Virtual Minecraft Club

Silver City Public Library

Children

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Tweens (10-12)

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Teens

Virtual Minecraft Club

Sep 14, 2020

$51-100

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Byline

MJ Medel, Children's and Young Adult Librarian, Silver City (N.M.) Public Library

Virtual Minecraft Club is an online adaptation of our original Minecraft Club program, a program for ages 6 and up to collaborate, compete and build with other local fans on all supported Minecraft platforms.

Virtual Minecraft Club, like its in-person predecessor, happens for one hour once per week.

Advanced Planning

The online version of our Minecraft Club was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It enabled our Minecrafters to enjoy a communal and collaborative gaming experience right from their home with the use of Minecraft Realms on our own private server.

A Minecraft Realm allows up to 10 players who can play together and have access to all the subscriber's content in our Realm. Only people we invite can join our world. Our Minecraft world is online and always accessible, even when we log off.

Participants must have an internet connection, a supported device, and the Minecraft game software. Pre-COVID, Minecraft Club in the Silver City Public Library provided devices for all participants to play (this included laptops and consoles like Xbox and Nintendo Switch). The library also provided up-to-date Minecraft software.

Your library must make a decision between Minecraft and Minecraft for Java, purchase the game for a device that you will be using in the library, and create a Minecraft account. Then you can subscribe to Realms. Our library subscribed to Minecraft Realms Plus, not Realms Java Edition. This distinction is important because people who have a Minecraft for Java account cannot join a Realm in the Realms Plus system. Likewise, people with the non-Java version of Minecraft cannot join a Realm in Realms Java Edition. Realms Plus works for Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, Android, iPhone, iPad, Windows 10, Windows Phone, Amazon Fire tablets or Gear VR.

Generally speaking, Minecraft for Java is the "original" version of the game, most likely to be used by people playing Minecraft on a Mac desktop/laptop computer or a Windows 7 or older computer. We chose the newer Minecraft and Minecraft Realms Plus because it works on the library Nintendo Switch, the library Xbox and on the devices that a majority of our community members are using.

Marketing

We used our website, Facebook, Instagram, email lists, online community calendars, newspaper press releases and radio PSAs to get the word out about our adaptation of our program. We asked anyone who was interested to contact us and give us their

username so we could add them to the Realm.

Budgeting

The cost involved for Virtual Minecraft Club includes a copy of the Minecraft game for the device that you will be using and a monthly subscription to Minecraft Realms Plus. The game price varies depending on the device. As of summer 2020, Minecraft for Windows 10 cost $26.99 and the Minecraft app for an Android or iOS tablet cost $6.99. A subscription to Minecraft Realms Plus cost the Silver City Public Library $7.99 a month plus tax on a monthly auto-renewal.

The subscription has to be purchased on a device that supports Minecraft Realms, from an Xbox Live/Microsoft account. We had difficulty purchasing Minecraft Realms Plus on the library's Nintendo Switch. It worked better for us to purchase the subscription on the library's Xbox. Instructions can be found in this help article from Xbox.

For a year, the subscription totals to about $100.

Day-of-event Activity

Make sure that you are logged in to Minecraft on a device. To access your realm, you will need to be logged in to your Microsoft account too (Minecraft will have a button for that). You will be able to view the Realm settings, where you can add the usernames of the people who are interested in participating and you will be able to invite them.

Our children's and young adult librarian actively participates in Virtual Minecraft game play for the hour of the week when we host it. During this time our staff member can chat with participants in the Minecraft chat box, build collaboratively and survey what participants have been up to in the Realm. Virtual Minecraft can support up to 10 members at any one time.

Members of our Realm can play within that Realm at any time regardless of whether the library representative is present. The Realm owner has the ability to add or delete members and give or take away privileges of any one user.

Program Execution

During pandemic times, we have seen a steady patronage of around five kids per our active gaming hours and a member list of about 10. The goal and outcome for the virtual program remains the same as for our original in-person Minecraft Club: to collaborate, inspire and mentor Minecraft users in a communal setting.

