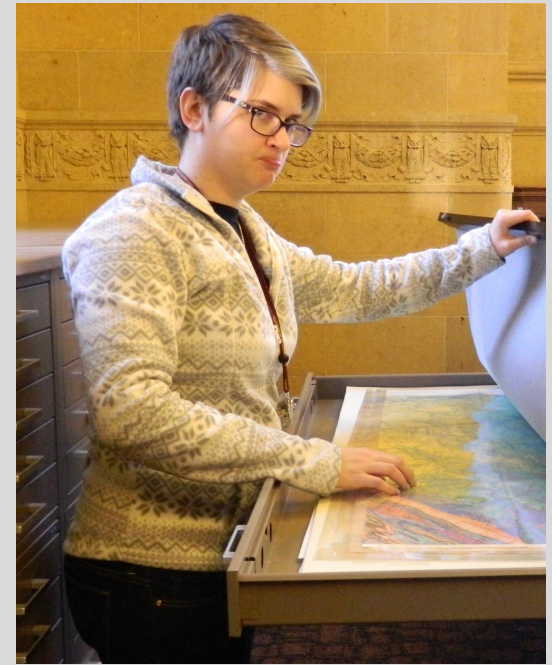@pseudoAMYloid
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A big library, a big campus, and a lot of exciting work going on related to video games. This presentation is about how we built a video game community in the Libraries, but it will be based on our experiences in our campus and library environment. We'll try to generalize our experiences and think broadly about the communities we all can build around gaming and other technologies.

1. Video games are a quickly evolving technology, and libraries have just begun exploring how to support it.

2. Doing work around gaming and libraries is more fun and productive in a community, but you might have to find or build one.

3. Having an effective community means finding where games fit in on your campus, and within your library's mission and goals.

academic video game services

Collections

We saw a growing body of literature offering long-sighted guidance on game collection. Libraries were collecting console-based games, but also beginning to think about how to support collections of other formats and genres, including PC games, indie and artistic games, and browser-based games, and how to maintain collections when the bits and discs start to break down. We also saw that libraries collected for a variety of purposes: archival, research, teaching, and entertainment.

New Collection

Video Games

- Limit 2
- 1 week check-out
- No renewals

Teaching and Learning

Many librarians also see a role of gaming collections in information literacy and teaching. Ward and Laskowski refer to games as "primary source" material for studying social issues, gender roles, and violence. Other resources, like The VideoGameCat, which Shannon created during her time at Colorado State, aims to help educators and librarians select video games based on factors like expert reviews and awards.

Some libraries are dabbling in game development, as well, to support student services like instruction and orientation.

Videogamecat

@thevideogamecat

Helping libraries and educational ins

videogamecat.com

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Events
Universities often leverage their collection and facilities to host events and organize showcases, or simply host events focused on student engagement. The budget, equipment, and coordination now required to host an event is neither novel nor extraordinary, and many academic libraries now host regular game nights and incorporate gaming into a larger suite of outreach activities.

"As gaming teaching, research, and technology rapidly evolve, academic libraries have the opportunity to grow beyond basic physical collection development and open gaming sessions, and begin developing the next generation of gaming collections and services right now."

--Laskowski & Ward, 2009

…"there still needs to be a better understanding of how game studies students, teaching faculty, and researchers utilize information and perceive their libraries."

--Smith, 2008

finding a community

finding a community

Creating a Community

It was a very organic process, starting in April 2013. Shannon's game-themed presentation at ARLD Day kicked off an discussion of the possibility of forming an informal group. The group assembled that month, and membership was by invitation or word-of-mouth. At these initial meetings, we realized that we wanted institutional support and legitimacy, but this kind of group didn't fit into UMN's existing structure. We wanted to keep it exploratory, uninhibited by missions or charges, and wanted it to be open to everyone.
This is where the idea of a community of practice came in.

