Book Emojis

University of Dayton Libraries

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Byline

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The University of Dayton Libraries wanted to find a fun way to introduce incoming first-year students to our leisure reading collection, a rotating collection of current popular fiction and non-fiction titles. We developed a quick and easy game that had students guessing popular book titles based on sequences of emojis. **(View a sampling of Book Emoji puzzles under Attachments at right.)**

Advanced Planning

Book Emojis was part of a larger library program that introduced incoming first-year students to the wide range of library services and collections available to them. The larger program was a play on the music festival Coachella; we named our program “Roeschella” in honor of our building’s name (Roesch Library). Roeschella planning took several months, but a subcommittee of two people worked on the idea for this

specific game, which only took a couple of weeks to figure out.

We knew our primary learning outcome was to introduce students to our leisure reading collection and promote recreational reading as a part of the college experience. We used the “stage” (activity area) that hosted the Book Emojis game to showcase print titles from the collection, Kindles preloaded with popular titles that are available for checkout, and our Porch Reads program, a student-led book group focused on popular titles.

To develop the game, the subcommittee identified popular books to display on a cart at the station, and created large color printouts of emojis that corresponded to those titles and that could be posted around the stage.

Marketing

Since our game was part of a larger new student orientation event, we did not do specific marketing for just the game. Marketing for the full Roeschella event was folded into new student orientation communications with all of the incoming students.

However, we did use social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter) to share images from the activities throughout the day with our followers, and we gained a lot of new followers from the students who participated in our activities that day, including the Book Emojis game.

Budgeting

There were no significant costs associated with the Book Emoji game, other than the cost to print the emojis in color, which we were able to do in-house on regular, 8.5-by-11-inch paper.

We also provided free candy at the table where the game was set up. We were able to buy several pounds of bulk candy for less than $30.

Day-of-event Activity

Not much set-up was required for the actual game. About an hour before the students started to arrive, one person set up a book cart with the books used to create the emoji titles, and also added a few additional books as red herrings to make the game a little more difficult.

The book cart was placed next to a table that also had additional books from the leisure reading collection on display, in addition to the Kindles and a bowl of candy. The emoji printouts were taped up on short display walls that were part of the space for the game. Staffing was a small challenge, as students arrived in hourly waves over an eight-hour period. We tried to have two people staffing the game at a time, but were able to get by with just one person staffing for short periods.

Program Execution

For the actual game, students approached the table in small groups, and one staff member would briefly explain the premise of the game (guess the title by looking at the emojis and the books on the cart), and then encouraged students to point to an emoji title and call out the real book's name. **(View photos of the game in action under Photo Slideshow at right.)**

As some of the students guessed titles, the second staff person talked to those students who were not actively calling out titles by giving more information about the leisure reading materials on display, including graphic novels and different types of genre fiction (science fiction and fantasy, mystery, etc.).

Throughout the course of the day, we engaged with over 1,500 students. Overall, students really enjoyed guessing the titles, and they were happy to find out they could check out the latest bestsellers to read for fun from our library.

Advice

Our advice for hosting a similar program is to keep it simple and to pick a variety of titles to translate into emojis, so participants find a title that resonates with their reading preferences.

The game itself is pretty quick and easy, but it offers a great springboard for deeper conversations with your students around the idea of reading for pleasure, and not just for classes. It’s a great way to generate some excitement around a collection in your library that might not be well known.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
emoji_book_game.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images





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Aug 5, 2015
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



Wow, Weeks of Welcome!

Audiences:

Audience
Adults (21 and up)
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Picks for International Games Day

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
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+ | $
Image



First Impressions: This Library is 'Lit'

Audiences: