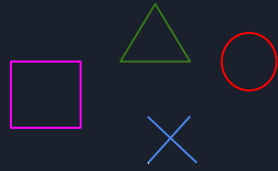


# Borrow, Play, & Create Video Games in the Library

A proposal by: Nicole Azof  
For the Stanislaus County Public  
Library



# LEVEL 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Video games in the library can increase patron engagement. These video game services will give the library an opportunity to reach out to new users and connect with regulars on a deeper level. Members of the video game community will feel heard, and excited to have space where they can play and connect with others. O'Brien's article emphasizes the importance of free space (O'Brien, 2019) where patrons can simply come to the library, pick up a video game and play will encourage patrons to visit the library more often. The library becomes a "third place" (ALA, 2025) one creating a social and engaging place. This program will not only pick up on the newest tech trends in the library, but will give access to patrons seeking gaming entertainment, wanting to borrow any games to take home, and encourage patrons to be creative.

O'Brien, C. (2019). *How San Francisco's Public Libraries are embracing their changing roles*. Shareable.

<https://www.shareable.net/how-san-francisco-public-libraries-are-embracing-their-changing-role/>

ALA. *Gaming in Libraries* (2025). American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/gaming/gaming>

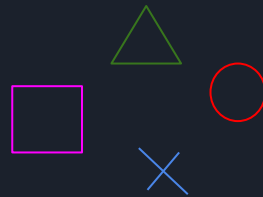


# LEVEL 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FREE! CONNECTION! COMMUNITY!



## LEVEL 2: INTRODUCTION



“Libraries are about access to stories and information in many forms of media, not specifically books,” (ALA Games & Gaming Round Table, 2025). Libraries brought in video game services to maintain relevance in the 21st century library, and believe it can keep the library and community hyperlinked. In fact, Strong points out in his article that libraries were more than happy to offer video game services (2023) , create space to play video games, and even add video games to their library circulation so patrons can borrow them. Additionally, video games can be educational, often aligning with school curriculum. Most video games often push players to think more actively as they encounter challenging levels, which helps children develop a sense of “agency” (Brown & Kasper, 2013) and be more motivated to learn new ideas. Some of these library programs hold game design workshops where community members with video game expertise can teach patrons about designing their own games. This could be the perfect opportunity to display books such as Video Game design, Concept art books, and gaming guides for different games.

Games & Gaming Round Table. (2025). *Why have games in libraries? Dealing with obstacles and challenges to bringing games into the library*. American Library Association. <https://games.ala.org/why-have-games-in-libraries/>

Brown, R. T., and Kasper, T. (2013). The fusion of literacy and games: A case study in assessing the goals of a library video game program. *Library Trends*.  
<https://web-p-ebshost-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=4f728dc0-d89e-4a53-86bd-d5d3a78a8acc%40redis>

## Level 3: OBJECTIVE

The Stanislaus County Public Library will be implementing a *Borrow, Play, & Create Video Games* program, one of the many growing technology trends libraries are adopting. Taking place in the library's community room, the program will allow kids, teens, young adults, and even families to play video games together.



(San Mateo County Libraries, 2024).

## Level 3: Objective Playing Games

For most special events, the video games played at the library will be RPG (Role Playing Games), educational, or family oriented games to foster problem solving and creativity skills kids and teens can hone. Adults will also have their own game nights more for their target audience.



(Santa  
Clara  
County  
Library  
District,  
2025)

## Level 3: Objective Gaming Collections

We know patrons probably want to play video games of all genres, so different types of video games will still be available to check out.

Circulation include games for different consoles (X-Box, Playstation, Nintendo Switch, etc.) even if library doesn't hold all consoles.



(The Santa Clara County Library District has games such as *Assassins Creed*, *Sonic Superstars*, and *DragonBall* on their online catalog for users to place holds on. And all these games are for different ages, and can be played on different consoles, 2025).

## Level 3: Objective Game Design

Every other week, one of the events will have a “Game Design” workshop where all attendees will get to conceptualize their own video games (RPG) to inspire their creativity. (Worldbuilding, characters, designing, quests, etc.)



(NC State University has a work station where students can sit at and learn to design their own games, 2025)



## LEVEL 4: THE TECHNOLOGY

Video games can be played on several different consoles. (X-Box, Playstation, Nintendo Switch, VR) and of course it's up to the library to decide which consoles they can provide, based on popularity or users' needs. Even so, the library can still provide different console games in case patrons do have those systems but don't have the games they want. Librarians should keep updated on what the latest consoles are (Enis, Webb, and Wilkes, 2021) with Nintendo Switch and PS5 being the latest. Lots of libraries also provide VR (virtual reality consoles and games) as well.



(Xbox Series S from the official Xbox site, 2025)

Enis, M., Webb, A., and Wilkes, C. (2021). *Game On: Gaming Programming for Libraries*. Library Journal.