Community of Practice

- group of people that have a topic/problem they want to explore
- may exist for any length of time
- can work on multiple topics concurrently or sequentially
- open to anyone who wants to be part of the community

Example: http://it.umn.edu/home/it-umn-community/cops

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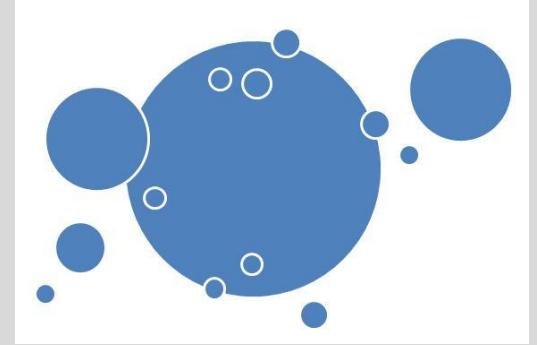
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finding a community

2013

April	April - June	June	July
Assembled informal gaming group	Held closed meetings	Became Libraries 1st Community of Practice	Appointed convener, opened up group to all staff

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See who shows up

There are a lot ways to find others on your campus who are as enthusiastic about games (or any other technology) as you. You can host informal discussions and brown bags on gaming topics, and see who shows up. Consider starting a journal club, or if one already exists, suggesting papers on gaming topics.

Visit http://z.umn.edu/gamelinks for a full list of resources and ideas.

z.umn.edu/gamelinks

Image courtesy of markcph via Flickr

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EDUCAUSE Games & Learning Constituent Group

Public   137 members

Search community

Members (137)   See all

eld.

Join this community to post or comment

Join community

Que Jinn
Discussion - Dec 31, 2013

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year and posting a Machinima created by an educators' gaming guild. http://bit.ly/12daysxmas

It scrolls a bit fast so the lyrics are below.

Read more (15 lines)

12 Days of Christmas: Inevitable Betrayal WoW Crow...

c mounts

+1

Add a comment...

Join existing communities
There are many active communities inside and outside the library community that discuss gaming topics. Check out the LibGaming Google Group, the Games and Learning Constituent Google Group, and the Games, Learning, and Society listserv.

Visit http://z.umn.edu/gamelinks for a full list of resources and ideas.

Educators know that fun and learning aren't opposites. From excellent way to provide structure, motivation, and enjoyment to a development of games for learning. Even game skeptics are welcome throughout the year.

http://www.educause.edu/discuss/teaching-and-

Joyce Bettencourt
Discussion - Nov 14, 2013   #SecondLife

For those interested, sharing what tomorrow's +NonProfit Commons in +Second Life meeting agenda will be.

Joyce Bettencourt originally shared:
Friday, November 15th, +TechSoup's Nonprofit Commons in Second

Attend or follow conferences
Several conferences intersect with games and libraries, including the Games, Learning and Society conference (June), Educause (October), Games for Change (June), Serious Play (July), and some programming at ALA Annual (June-July).

Visit http://z.umn.edu/gamelinks for a full list of resources and ideas.

GLS

EDUCAUSE

ECGBL

GAMES FOR CHANGE

SERIOUS PLAY
CONFERENCE

ALA American Library Association

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Image courtesy of zigazou76 via Flickr

Attend webinars
Keep an eye out for webinars. There were two in March 2014: Games and Gamification (hosted by New Media Consortium) and Gamification in Libraries (hosted by the New York Library Association.)

Visit http://z.umn.edu/gamelinks for a full list of resources and ideas.

Image courtesy of media.aphelis.net via Flickr

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gaming + our library roles

gaming + our library roles

Research
We identified UMN research that incorporates game-based methods or studies games in computer science (data mining in MMORPGs, speech recognition and machine learning, human-computer interaction and the social aspects of gaming), kinesiology (motion sickness, physical education in elementary schools, diagnoses of mental disorders in children), and the School of Public Health (gaming simulations to determine emergency readiness).
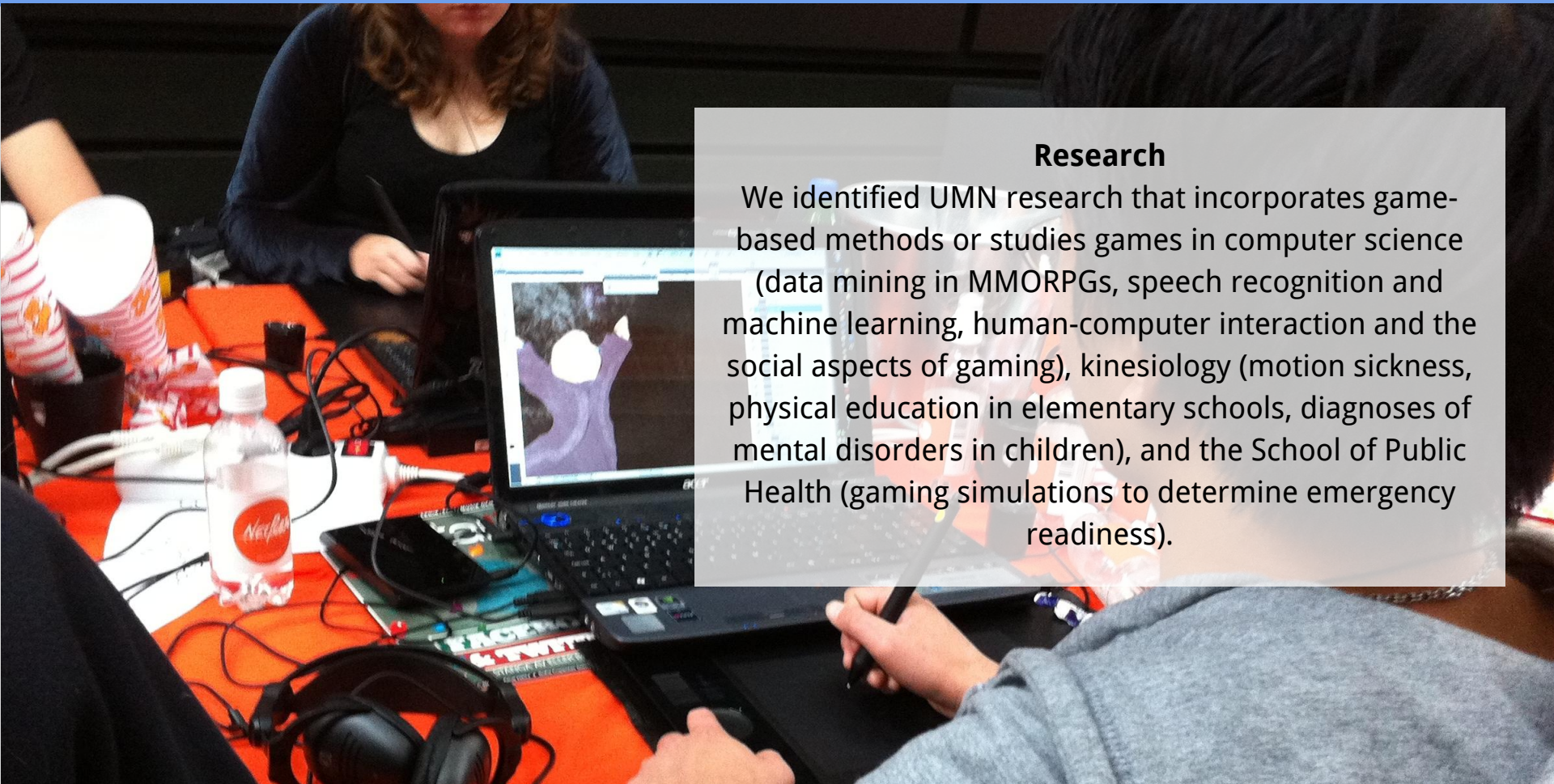
gaming + our library roles

Teaching and Learning
We keep an eye out for opportunities to use game-based learning in our library instruction. For example, we participated in a playtest of a info lit ARG; one of our group members created a fast-paced game called "Blackjack"; and our group is developing a card-based party game to help students brainstorm paper topics. Additonally, we have found examples of instructors who use games in their classes in the School of Nursing.
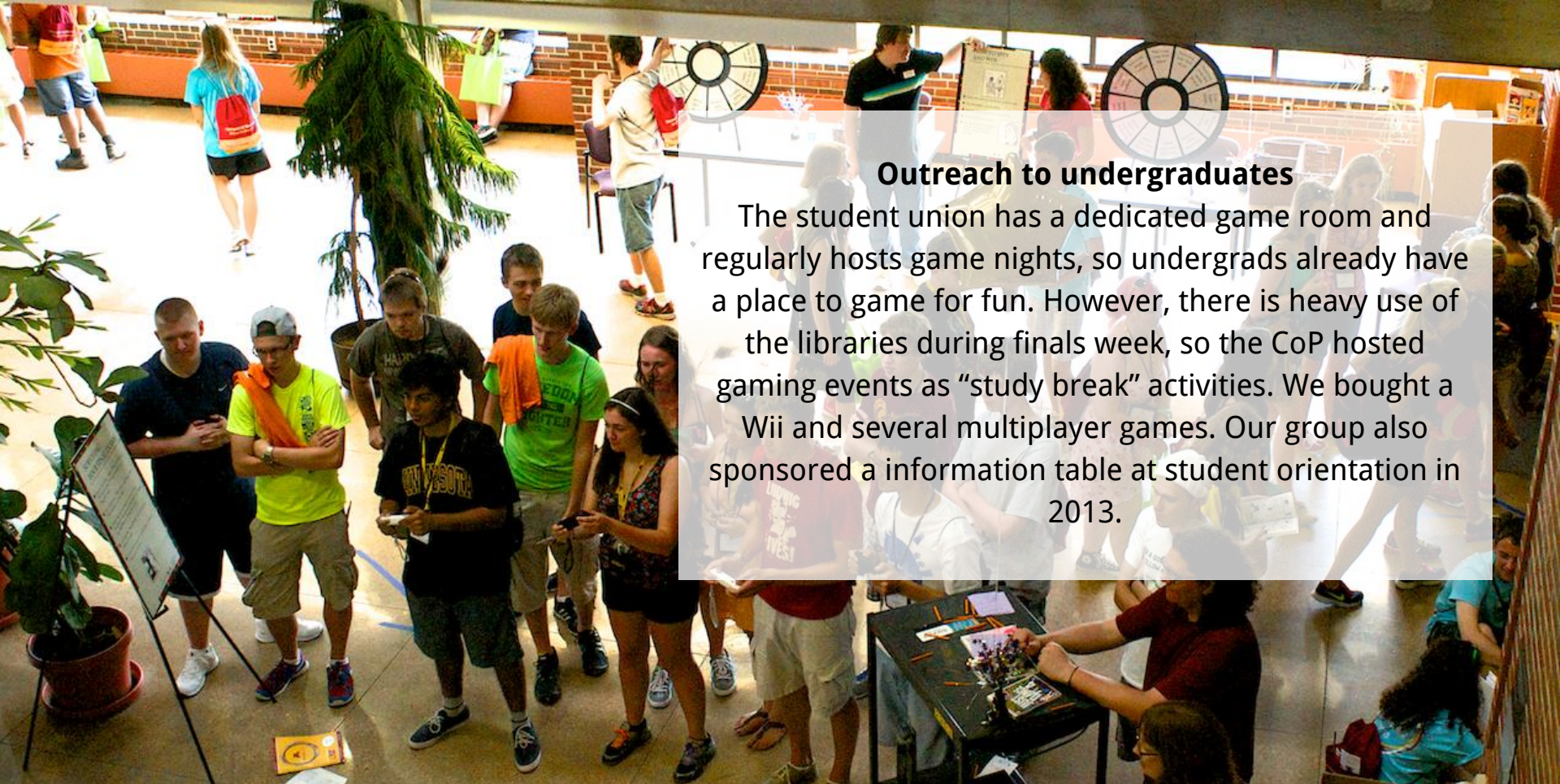