Advice

The distinction between Minecraft and Minecraft for Java was the aspect of this program that took the most time to research and figure out. For in-person Minecraft Club, the library had purchased seven Minecraft for Java accounts to allow participants to play on the library's laptops. We discovered that these accounts would not work for Minecraft Realms Plus, so we were not able to offer these logins to our community members to use for free.

We welcome any ideas and feedback from others who have found a way to reduce or eliminate the cost barrier for families who do not already have Minecraft at home.

We have prevented security concerns by having potential players contact us via email or Facebook Messenger with their usernames before we add them, so we know who we are adding to the Realm.

As the host, we always control who gets added to the Realm. This reduces concerns about what activity is happening in the Realm outside of the supervised gameplay hour. This system works well for us because many of the kids/families asking to join the Realm are people who have participated in our in-person Minecraft Club in the past, so we know who they are.

Mojang, the maker of Minecraft, operates separately from Microsoft, and to get tech support for any Minecraft-specific problems you will need to talk to them directly. They do not operate by phone. You must use an email form that can be found on their website. They do have comprehensive FAQs and troubleshooting pages.

There is also a wealth of knowledge about real-time Minecraft issues online via YouTube, Reddit and other gaming forums that can be very helpful when Mojang cannot be immediately reached.

MJ Medel has left the Silver City Public Library to pursue other opportunities. If you have questions, please contact Lillian Galloway, programming and outreach librarian, at programs@silvercitypubliclibrary.org.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

May 18, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



So, You Want to Start a Minecraft Program

Audiences:

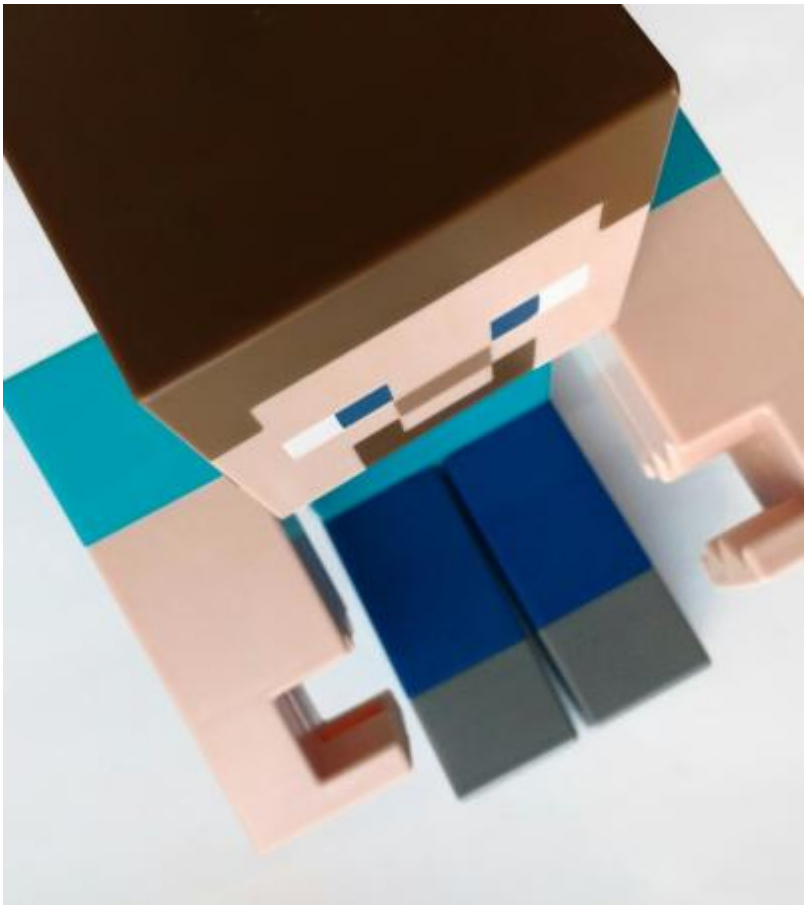
Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Jun 18, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



No Fuss Minecraft Programs

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
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Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



The Best Minecraft Mini-Games (According to Middle Schoolers)

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)