<https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Game-On-Gaming-Programming-For-Libraries>

# LEVEL 5:

## When the Trend Started



While libraries have always provided board games or online games to play on the computer, libraries also started offering video games to play or borrow in the library around the early 2000s and late 2010s when public libraries started adding video games to their circulation (Oakley, 2008) and even offer services and events for kids, teens, and their families where they can hang out and play video games together. This trend was starting to pick up again in the late 2010s when virtual reality came to play, and libraries started adopting them due to their immersive storytelling aspects (ALA, 2025) that can introduce a new kind of entertainment, such as video games to kids, teens, and adults as well. And around 2020 again when COVID hit, libraries thought to expand their game programming outside the library by playing phone or video game applications such as Kahoot or JackBox games via online/Zoom when adults needed to play games as a destressor (Enis, Webb, & Wilkes, 2021).

(Official  
JackBox  
website, 2025)

Oakley, T. (2008). *Circulating Video Games: The Gaming Life*. School Library Journal. <https://www.slj.com/story/circulating-video-games-the-gaming-life>

ALA. *Virtual Reality*. (2025). American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/future/trends/virtualreality>

Enis, M., Webb, A., and Wilkes, C. (2021). *Game On: Gaming Programming for Libraries*. Library Journal. <https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Game-On-Gaming-Programming-For-Libraries>

## LEVEL 6:

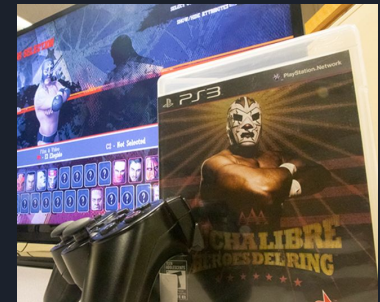
# EXPERIENCING CULTURE THROUGH VIDEO GAMES

Libraries can also provide video games that have cultural impact for different heritages globally.

Librarians can bring in video games that originated from or represent several

cultures/characters/settings and present it as a learning opportunity for kids and teens (Ebner, 2019) to see how diverse video games are, and learn more about the creators of those games.

Kids and teens can play games focusing on Latin American, Japanese, Italian, and many other cultures.



(Both games such as *Soul Calibur* and *Lucha Libre* add more diversity to the game collection, From Ebner, 2019)

Ebner, A. (2019). *Game On: Exploring the World Through Video Games*. University of Delaware.

<https://library.udel.edu/news/2019/05/18/exploring-the-world-through-video-games/>



## LEVEL 7: Details of the Program

Kids, teens, and young adults will have access to play video games based on their age and curriculum, and certain games will be chosen for special events.

- Freeplay gaming will be timed. Kids and teens can have a certain time slot for 1-2 hours. Before going in, kids will have to tell the librarian which console they are playing so they know when the next person could use it. Make sure kids and teens are not disrupting any other patrons and are taking turns when necessary.



( Nintendo  
Switch from the  
official Nintendo  
website.)

## LEVEL 7:

# Details of the Program

### Rules:

- Patrons must wait their turns to play games/use consoles unless of course the game allows multiplayer.
- Players must follow their time slots, once their time is done, they must give the console to the librarian/next player.
- Fighting/Loud arguments will not be tolerated and any users doing this will be kicked out and lose their time slot.
- Parents must also approve of the games their kids are playing. Certain games (such as Rated M are restricted to 18 years + patrons, Rated T for teens may be restricted to 13 years + unless parents approve. Rated E means anyone can play.)
- Most special family/special events will focus on RPG (role playing games) and educational games, but events for adults and freeplay gaming is up to the patrons. Game Design Workshops will occur every other week. If patrons wish, they can borrow whatever games they were playing to take home, and if the library doesn't have the console, circulation will still have other video games on different consoles to borrow.



(PS5, From the Playstation official site)

## LEVEL 8:

### How Users Are Impacted By the Trend

These video game services have given kids and teens, and to an extent families, a space to “develop important social and educational skills” (Czarnecki, 2007) as they interact with their peers and family members. This includes the adults who come to the library to play games as well. Young adults and adults still love to play video games and by giving them space and opportunity to freely play games, they are able to socialize with their friends, families, and peers sharing their interests.

(From the Playstation  
official website,  
2025)



Czarnecki, K. (2007). *A Revolution in Library Service: The Gaming Life*. School Library Journal.

<https://www.slj.com/story/a-revolution-in-library-service-the-gaming-life>

## LEVEL 9:

### PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION: Step 1

- **Keep updated on the latest consoles/games.** Conduct surveys in your community to see which consoles/games users are most likely to play/don't have so we can really fulfill their entertainment needs. It is important to be aware of the budgeting, and see how many consoles your library can hold and how much space the library has. Keep in mind in the collection, patrons can still borrow games for their consoles at home.

