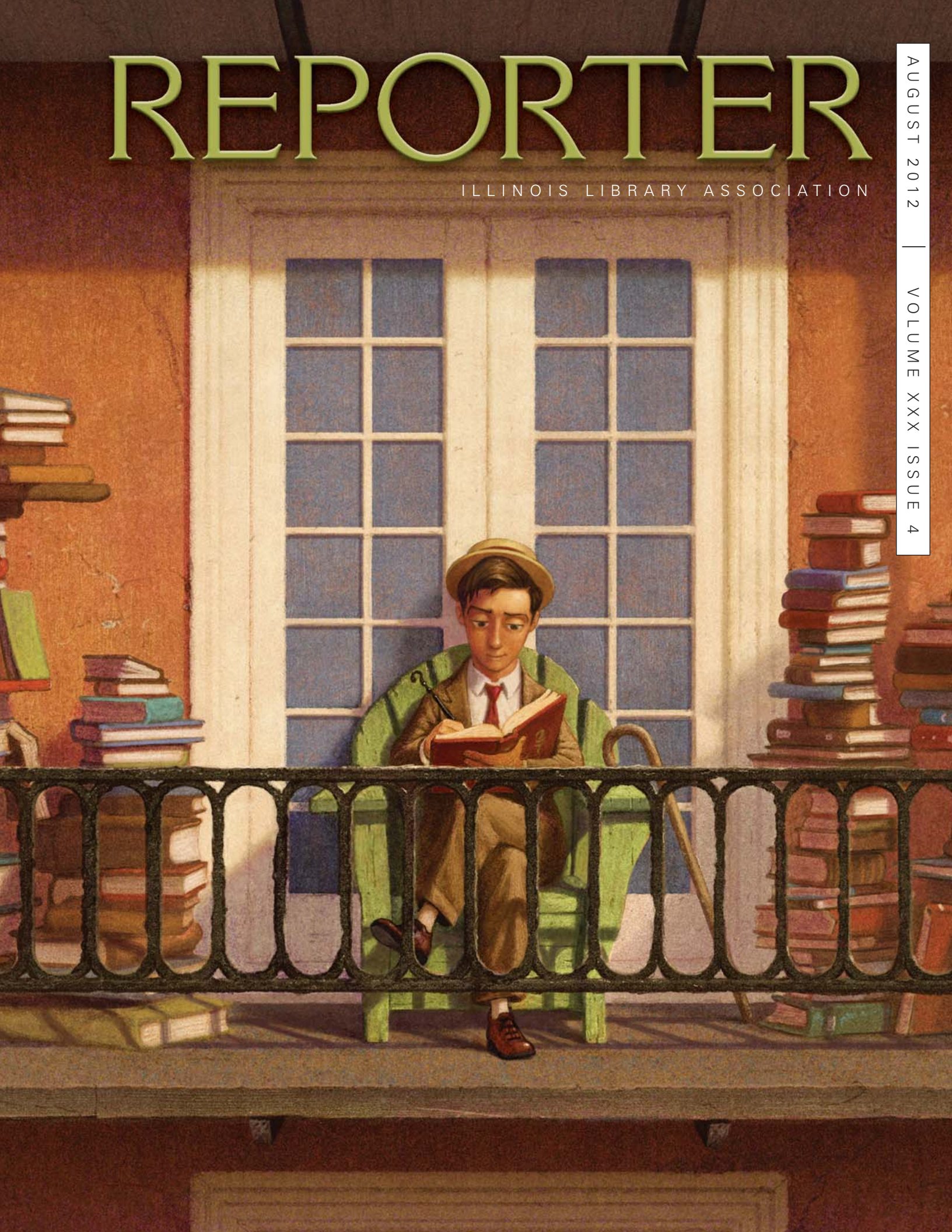


REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2012

VOLUME XXX ISSUE 4



The Illinois Library Association Reporter

is a forum for those who are improving and reinventing Illinois libraries, with articles that seek to: explore new ideas and practices from all types of libraries and library systems; examine the challenges facing the profession; and inform the library community and its supporters with news and comment about important issues. The *ILA Reporter* is produced and circulated with the purpose of enhancing and supporting the value of libraries, which provide free and equal access to information. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people.



