Video Game Collection Development Policy

for the Martha Riley Community Library

Roseville, California

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Tiffany Calhoun
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Overview

Mission and Goals

The mission of the Roseville Public Libraries of Roseville, California states, “We enrich lives by actively connecting people with an engaging variety of collections, activities, services and environments” (Roseville Public Library). The Roseville Public Libraries’ vision is to be “the place to experience the joys of learning, discovery, creating, and connecting” (Roseville Public Library)! In accordance with this overall mission and vision, the mission of the video game collection at the Martha Riley Community Library is to provide a variety of popular video games for circulation that will enrich the lives of our child and teenage users and that will promote new and different modes of learning, discovery, creating, and connecting.

By developing this special collection, the Martha Riley Community Library aims to accomplish several goals: (1) To provide a new collection that the current user community can enjoy and through which they can learn; (2) To attract more library users within the target clientele; and (3) By attracting new users, to encourage the use of other library services and resources. Several sources show that video games can support various methods of learning and the development of important skills, such as problem solving, teamwork, and strategy; in addition, the inclusion of video game collections in a library can attract more users, which will only help to promote the use of additional library services (Oakley, 2008; Sanford, 2008; Rich, 2008). Since the Martha Riley Community Library currently has a modest video game collection, this development policy plans to guide this growing—in size and popularity—collection in order to fulfill the mission and vision of the Roseville Public Libraries and the mission specific to this special collection and to accomplish the goals listed above.
Service Community

The Martha Riley Community Library, being one of the three Roseville Public Libraries, serves the citizens of Roseville, California, which is located in the metropolitan area of Sacramento in Placer County. Roseville has a population of approximately 107,000 people (Fedstats). The three most prominent racial groups in the city are Whites, making up eighty-six percent of the population, Hispanics, making up eleven percent, and Asians, constituting four percent (Fedstats). The age distribution percentages of Roseville are as follows: twenty-six percent of the population is under eighteen, seven percent is between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, thirty percent is between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four, twenty-one percent is between the ages of forty-five and sixty-four, and fourteen percent is age sixty-five or older (Fedstats). These statistics are representative of Roseville as a whole, and, therefore, indicate the possibilities of ethnicities and ages of people who may use any of the three Roseville libraries.

Recommended Service Clientele

As indicated in the mission statement for the Martha Riley Community Library’s video game collection, the target user community will be children and teenagers. That being said, the expected age range of the majority of the collection’s users will be from ages five to eighteen, which is approximately nineteen percent of Roseville, California’s population (Fedstats). Through surveys of current users of the video game collection, a more precise age range might be determined at which to direct development.
Collection Parameters

This special collection at the Martha Riley Community Library is one of video games; thus this development policy deals only with video games. However, because video games are often released for more than one gaming system (XBOX, PlayStation 3, Wii, etc.), the library will try to acquire each game selected for more than one of the popular gaming systems, when such options are available.

Additionally, no specific video game content will be sought; rather, the library will seek to acquire popular and recommended games with a rating from the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) of “E” (for Everyone), “E 10+” (for Everyone ten and up), “T” (for Teen), and “M” (for Mature), as these are the appropriate game ratings for the target user groups (Entertainment Software Rating Board).

Needs to be Met by the Collection

The Martha Riley Community Library understands that having a circulating video game collection is an excellent way to attract young people to the library (Oakley, 2008, p. 30). Aside from this advantage, video games are entertaining and fun, but they also support “learning in many complex ways, encourage positive interaction with computers, the use of imagination, problem-solving skills, and enable opportunities for collaborative engagement” (Sanford, 2008, p. 83). Additionally, they “may also teach a kind of digital literacy that is becoming as important as proficiencies in print” (Rich, 2008). With this understanding, the video game collection at the Martha Riley Community Library is oriented towards meeting the recreational and educational needs of library users and several service needs of the library. By meeting the recreational and educational needs of patrons, the collection aims to enrich users’ lives and help this library truly
be a place where people come to experience the joys of “learning, discovery, creating, and connecting” (Roseville Public Library). The service needs of the library that the collection intends to meet are to increase the general use of library materials, to attract more library users, and to promote other library services, programs, and resources, specifically the Roseville Public Libraries’ Teen Library Council, a volunteer council of teenagers that help plan library events, recommend library materials, decorate teen space, and help raise money for the library through fundraisers (Roseville Public Library).

The video game collection will be a circulating one because the library will not be housing the various game systems on which to play the games. The rental period will be one week, with a one dollar late fee for each day the game is late. If, however, certain games are not circulating as often as hoped for, the rental period may be extended to encourage their use. Even though the Martha Riley Community Library is one of three public libraries in Roseville, it will attempt, with its video game collection, to be as self-sufficient as possible for its user community; however, this library will collaborate with the other Roseville Public Libraries in order to most effectively meet patron needs and wants.