(PlayStation Pro 4. Some consoles may just come out with an updated version of the console, so make sure to know if its worth purchasing or keeping an old one, from the official Playstation website, 2025)

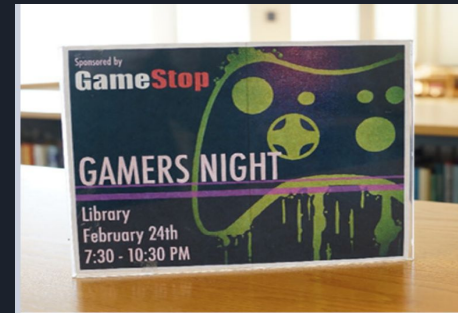


## LEVEL 9:

### PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION: Step 2

- **Establish partnerships with local gaming stores or other stores selling games** (Czarnecki, 2007) Additionally, some of these workers may be experts in the gaming world, and might be able to come for special events and talk about their work in the stores or explain the lore of certain games. Asking for donations from community members can also be a great way to build up your library's video game collection. Ask these stores if they can market the library's events at these stores and even tag them in social media posts. Establishing these types of partnerships will create a strong support network that not just keeps the program going, but helps it thrive.

(A flier marketing a video game event crediting GameStop, (Donnelly and Herbert, 2017).





## LEVEL 9:

### PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION: Step 3

- **Collect feedback from patrons and librarians.** After special events, invite patrons and staff members working the events what they thought was great/needs improvement.

Leave comments on social media feedback posts, or in suggestion boxes the librarians can check after. Additionally, users can try out the video game room prior to its launch and give librarians feedback about how accessible it is for users, and easy to use.

(Students filling out surveys about marketing, enjoyment, improvement etc. From Donnelly & Herbert, 2017)



## Level 10: Libraries Successfully Implement the Tech!

### FOR PLAYING VIDEO GAMES INSIDE THE LIBRARY

- Many public libraries have successfully implemented video game programming in their services and have received great feedback. Gamers who own consoles, but don't want to purchase a specific video game but still want to test it out appreciate the “increased accessibility” (Rogers, 2020). And gamers who don't own consoles also appreciate getting to try out different consoles before purchasing.

(From the Playstation  
official website,  
2025)



Rogers, R. (2020). *Gaming on a Budget? Try Your Local Library*. Wired.

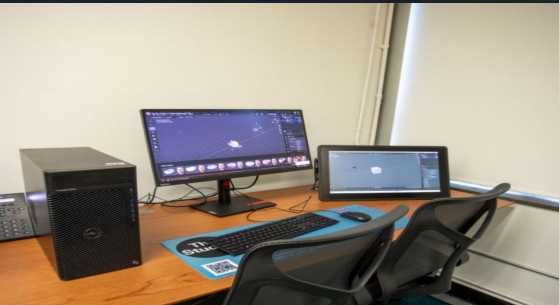
<https://www.wired.com/story/free-games-libraries/#:~:text=Libraries%20across%20America%20are%20adding,if%20they%20have%20a%20collection>

# Level 10: Libraries Successfully Implement the Tech!

## FOR GAME DESIGN WORKSHOPS

- Public libraries can also invite game design experts to host workshops on how to design their own Mario level (Business Wire, 2017), creating a fun and immersive space for families to work together. Academic libraries also implement game design workshops and courses in the library for students to hang out and learn how to design their own characters.

*(The Illustration and modeling workstation at the NC university's library, 2025).*



Business Wire. (2016). Nintendo Hosts a Mario Level -Design

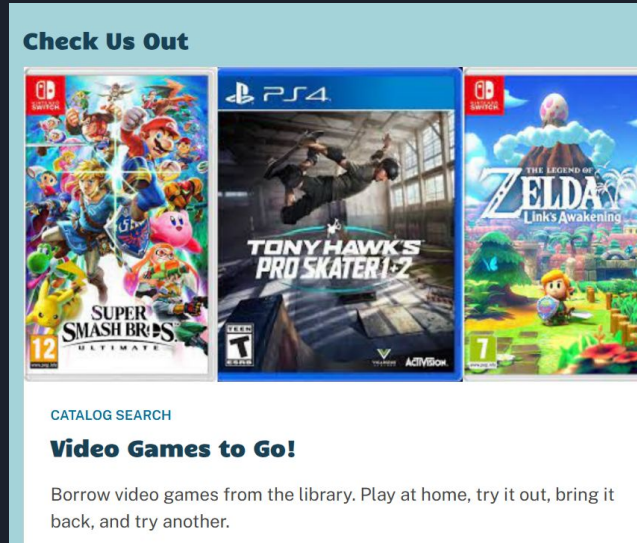
Workshop at the Los Angeles Public Library. *Business Wire*.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1776814667?accountid=10361&parentSessionId=Nn8%2FskbP14VGvDGzJFvtA31iBJaxHDfvytxMO9LVWk%3D&pq-origsite=primo&sourcecetype=Wire%20Feeds>

## Level 10: Libraries Successfully Implement the Tech!

### FOR BORROWING

The Oakland Public Library provides an online catalog for users to browse and place holds on games they wish to play and pick up later.