ON THE COVER

The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore is a new picture book by William Joyce, a bestselling author, and the winner of the 2011 Academy Award™ for best animated short film. Cover illustration is courtesy of Moonbot Books, an Imprint of Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

The Illinois Library Association is the voice for Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. It provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services in Illinois and for the library community in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the United States, with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. Its 3,200 members are primarily librarians and library staff, but also trustees, publishers, and other supporters.

The Illinois Library Association has four full-time staff members. It is governed by a sixteen-member executive board, made up of elected officers. The association employs the services of Kolkmeier Consulting for legislative advocacy. ILA is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization.

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“Quit Being Afraid”

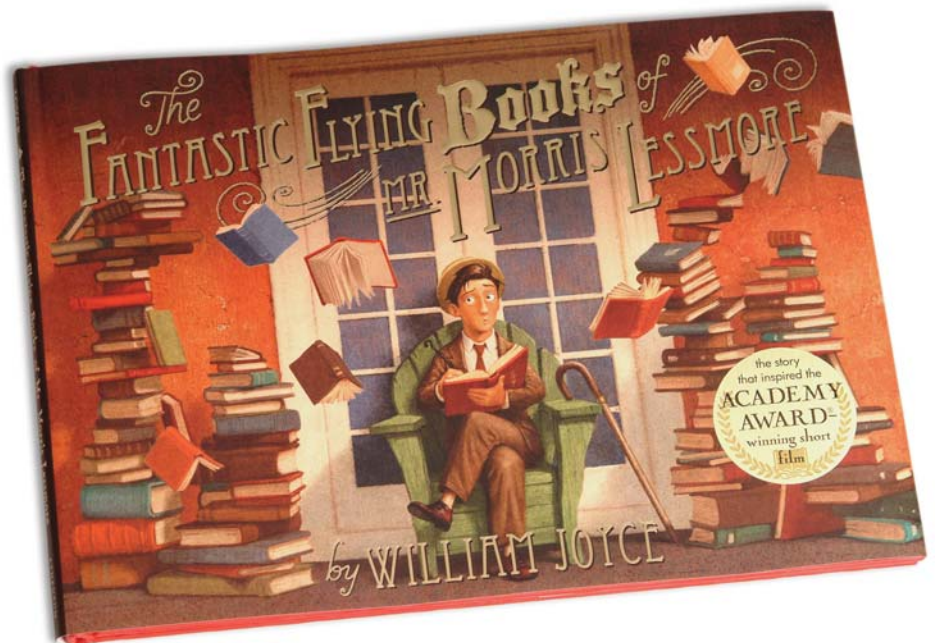
Academy Award™ Winner William Joyce on Books, Publishing, and Libraries

One of the latest children’s books introduced at the American Library Association’s 2012 Annual Conference in Anaheim is *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*, by William Joyce, just published by Simon & Schuster’s Atheneum Books for Young Readers. If it already sounds familiar, it’s because an animated short film of the same title won an Academy Award™ last February.

The library world took notice, because here was a film about what librarians love — books, and the power of stories. The film featured thousands of hand-painted books, constructed by Joyce’s Moonbot Studios, as well as a full city block of the French Quarter built to scale. It’s been described as inspired in equal parts by Hurricane Katrina, Buster Keaton, the *Wizard of Oz*, and a love of books.

The text for the book came first, written in the early 2000s as a tribute to one of publishing’s old school titans, Bill Morris. Joyce first came to New York fresh out of college with a portfolio of drawings and fell in love with the book business as it was then.

