

## Games@the Library 2016 Report for the APLA Winter Bulletin

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During the week of October 16-22, 2016, APLA sponsored Games@the Library week which is also known as *la semaine des Jeux@la bibliothèque* in French! Anytime that week, libraries of all types in Atlantic Canada were encouraged to host a game themed event of their choice. There was a wide range of activities in various forms. These included a fill-in trivia quiz sheet, guest game leaders at scheduled sessions, or drop-in gaming sessions with electronic gaming consoles, puzzles, bingo, and/or board games like Chess, Monopoly, Sorry, Scrabble, Headbandz, etc. More physical games included bowling, Lego, hula hoop activities, parachute games, and library mini-golf which were offered in some libraries.

As this was not APLA's first Games@the Library week, it was great to see that, according to evaluation survey results, nearly two thirds of participating libraries had taken part in Games@the Library in the past. Some libraries were also some first-time participants. Based on the locations from which ballots were received, most gamers attended activities at public libraries but there were also patrons who joined in games at academic, school, provincial, and government libraries throughout Atlantic Canada.

APLA's goal is to show that libraries are places where people meet, learn, and have fun! Based upon participating library employees' comments, this goal was met and almost all of the library staff would consider offering Games@the Library week events again in the future. Remarkably, a couple of library employees indicated in their comments that the events had been so well received by patrons that they were adding more gaming on a weekly or monthly basis. A couple of other library personnel referred to flooding and that the weather had a major impact upon the client participation. One library staff member even said that Games@the Library programming was the first activity to draw clients out from their homes!

All participants during Games@the Library week were eligible to enter their names in the grand prize draw which took place November 28, 2016. The total number of ballots received was 640 and came from 35 different libraries. There was one grand prize for all of Atlantic Canada. While the main feature was the 7 inch Samsung Galaxy Tab E Lite, there was also money left to include gift cards for Google Play and Steam.

Congratulations to Nicholas Standing, this year's Grand Prize Draw winner! He was a participant in a gaming event held at the College of the North Atlantic's Bay St. George Campus Library in Newfoundland.



*Photo courtesy of the College of the North Atlantic staff. Pictured (L-R) are: Theresa Hynes, Library Technician at the Martin Gallant Library, Nicholas Standing, prize winner, and Lisa Marshall, Librarian at the Bay St. George Campus of the College of the North Atlantic in Newfoundland.*

Many thanks to Theresa Hynes, Library Technician at the Martin Gallant Library and Lisa Marshall, Librarian at the Bay St. George Campus of the College of the North Atlantic in Newfoundland, for having discerned the prize and photographed the winner. Also, the assistance of Melissa Anez (APLA's webmaster), Suzanne van den Hoogen (APLA President), and Kristel-Fleuren Hunter (APLA Communications Coordinator) was appreciated in disseminating the information about Games@the Library online.

The Games@the Library website went live in its newly amalgamated version on September 14, 2016 and is connected to the main APLA website. Downloadable resources included the Games@the Library poster and logo which were available in both French and English. In addition to the Games@the Library website, Games@the Library promotions for 2016 focused on online communications including APLA's Listserv, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. The Games@the Library information was also submitted as a news story for APLA's fall bulletin so as to promote the event.

Based on the results of the evaluation forms completed by some of the participating libraries, the most effective communication tool was APLA's Listserv. Another method of communication with great impact was the NBPLS Notifications System which was indicated strongly under "other" as having been how many of the evaluation survey respondents heard of the 2016 Games@the Library.

A total of 29 library employees completed the online event evaluation survey. The survey questions covered the participation experience of library staff from promotional and organizational perspectives in regard to Games@the Library. There was also some feedback received via email. Recommendations on how to improve the event were great! Comments included requests for other software options so as to facilitate conversion and editing to add specific library event information to generic event posters. Equally, the inclusion of more ready-made promotional materials which are pre-formatted for social media including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram would be desirable as well as graphics specifically for advertising monitors.

On another note, some library employees would appreciate more gaming ideas on APLA's Games@the Library website. It was suggested that an online calendar of events, for example, would be both an advertising opportunity and a way to discover new gaming ideas. A hashtag specific to the event would also help locate gaming ideas and assess feedback from the week. Finally, it could be advantageous to tie Games@the Library week in October to ALA's International Games Day in November by holding the Grand Draw for Games@the Library week on ALA's International Games Day (November 19). That was not possible this year due to concerns of a potential Canada Post strike during the planning stage of the Games@the Library week. As all ballots were successfully received within two weeks of the final gaming day, it should be feasible to link Games@the Library week with the ALA International Games Day if Games@the Library week is held again in the future.