Outreach to undergraduates
The student union has a dedicated game room and regularly hosts game nights, so undergrads already have a place to game for fun. However, there is heavy use of the libraries during finals week, so the CoP hosted gaming events as "study break" activities. We bought a Wii and several multiplayer games. Our group also sponsored a information table at student orientation in 2013.
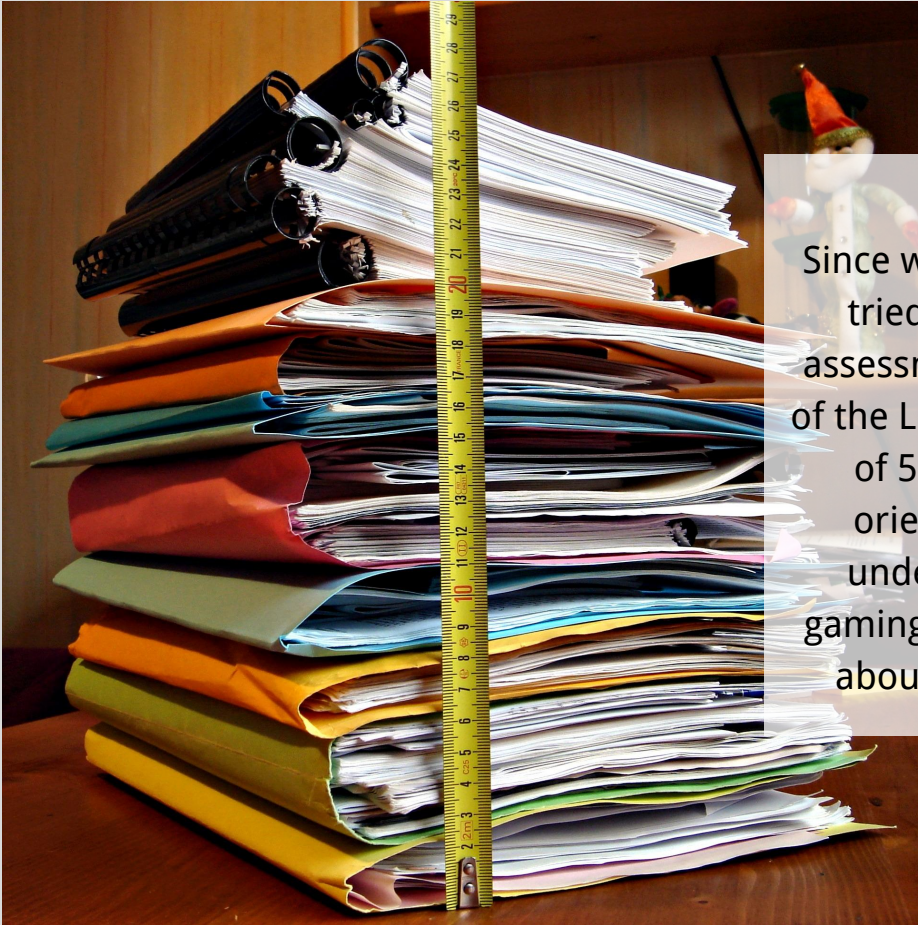
Assessment