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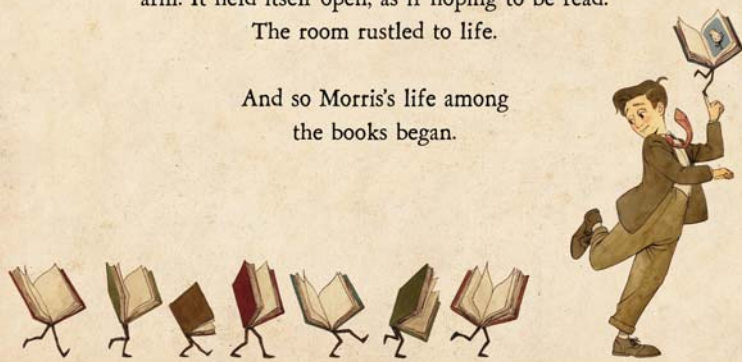


Then a happy bit of happenstance came his way. Rather than looking down, as had become his habit, Morris Lessmore looked up. Drifting through the sky above him, Morris saw a lovely lady. She was being pulled along by a festive squadron of flying books.



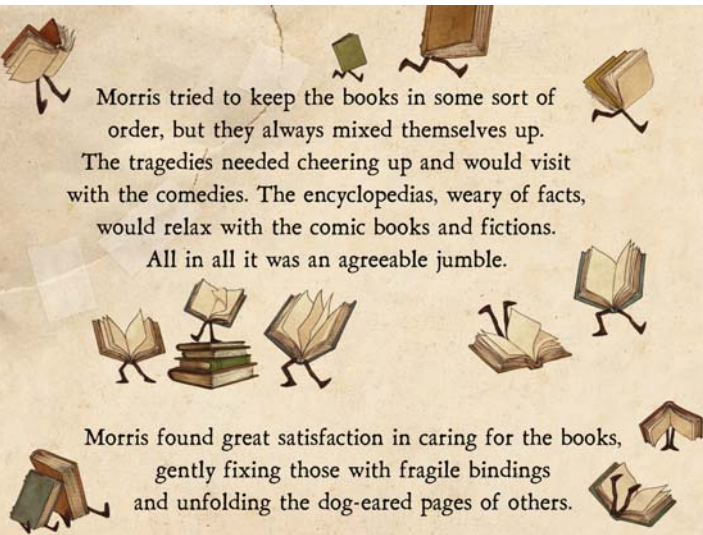
Then his new friend flew up to him and landed on his arm. It held itself open, as if hoping to be read. The room rustled to life.

And so Morris's life among the books began.



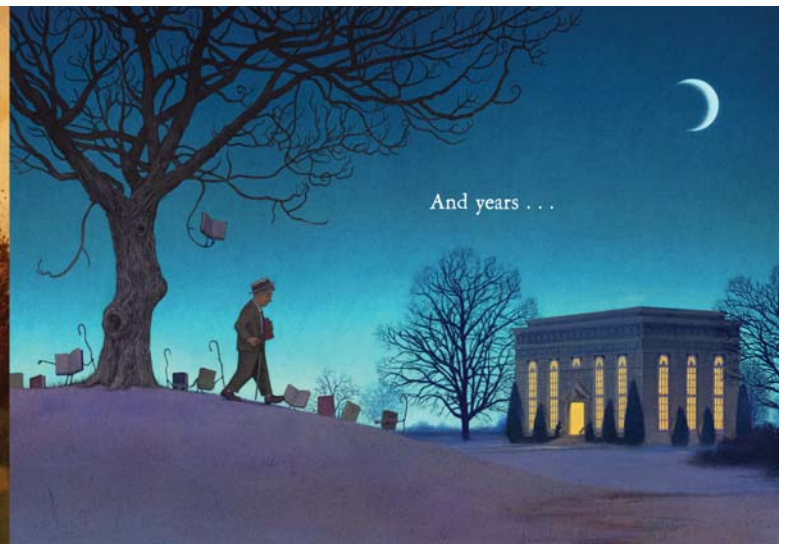
Morris tried to keep the books in some sort of order, but they always mixed themselves up. The tragedies needed cheering up and would visit with the comedies. The encyclopedias, weary of facts, would relax with the comic books and fictions.

All in all it was an agreeable jumble.



Morris found great satisfaction in caring for the books, gently fixing those with fragile bindings and unfolding the dog-eared pages of others.





