



Game it up! Using gamification to incentivize your library

Daniel Giddens

To cite this article: Daniel Giddens (2016) Game it up! Using gamification to incentivize your library, The Australian Library Journal, 65:4, 330-330, DOI: [10.1080/00049670.2016.1241204](https://doi.org/10.1080/00049670.2016.1241204)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049670.2016.1241204>



Published online: 18 Oct 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 888



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Game it up! Using gamification to incentivize your library (Library Technology Essentials series #7, edited by Ellyssa Kroski), by David Folmar, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 148 pp., \$US 4500 (soft cover), ISBN 978-1-4422-5335-3

As a profession, we know that libraries are much more than books, but that we also exist in an age of instant gratification, where information is only a click or a swipe away. Added to this is that we are now serving generations of users who have known nothing else, so we need to engage in this space in a creative way to promote the other programs and services we offer, and continue to remain a relevant, valuable resource. Gamification gives us such an opportunity. This book is part of the *Library Technology Essentials Series*, but as the author David Folmar points out in the opening pages, technology is only part of the story for gamification, underlining the importance of game thinking as crucial to its success.

We learn in the first two chapters that game thinking involves bringing the different elements of gaming together to create a meaningful experience that appeals to a wide audience, where winning the game can be measured in multiple ways. Games motivate people, but can also teach, inform and change behaviour, which is one of the benefits for libraries. A good game is not just about a good story, good production values, or understanding the types of gamers. However, two features that Folmar says games cannot do without are the element of fun and the social aspect. Educational games should also emphasize positive outcomes. Failing through the design process and incorporating gamer feedback to improve a game are seen as equally important. Libraries are all about fostering positive community experiences and inclusiveness, so this is another benefit to recommend gamification as a potential avenue for libraries to explore.

The book acts as a guide that encourages and demystifies the concept, showing that you don't have to be a technology specialist to create either physical or online games, from the simple to the more advanced for the purpose of staff development, customer service or information literacy. Chapter 3 focuses on potential tools and applications to create different elements, such as badging, avatars and social media plug-ins, while Chapter 4 focuses on the experiences of different libraries. This chapter seems to be the most out of place or needed to be incorporated into the following chapter, the most substantial part of the book, which gives step-by-step guidance on how to create different projects, including a tour around the library for new staff to learn about different areas, a library passport that links library resources to learning about attractions in the local community, and online information literacy games using Twine and GameMaker. The penultimate chapter briefly reinforces tips and tricks; this could have been combined with the last on future trends, which doesn't really live up to its name and needed more development. Following this is some recommended reading and websites that include helpful descriptions. Overall, this is a good primer on the concept.

Daniel Giddens
RMIT University Library

© 2016 Daniel Giddens
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00049670.2016.1241204>

RDA essentials, by Thomas Brenndorfer, Chicago, IL, ALA Editions, 2016, 376 pp., US\$105.00 (soft cover), ISBN 978-0-8389-1328-4

Resource Description and Access (RDA) is a standard for descriptive cataloguing which provides guidelines for the formatting of bibliographic data. *RDA Essentials* is designed as a supporting handbook for creating RDA catalogue records and is intended as a quick reference source for the