Since we've been operating for almost a year and we've tried a few things, we now want to start looking at assessment to make sure our activities match the goals of the Library and the University. We conducted a survey of 586 first-year undergraduates during Fall 2013 orientation. The survey results gave us a baseline understanding of students' preferences for library gaming services, and provided a lot of food for thought about what kinds of services we should be offering.

Image courtesy of Alexandre Duret-Lutz via Flickr

challenges

Challenge #1: Group cohesion
The community of practice is an informal group held together by common interest in gaming. We can't make any demands on time or participation, and each member comes with a different set of professional interests. At first, we tried to make sure that there was something for everyone at each meeting, but month after month, we got nothing done.
We radically changed the format of our meetings. Instead of an open agenda, the convenors solicited ideas from the group on a monthly basis, and created a themed monthly agenda. By setting a theme and inviting members who were interested in discussing that theme, our meetings were much more productive and enjoyable.

Challenge #2: Resources
This picture represents a pretty major accomplishment for our group: it's the first acquisition of a gaming console by the UMN Libraries (it's not a WiiU, but the bag is great for transporting it). We also have a small collection of party games with the Wii. We didn't know if there would be resources available to acquire games at all, since our CoP doesn't have a budget. So far, when we've asked, we've received, but we're not sure whether more ambitious (read: expensive) projects would require additional effort.
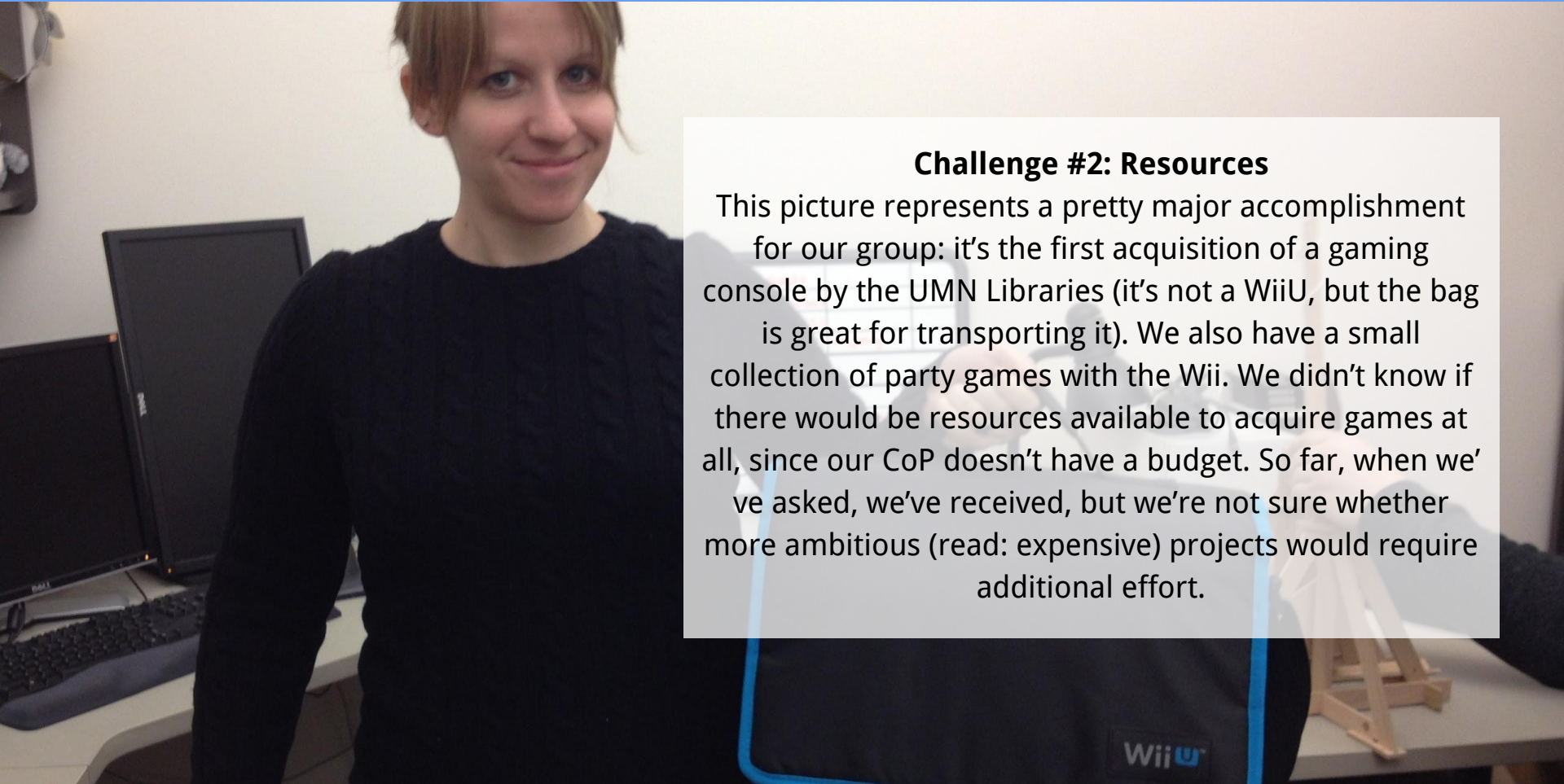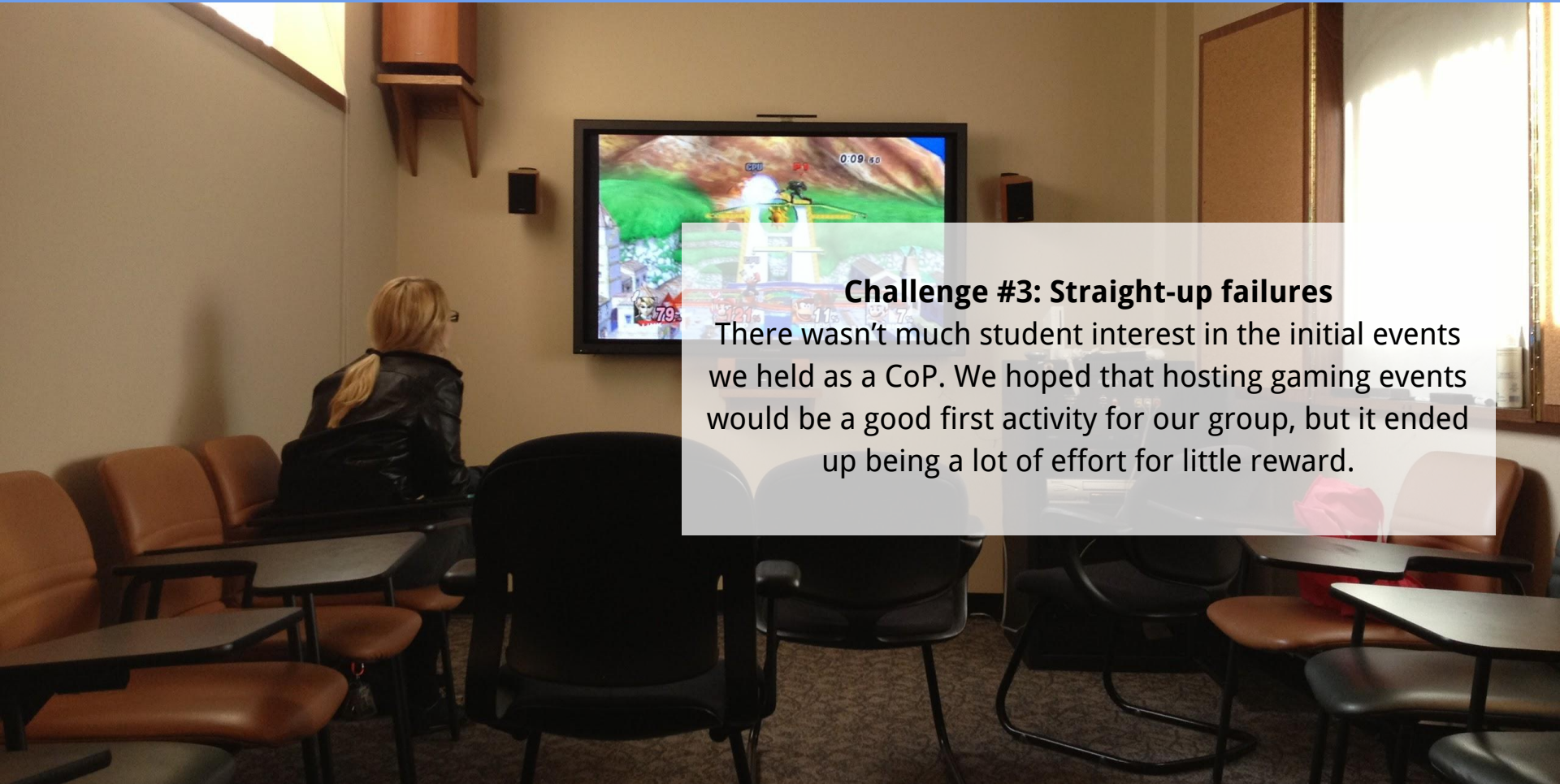
Challenge #3: Straight-up failures