Selected spreads from *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* are courtesy of Moonbot Books, an Imprint of Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

[continued from page 4]

He reminisces about houses like Scribner’s, which published all of his favorite books, and visiting their offices in Manhattan that had a retail store on the first floor and offices upstairs. He recalls the scene, as being “crowded” with books, a grand old building with windows, and the windows were open.

If you’ve seen the Oscar-winning short, the open windows will be familiar. As for the publishers themselves, he characterizes them as “swashbucklers, gamblers, and gentlemen.” When Joyce wrote the story about the flying books, he was paying tribute to that era and all the things he felt were being lost — a friend who was dying and a business that was losing its way.

It would be almost a decade before the illustrations and text came together in the book being published this summer. Joyce was busy, working on films like *Toy Story* and *Robots*. There were other children’s books and an Emmy-award-winning television series for Disney Channel. He was traveling back and forth to California, being wooed by Steve Jobs and Pixar, but ultimately returning to live and work in Shreveport, Louisiana.

AND THEN THERE WAS KATRINA

“I wrote the book originally because I was losing something,” Joyce says. “But after Katrina, the story became about losing everything.” He describes scenes of incredible loss, of streets clogged with debris, including books coated with muck, the words wiped away. At the same time, kids in the shelters, reading books. Those visuals worked their way into the film, made with the help of other friends and colleagues who were forced out of New Orleans and landed in Shreveport.

Besides the movie and the book, there’s an app, which got raves from John Pavlus, writing in the online magazine *Fast Company* both for its content and execution:

“E-books are already a fraught subject for many readers, writers, publishers and designers, but children’s e-books are even more so. Is it rotting their minds? Is it as good as good ol’ paper? Is it too interactive for their own good? Obviously there are no practical answers to such questions, but at least one children’s e-book/app/thingie (what do we call these things, again?) is doing it very, very right. Part of why the book works so well is its top-shelf creative pedigree: author William Joyce is also an accomplished illustrator and animator who’s published *New Yorker* covers, won a bunch of Emmys, created character designs for some of Pixar’s first animated classics, and worked on many others for DreamWorks and Disney. In fact, the interface design is so subtle it wasn’t until I was about six pages in that I realized that every page of the app has some delightful feature embedded into it that you have to find for yourself. This is the key to a successful children’s book — inviting them to play and explore and be curious, not just jab buttons to activate cheesy visual effects.”

There are more books, movies, and apps being created in Joyce’s Moonbot Studios in Shreveport, where about forty designers sit in pods of three, each with two screens in front of them — one to draw on, one for research. But there’s also a reference library, books Joyce has collected through all the years of his love affair with books as a place of discovery. And more often than not, one of the designers in their twenties who grew up with screens, not books, makes his or her way to the shelves and looks, leafs, dives into the books.



...with the opening of a book.

“QUIT BEING AFRAID”

Not all of Joyce’s stories are about books, but many of them share a fascination with ways in which knowledge and technology either collide or coexist, a frontier that’s all too familiar to libraries in the age of the e-book. When describing the world he created for *Rolie Polie Olie*, both a picture book and a TV show, Joyce said he “wanted to see if we could make a robot world that felt warm and kind; an almost old-fashioned version of what the future could be.”

The old-fashioned future is something Joyce thinks libraries might explore. His vision for a library today is one with huge windows — that open, of course — and huge stacks of books. His advice to libraries, and probably the rest of us, is to “quit being afraid” of being what we really want to be, what we once were, whatever makes us special and unique.

The day after Joyce offered this advice, David Brooks made a similar argument in the *New York Times*, though about entirely different subjects. Brooks wrote, “Go deeper into your own tradition. Call more upon the geography of your own past. Be distinct and credible. People will come.”