(Oakland Public Library video game catalog on their library website, 2025)

# CONCLUSION: *You Have Finished the Game!*

Video game programming is transforming libraries into a third place, giving a space where kids, teens, and adults can gain access to games/consoles they don't have, share common interests with their peers, have the opportunity to socialize with community members and their families, and encourage patrons to visit the library more often.



(From  
Nintendo  
official  
website,  
2025)



(Mario characters from the official Nintendo  
website, 2025)



# References

ALA. *Gaming in Libraries* (2025). American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/gaming/gaming>

ALA. *Virtual Reality*. (2025). American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/future/trends/virtualreality>

Brown, R.T., and Kasper, T. (2013). The fusion of literacy and games: A case study in assessing the goals of a library video game program. *Library Trends*.

<https://web-p-ebscohost-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=4f728dc0-d89e-4a53-86bd-d5d3a78a8acc%40redis>

Business Wire. (2016). Nintendo Hosts a Mario Level -Design Workshop at the Los Angeles Public Library. *Business Wire*.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1776814667?accountid=10361&parentSessionId=Nn8%2FskbP14VGvDGzJFVtA3liBjaxHDffvvtxMO9LVWk%3D&pq-origsite=primo&sourcectype=Wire%20Feeds>

Czarnecki, K. (2007). *A Revolution in Library Service: The Gaming Life*. School Library Journal. <https://www.slj.com/story/a-revolution-in-library-service-the-gaming-life>

Donnelly, J.C., and Herbert, B.R. (2017). *Calling all Gamers: Game night in the academic library*. Association of College & Research Libraries. <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/16703/18189>

Ebner, A. (2019). *Game On: Exploring the World Through Video Games*. University of Delaware. <https://library.udel.edu/news/2019/05/18/exploring-the-world-through-video-games/>

Enis, M., Webb, A., and Wilkes, C. (2021). *Game On: Gaming Programming for Libraries*. Library Journal.

<https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Game-On-Gaming-Programming-For-Libraries>

Games & Gaming Round Table. (2025). *Why have games in libraries? Dealing with obstacles and challenges to bringing games into the library*. American Library

Association. <https://games.ala.org/why-have-games-in-libraries/>

Jackbox Games. (2025). <https://www.jackboxgames.com/>

NC State University Libraries. (2025). *Gaming*. NC State. <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/do/gaming>

NC State University Libraries. (2025). *Game Development Workstation*. NC State.

<https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/spaces/game-development-workstation#directions>

NC State University Libraries. (2025). *Illustrations + Modeling Workstation*. NC State.

<https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/spaces/illustration-modeling-workstation#inside>



# References

- .intendo Switch. (2025). [https://www.nintendo.com/us/gaming-systems/switch/?srsltid=AfmBOoqUI0v1AazNCCTaOPZk3GGzzg-AEkCcsH08YUY\\_wb9pjVNx2j56](https://www.nintendo.com/us/gaming-systems/switch/?srsltid=AfmBOoqUI0v1AazNCCTaOPZk3GGzzg-AEkCcsH08YUY_wb9pjVNx2j56)
- Oakley, T. (2008). *Circulating Video Games: The Gaming Life*. School Library Journal. <https://www.slj.com/story/circulating-video-games-the-gaming-life>
- O'Brien, C. (2019). *How San Francisco's Public Libraries are embracing their changing roles*. Shareable. <https://www.shareable.net/how-san-francisco-public-libraries-are-embracing-their-changing-role/>
- Playstation. (2025). <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/>
- Rogers, R. (2020). *Gaming on a Budget? Try Your Local Library*. Wired. <https://www.wired.com/story/free-games-libraries/#:~:text=Libraries%20across%20America%20are%20adding.if%20they%20have%20a%20collection>
- Santa Clara County Library District. (2025). *New Games*. SCCLD. <https://scclld.org/games/>
- SMCL Circulation Services. (2024). *Level up with New Video Games at San Mateo County Libraries*. San Mateo County Libraries. <https://smcl.org/blogs/post/level-up-with-new-video-games-at-san-mateo-county-libraries/>
- Strong, B. (2023). *Branching Out: Gaming in Libraries*. Jackson County Library Services. <https://jcls.org/2023/04/04/gaming-in-libraries/>
- Xbox. (2025). <https://www.xbox.com/en-US/consoles/xbox-series-s>