There wasn't much student interest in the initial events we held as a CoP. We hoped that hosting gaming events would be a good first activity for our group, but it ended up being a lot of effort for little reward.

Challenge #4: Making an impact (work in progress)
The underwhelming interest in our initial events surprised us, especially because other libraries reported success with similar activities. We had to admit that sustaining these events every semester wasn't worth the time and effort, because the payoff wasn't any greater than other finals week activities. Our survey of first-years really got us thinking -- what ARE the next generation of gaming services?

successes + next steps

Looking ahead
We see a lot of opportunities for the Libraries to engage with gaming on campus. Ideas include hosting a research showcase, making new and advanced technology available to encourage innovative experimentation and use, and forming a collection of games developed by students or researchers at the University. We also want to survey our researchers, student developers, and instructors that use games to learn how the library can support them.

Image courtesy of Waldo Jaquith via Flickr

recommendations

1. Take the lead!

2. Help other library game nerds find you.

3. Create goals.

4. Give structure to your discussions.

5. Talk about how your efforts fit into the larger library mission / campus community.

6. Go forth and create!

stuff to read

Laskowski, M., & Ward, D. (2009). Building next generation video game collections in academic libraries. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *35*(3), 267–273. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2009.03.005

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Robson, D., & Durkee, P. (2012). New Directions for Academic Video Game Collections: Strategies for Acquiring, Supporting, and Managing Online Materials. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *38*(2), 79–84. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2012.01.003

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