Joyce talks about the libraries of his childhood as civic and heroic, and when you entered, there was a “sense of arrival.” That sense permeates his creations, available to new generations through books and films that can be found in today’s libraries. But it wouldn’t hurt to keep the windows open, too. **IA**

SELECTED LISTING OF BOOKS/FILMS/ APPS BY WILLIAM JOYCE

Picture Books

Rolie Polie Olie
George Shrinks
Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures with the Family Lizardo
Santa Calls
The Leaf Men and the Brave Good Bugs
Bentley & Egg
Guardians of Childhood Series: The Man in the Moon
The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore

Films & TV

Robots
Meet the Robinsons
The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore
Rolie Polie Olie
George Shrinks

Apps

The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore
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IMAG-N-O-TRON: “The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore” Edition

Fifty Shades Fever

No question, the hottest book at the moment is E. L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey* (Vintage, 2012). As I write this, there are 140 holds for the print edition, 20 holds for the audiobook, and 69 holds for the e-book at my southwest suburban library serving a population of approximately 75,000.

This is the most holds I have ever seen on a single title — more than a new Janet Evanovich or James Patterson and more than the *The Help* (Amy Einhorn, 2009) and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), both of which benefited from blockbuster movie releases. *Fifty Shades* and its sequels have surprisingly exceeded the demand for *The Hunger Games* and *Twilight* trilogies, books that appeal to a broad range of ages, compared to *Fifty Shades*' more mature audience. The phenomenon of this trilogy is unprecedented and like nothing I have seen before.

According to Robert Haddock, a representative for Random House, *Fifty Shades* has become “the biggest-selling title in the history of Random House publishing, surpassing *The Da Vinci Code*.” Haddock also claims *Fifty* “has sold 12 million copies. That is 50,000 books a day, 1.2 books every second. If you took the book apart and put the pages end to end, 12 million copies would

circle the earth 13 times.” These statistics were current as of June; I can only imagine what the sales are now, and what they will be in the future when *Fifty Shades* arrives on the big screen. One wonders how an unheard-of author who started out writing this title as *Twilight*-fan fiction is able to take the top three spots on the *New York Times* trade bestseller list. According to the *Examiner*, we can attribute the popularity to “its pushing of sexual boundaries in its appeal to middle-aged women. Experts have recently revealed that the source of success behind the spicy novels is its strong fan base. Not teens dressing up as the Boy Who Lived or young female audiences wishing for a vampire to whisk them away, but women over age twenty-five looking for that ‘fantasy romance,’ as E. L. James has called it.”

It should be no surprise that we will see a deluge of erotic romance publishing in the coming year as writers move to cash in on this reading trend, just as *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* did for Swedish crime fiction. In addition to viral marketing and word of mouth promotion, the proliferation of e-books and their inherent discreetness has made it all the more manageable for many readers who perhaps would have been embarrassed for others to see what they are reading.

[continued on page 10]

“It should be no surprise that we will see a deluge of erotic romance publishing in the coming year as writers move to cash in on this reading trend.”



RANGE OF LIBRARY RESPONSES

There was the recent Brevard County Library System (Florida) debacle in which the director removed copies, claiming the book did not meet the library's collection criteria, only to then later restock all nineteen copies in response to community outcry. Someone from that library initially purchased the books with their collection stipulation in mind, so to state that as the reason for the ban doesn't seem entirely accurate. I interpret their actions as simply being afraid of the response to a racy book and a regrettable decision to nip any challenges in the bud by deaccession.

It is harrowing to think that any library would consciously participate in the banning of books, simply due to potentially objectionable subject matter. Materials with horrendous violence stay on the shelf, no questions asked, but it seems that items containing consensual sex are scrutinized. Fortunately there are other reactions to report besides the one from Brevard County. When patrons from the Town and Country Public Library in Elburn were asked what they thought about their library carrying these books, one responded that "most of them [bestsellers] have as much sexual content as *Grey* and at least it is consensual sex, not rape or horrific violence against women."

What have other Illinois libraries had to say about the demand, and how are they reacting to the hype? After polling 161 Illinois libraries serving urban, suburban, and rural communities, 94 percent stated that they have been asked by their patrons for the book even though 12 percent of libraries confessed that they still don't own a copy, despite its popularity. The main reason

cited for not purchasing is that they simply don't collect in this genre. In cases where individuals have asked for the item, I would hope libraries would allow patron demand to be the driving force behind acquisitions and trump any previous decisions about what genres are and are not collected.

