Power up: Gaps in and opportunities for gaming in LIS Curricula

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Introduction

- Games have long been part of libraries (Nicholson, 2013); libraries have been adding games to their collections to encourage learners' development of critical thinking and inquiry skills, their use of information sources, and to facilitate participation in knowledge-based collaboration (Neuman, 2011).
- Digital gaming in particular facilitates the development of 21st Century Literacies (Galarneau & Zibit, 2011).
- Librarians can use games to teach students about inquiry, use of information sources, participation in knowledge-based collaboration, and other critical thinking skills; gaming and technology are great vehicles to promote a lifelong love of learning and reading (Mashriqi, 2011).
- Children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged are falling behind in 21st Century digital media skills because they do not have the access they need; libraries should provide both the access and the mentoring necessary to fully engage with these literacies (Gee, 2012).
- Once realizing the educational potential of games of all sorts to be context-rich, well-designed learning environments, pre-service librarians embraced games as learning tools and activities and saw them as valuable part of the library and curriculum (Martin & Martinez, 2016).

Problem Statement & Research Question

Digital gaming provides can help librarians foster 21st century literacies, but are pre-service librarians being prepared to be able to successfully incorporate gaming into their collections and programming? As such, our research question was: **How do ALA-accredited LIS programs in the U.S. address gaming in their curricula?**

Methods

We searched the course descriptions from ALA-accredited LIS programs in the U.S. for terms related to games and gaming, gamification, digital interactive media, and virtual worlds

Findings

Only nine courses across three ALA-accredited programs had curriculum related to gaming:

- One special topic course on developing programs with games in libraries
- One course consumption of games and other media
- Three courses on game design, one focused on serious games and games for learning in particular
- One course that focused on narrative structures and included games and interactive digital media as venues for exploring those narratives
- There were three courses that referred to game related content, (specifically, game-based approaches, games with a purpose, and game-based learning), but it was unclear how gaming was being addressed in the courses
- Seven of the nine courses associated with the search terms were special topics courses

Limitations

- Course descriptions were collected from the 2014/2015 academic calendar year and may have since been updated
- Limited to ALA accredited programs in the United States
- May not have included all special topics courses

Recommendations

Gaming can easily be incorporated into LIS curriculum through content and activities that address:

- Developing collections to include games and gaming media could be addressed into collection development courses
- Creating gamers' advisories and gaming programming and services could be included in courses that address materials, programming, and services for both adults and youth
- Developing or using games as instructional tools or learning activities for games-based learning in the library/classroom contexts could be incorporated in courses that address programming and services or in courses that deal with instructional design

Next Steps

Given the findings and recommendations above, the next steps of this research project include:

- Surveys of instructors, lecturers, and other faculty members at ALA-accredited programs about their inclusion and/or use of games in their courses
- The surveys will also be used to solicit and collect sample syllabi as well as identify potential interview participants
- Ultimately, we hope to provide curricular recommendations for LIS programs and best practices guide for librarians

Infomon

Gotta catalog 'em all!

Art by
Javi Hernandez

Infomon

Monsters based on various information theories and concepts (Infomon) have invaded ALISE! Can you catalog them all?

How to Play

You can find the Infomon (10 types in total) around the room during this session. Simply collect the 'card' for each Infomon from its location, then bring the complete set of cards back to our poster. You may trade Infomon cards with other players to complete your set, but you cannot carry more than one card of each particular Infomon.

Fabulous Prizes!

If you bring back the complete set of Infomon, you may win a prize! The first player to bring back the complete set wins the grand prize, a $10 Starbucks card. The next four players to bring back the complete set will receive a $5 Starbucks card.
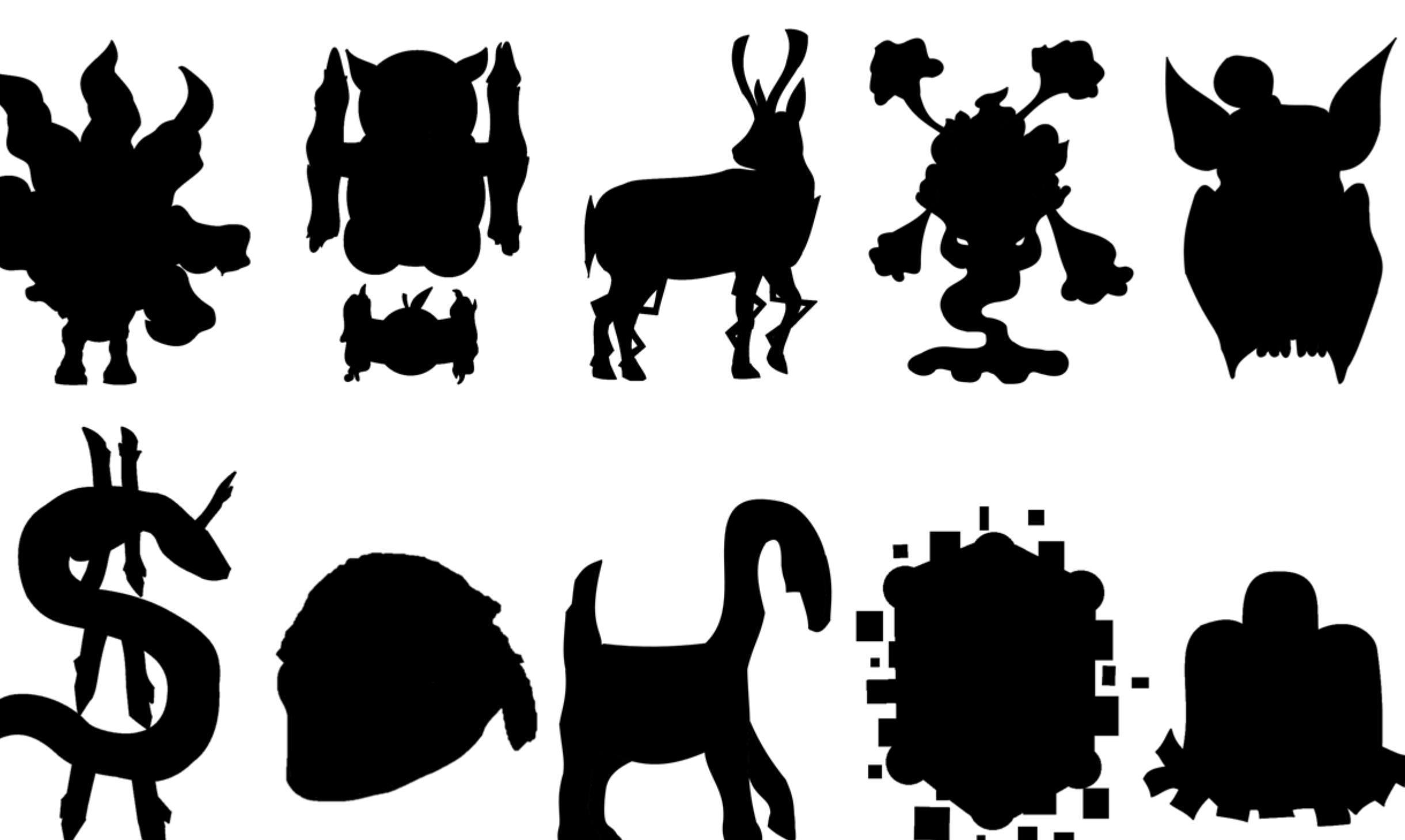
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