Video Game Collections in an Academic Library

Diane Robson
Media Librarian
University of North Texas
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OVERVIEW

• Do Games Belong in Libraries?
• Collections & Programs
• Starting Your Game Collection
• UNT’s Collection
• Licensing
• Emerging Digital Resources
• Building a Robust Collection Despite These Issues
• Keep Collecting Physical Items
TERMS TO KNOW

Digital Rights Management (DRM) – controls the use of digital content and devices after sale

1st generation – limits illegal copying and distribution

2nd generation – limits access to legally obtained materials

Game platform/portal – allow distribution of digital content

Emulator – allows an electronic device to imitate another program or device

Stand-alone PC – no internet or network connectivity
DO GAMES BELONG IN LIBRARIES?
GAMES HAVE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

YOU HAVE DIED
OF DYSENTERY

The Oregon Trail
“Games create a compelling need to know, a need to ask, examine, assimilate and master certain skills and content areas. Some experts argue that games are, first and foremost, learning systems, and that this accounts for the sense of engagement and entertainment players experience.”

— Institute of Play
Who is playing games?
155 million people in America
51% of households own a game console
42% of Americans play games regularly

Players
Average age: 34 years old
67% of households play video games
40% gamers are women

Industry
$22 billion in revenue
52% of this revenue was for digital content
146,000 people employed directly or indirectly

(www.theesa.com)
COLLECTIONS & PROGRAMS
Libraries have a part to play in the preservation and collection of games for future generations.

**Archival collections**
Preservation of games & digital artifacts related to games
Research collections
Aid in study and teaching of games and game design

• 400 U.S. colleges offer courses in video game design.

• Games are used in art, communication, journalism, learning technologies, linguistics and radio, TV, & film classes.
Recreational Collections

A gaming collection can be much more than just a research resource.

Games can be used to:

• Enhance programming and outreach
• Build community
• Help with retention
• Encourage learning through play
STARTING YOUR GAME COLLECTION
What are the goals of your library collection?

**What type of collection can you support?**

- Archival
- Educational
- Recreational
- A little of everything

**What formats will be included?**

- Born Digital Games (Console/PC)
- Physical Games (Console/PC)
- Tabletop/Board Games
GAME COLLECTION SUPPORT

A digital game collection requires support from other areas of the library.

Do you have adequate technical support for a digital video game collection?

• PCs
• Dedicated game consoles (Nintendo, Xbox, PlayStation)
• Handheld systems (Nintendo, PlayStation)
• Smart phones
• Wireless devices (Ipad/Tablet, Ipod, Kindle)

Contract librarian support
Do you have support to meet your campus legal requirements?
At this time the UNT game collection includes console, computer, and tabletop games. This collection is educational and recreational. Our goals are to:

• Increase library collaboration across campus and the community
• Improve library literacy and familiarize new students with the libraries
• Enhance student collaboration and success
SELECTION & DEVELOPMENT

We play and circulate our games.

Librarian-curated collection including:

• Top-rated games
• Historically relevant games
• Games to support coursework
• Consider requests from patrons, staff, and faculty
ACQUISITIONS

Single-item firm orders
All of our library purchased titles are physical items because of licensing limitations. We input single-item order records for each title.

Open Access Games

• Portals
UNT provides access to free game portals (students use their own accounts).

• Browser-Based Games
Many browser-based Indie games are free.
  Itch.io
  Kongregate
  Games for change

Donations
UNT actively solicits donations of games throughout the year to build our collections.

Subscription
One Play is a new game subscription service that has just released a library license.
There are many ways to access digital games.

UNT’s collection includes:

• Computers
  (6 PCs, 6 Laptops)

• Game consoles
  (Xbox, Nintendo, Sony)

• Handheld game system
  (Nintento DS, 3DS, PSP, Vita)

Other digital game devices:

• Smartphone

• Wireless device
  (Ipad/Tablet, Ipod, Kindle)
DELIVERY SYSTEMS — SOFTWARE

Methods of delivery:

Physical
• Disk
• Cartridge

Digital
• Console Portals
  - Nintendo eShop
  - PlayStation Network (PSN)
  - Xbox Live Marketplace
• PC Game Portals
  - Steam
  - Good Old Games (GOG)
  - One Play
  - Game Tap
LICENSING

Most digital delivery systems have licensing for single-users only.
Licenses are reviewed for conformity to the contracting requirements of the State of Texas and for library use.

We look for:

- Indemnification
- Governing law
- Venue
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Terms
- Limitation of claims
- Confidentiality
- Authorized users
- Perpetual access
End User License Agreement (EULA)

All EULAs and click-wrap agreements must go through the licensing review process.

Clicking a EULA is considered agreeing to a contract in the university’s name.

To aid in this process, a list is maintained of the approved EULAs.
HOW CONTRACTS AND EULAS AFFECT OUR COLLECTION
PHYSICAL GAME ACCESS

PC, console, and table-top games circulate to our patrons under first-sale doctrine (just like other physical library materials).
No library-owned digital downloads because of licensing issues.

No internet access on consoles because:

• We cannot ensure account security (passwords, etc.)
• We cannot allow user-owned content to remain on library hardware
DIGITAL PC GAME ACCESS

PC Games
Access software (if EULA allows)
Student uses own account.
• Blizzard
• League of Legends
• Star Wars the Old Republic

PC Portals
• Steam – free portal / Digital Rights Management system (DRM) / no multi-user license
• Good Old Games – free portal / DRM-free games / no multi-user license
• Subscription Portals – allow access if multi-user account is available
OLDER GAME ACCESS

Problems
Older physical games are:

- Dependent on older software
- 16-bit/32-bit/64-bit
- DOS

Solution
These problems are solved by running a virtual machine (AKA emulator) such as:

- DOS emulator (DOSBox)
- Windows XP emulator
DIGITAL ACCESS & CAMPUS SECURITY

Issues:

• Digital Rights Management (DRM)
• Steam/Custom Executable Generation (CEG)
• Account security (AKA “Deep Freeze”)
EMERGING DIGITAL RESOURCES
One Play is a subscription-based service that allows digital access to games with a multi-user license.

This portal provides:

- Access to over 1000 games for download and play
- PC (including MAC) and Android games
- Educational games
- Games loaded to two platforms at a time
Problems with licensing are a known issue and librarians are working to solve them.

TAG received a grant from the Knight Foundation to create a prototype console loaded with indie games and library-appropriate licensing.

This console, named Alice, will have a stripped down Linux distribution running Kodi on a Gigabyte Brix. The controllers are generic.
The Steam Machine is a computer running SteamOS that can connect to the internet and not required to have Deep Freeze loaded (at UNT).

This solves the problems with Steam CEG & Key codes.

May potentially create problem with keeping personal accounts secure (complete log-out required).
BUILDING A ROBUST COLLECTION DESPITE THESE ISSUES
Link to free games & resources online
GAME CREATION SOFTWARE

• Plotbot (Screenwriting)
• Inkscape (Graphic)
• Gimp (Graphic)
• Audacity (Audio)
• Stencyl (Programming)
• Gamemaker Studio (Game Engine)
• Unreal Engine 4 (Game Engine)
• Unreal Development Kit (Game Engine)
• Unity (Game Engine)

Access to resources
• Flow lab Game Creator
• Scratch
• Play My Code
• Twine
INTERNET ARCHIVES

Console Living Room
The Internet Archive's Console Living Room takes us back to the evolution of the home video game, when the first home video game consoles became centers of video game entertainment.

Software Library: MS-DOS Games
Software for MS-DOS machines that represent entertainment and games. The collection includes action, strategy, adventure, and other unique games of the MS-DOS era. Through the use of the EMU4X68/EMU3200 emulator.

Classic PC Games
Take a walk back in time and revisit your favorite DOS and Windows games. The files available in this collection consist primarily of PC demos, freeware, and shareware. These files are the original releases which will require intermediate to high-level knowledge.

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KEEP COLLECTING
PHYSICAL ITEMS
Our physical game collection is one of the most used collections in the library.

PC and Console games are circulated to the university under first-sale doctrine.

All of our games can be checked out for three days.

All of the circulating games are testing to run on current operating systems before circulating.
Take time each year to actively solicit donations from:

- Your patrons, faculty, and staff
- Game developers
- Game companies
Get your game on @ the library!
GAMING GROUPS

ALA Games and Gaming Roundtable
http://www.ala.org/gamert/home

League of Librarian Gamers (Facebook group)
https://www.facebook.com/groups/MTGLibrarians

Women in Games International (WIGI) (Facebook group)
https://www.facebook.com/getWIGI/?fref=ts
FREE ONLINE GAMES

Kongregate – http://www.kongregate.com/

Itch.io - http://itch.io/

Games for Change - http://www.gamesforchange.org/play/
PORTALS

Steam – store.steampowered.com

Good Old Games (GOG) – www.gog.com

One Play – www.oneplay.com

Game Tap – www.gametap.com

Origin – www.origin.com
REFERENCES


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http://laurenheacker.wix.com/eportfolio

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DIANE ROBSON
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

Diane.Robson@unt.edu