Libraries are also responding to the craze by supplementing the demand with attractive programming and creative displays. One library mentioned a display entitled "Still Waiting for Mr. Grey," featuring romance-type books to entertain patrons while they wait for their hold or guide others seeking more of the same. Another library has taken photos of staff members reading the book and posted them on Facebook as a way to demonstrate that they aren't afraid of controversy and that they support the freedom to read.

Despite arguments that there is a lack of substance and bad writing, there certainly is plenty here to get people talking and make this book a natural for discussion groups. Both the Deerfield Public Library and the Bessie Coleman Branch of Chicago Public Library have hosted book discussions on *Fifty Shades*. Furthermore, "the Library of Congress is providing the trilogy on one-book cartridges so that patrons can have access to all three at a time" says the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service, which anticipates that clients will want to read the entire series.

On a personal note, I am absolutely thrilled at how this is getting people excited about reading. We should cheer on and defend any work that does so, and if it takes some hot sex to entice readers, so be it! **ILA**

"After polling 161 Illinois libraries serving urban, suburban, and rural communities, 94 percent stated that they have been asked by their patrons for the book."

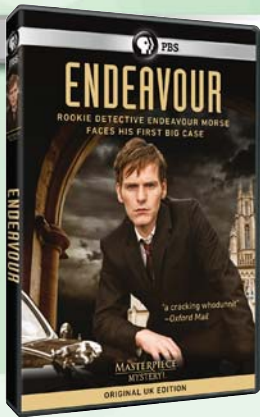
Library Jobline of Illinois



<http://www.ila.org/jobline>

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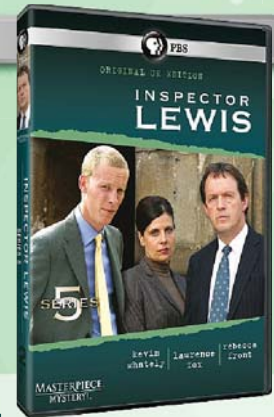


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Time to Play: Recreational Gaming at Libraries

Playing games in libraries is not new. In fact, the oldest chess club in the United States that still exists today was started in 1854 at the Mechanics' Institute Library in San Francisco¹. Over the last 160 years, the variety and availability of games in libraries have grown but the underlying concept of the library embracing structured play remains important. Libraries support recreational gaming in two ways: through circulating games in the same way they would circulate any item, and through creating opportunities for patrons to play games in the library.

One of the roles most public libraries embrace is supporting the recreational needs of a community. Traditionally, this role has been filled through books, but as recreational media changed over the decades, libraries adapted to provide access to new forms such as magazines, music, movies, and graphic novels. Games are one of the most popular forms of recreational media today, so they are appropriate for libraries publicly funded to support the needs of their communities. A key way in which games differ from other forms of media is that they are participatory, and this participatory nature creates the opportunity for the library to create connections between users through facilitating shared experiences.

[continued on page 14]





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[continued from page 12]

MANY WAYS TO PLAY

Public libraries commonly use games in five ways:²

- Many libraries have public spaces for chess, Scrabble®, or other traditional games in either the children's or general areas.
- Most public libraries allow players to use library computers for either purchased or web-based games.
- Summer reading programs are the home for many games; for example, the activity of “who can read the most books” is a game.
- For years, public libraries have had game competitions with chess, bridge, or Scrabble® clubs, and more recently, Mario Kart® or Rock Band® contests.
- Finally, some libraries have open play events where community members come together and engage in board, card, or video games as an event to enjoy with family and friends or to get to know others.