**Details of Subject Areas and Formats Collected**

**Collection Users**

As discussed in the Overview, the primary users of the video game collection will be children and teenagers. These are currently the most popular users of the collection, and the development of the collection will be aimed at encouraging more use by children and teenagers. These two user groups (roughly ages five to eighteen) constitute nineteen percent of the population of the city of Roseville, a significant amount (Fedstats). More information about these
users and their preferences can be found through interaction with the current participants of the Teen Library Council and through user surveys, if needed. However, it is important to note that the Martha Riley Community Library will not deny other patrons outside of these two user groups access to and use of the collection; the video game collection may be used by any and all library patrons.

**Collection Formats**

Since this collection development policy deals strictly with the video game collection at the Martha Riley Community Library, video games are the only items here to be collected. However, many video games are developed and formatted for multiple video game systems, such as Microsoft’s XBOX, Sony’s PlayStation 3, and Nintendo’s Wii—the current three most popular systems. For this reason, when a game is selected, the library will purchase copies of the game for multiple systems, if possible, for which the game has been released. Most likely, this will result in having a selection of games for the Wii (because the most popular games for the Wii are generally not available on other systems) and a selection of games available for both the XBOX and PlayStation 3. For more information on which systems a game is available for, the library will check that particular game’s official website or a review site, such as ign.com or gamespot.com.

**Selection Responsibilities**

The development of the video game collection at the Martha Riley Community Library will be overseen by the librarian in charge of teen resources and services. As this librarian is already familiar with many of the interests of teen users and with the Teen Library Council, he
will be responsible for seeking out user input on recommendations to the collection, reviewing the video games being considered for acquisition, and presenting this information to the head collection development librarian, who will make the final decision on whether or not to acquire a particular game.

**Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria for the video game collection include the following: select games that are popular and/or recommended by the target user groups; select games favorably reviewed by various selection aids; acquire each game for more than one gaming system when that option is possible; do not select games that receive an ESRB rating higher than “M” (for Mature); avoid unpopular games and games that receive negative reviews in the selection aids. These selection criteria have been suggested to ensure that the games added to the collection are games that the Martha Riley Community Library users want, that they are games of good quality, that the games will be available for users who have different game systems, and that the games are rated appropriately for the target user groups. In addition, by adhering to these selection criteria, the library can work toward accomplishing two of its goals for this collection: to provide a new collection that the current user community can enjoy and through which they can learn and to attract more library users within the target clientele.

**Selection Aids**

Aside from the input received from the Teen Library Council and other individual users on games being considered for acquisition, video game review sites, such as ign.com and gamespot.com, and gaming magazines, such as Electronic Gaming Monthly, for example, will be
consulted. Imagine Games Network, ign.com, is recommended because it is one of the largest and most respected video game websites in the world and has an experienced editorial staff (Imagine Games Network). Gamespot.com, powered by CBS Interactive, is also a widely known and respected site featuring premier online content for information and entertainment (Gamespot). Finally, *Electronic Gaming Monthly* is a monthly magazine and companion website boasting reviews, articles, and blogs from well-respected gaming editors and bonus content exclusive to EGM (Electronic Gaming Monthly). These selection aids will be the primary sources used to guide the decision-making process; however, other aids of high quality may also be consulted.

**Miscellaneous**

**Gifts**

Gifts to the video game collection at the Martha Riley Community Library will only be accepted if they are items that the library would purchase on its own, if they match all of the selection criteria, and if they are in good condition. This gift policy is to ensure that no unnecessary time or money is spent on items worthless to the collection and that the library does not add to the collection items unwanted and that will go unused by patrons.

**Deselection and Discards**

Because this is a relatively new collection for the Martha Riley Community Library, there will not be, as of yet, a specific deselection policy. However, once the collection grows and use of the collection can be reviewed over a longer period of time, a deselection policy will be implemented in order to remove those video games no longer receiving use and add to the
collection newer games. However, because video games are susceptible to physical damage through improper care and heavy game play, the physical condition of the video games will be regularly examined to assess whether or not an item needs to be cleaned, repaired, or discarded and replaced.

**Evaluation**

An evaluation policy will be in place to assess the effectiveness of the video game selection process. This is a relatively new and growing collection, so it will be evaluated by user feedback and institutional comparisons on the current selection available of individual titles and the availability of games for different game systems to determine if the selection criteria need to be reconsidered and changed. Again, the Martha Riley Community Library wants to be sure that this special collection is developed in such a way as to meet the mission and goals laid out earlier in this policy; for this reason, this evaluation policy will be in place.

**Complaints and Censorship**

Any complaints about the video game collection can be submitted by completing a complaint form with appropriate information. The complaint will be reviewed and the game in question will be appropriately reevaluated based on the nature of the complaint. However, as long as a video game meets the selection criteria and does not have an ESRB rating higher than “M” (for Mature), it will not be censored and removed from the collection. The reason for this is because the ESRB ratings mentioned above reflect the ages of the intended user groups for this collection and because the Martha Riley Community Library believes that if a parent or legal guardian of a child disapproves of their child’s access to any of the library’s material, then it is
solely the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to monitor what their child checks out from the collections.
References

Electronic Gaming Monthly. *In the beginning there was Electronic Gaming Monthly*. Retrieved from http://www.egmnow.com/about