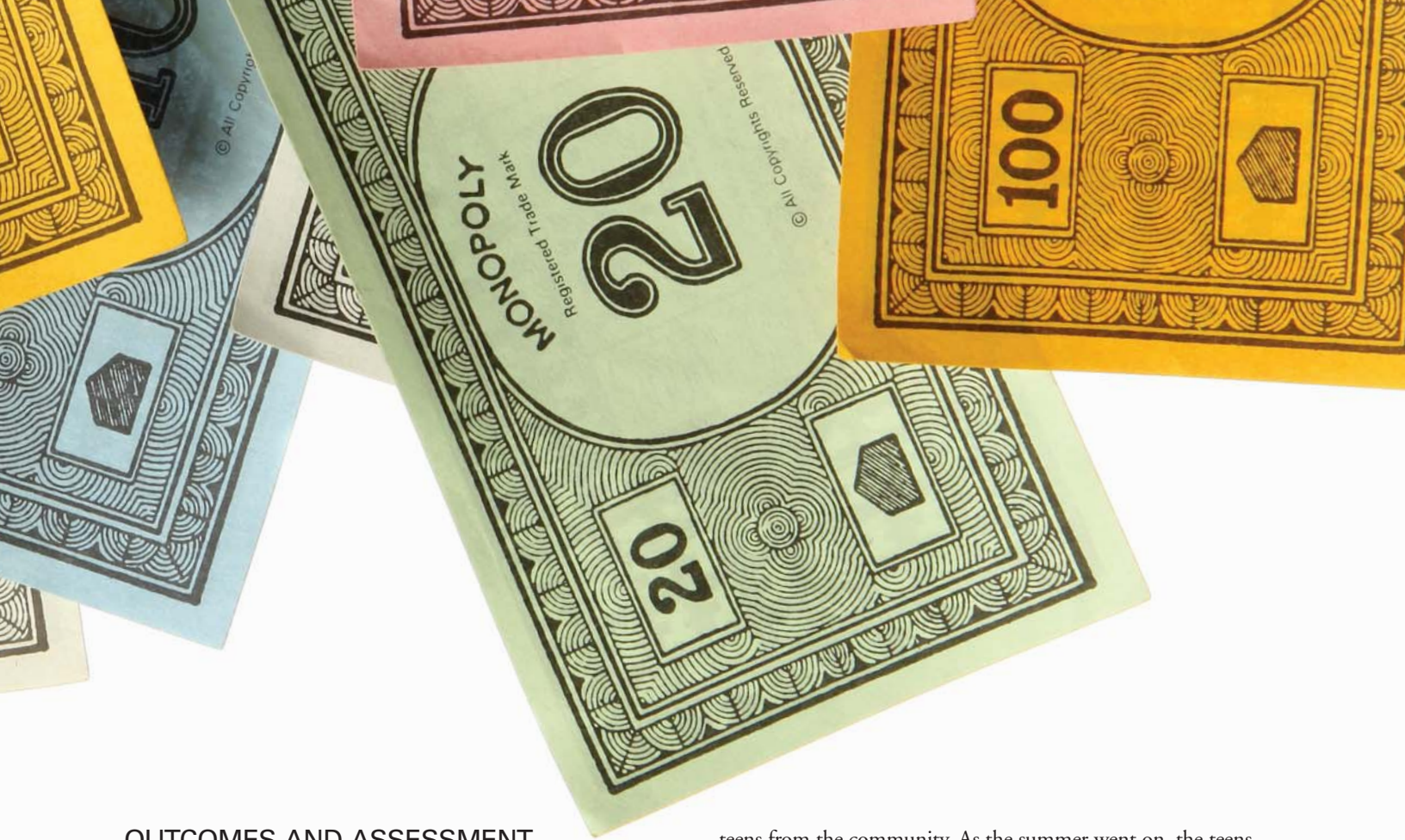
Academic and school libraries also use recreational games. Some host student gaming clubs for specific types of tabletop or video games as an event before or after classes. This creates an opportunity for students from different social groups to engage with each other around a common interest. As in public libraries, academic and school libraries also use games for special events, such as during student orientation or finals week. Typically about half of gaming in school libraries is recreational, while the other half is designed to support the curriculum.

AFFORDABLE AND CREATIVE OPTIONS

Recreational gaming programs do not need to have large budgets. A “bring your favorite board or card game” or an intergenerational “demonstrate games from your childhood” event requires nothing more than space. Borrowing or seeking donated equipment allows low-risk exploration of gaming programs. Local game shops may be willing to support the library with equipment donations to help kick off a new gaming program or might even be willing to bring equipment and staff to a gaming event.

Check out inexpensive print-and-play tabletop games³; for example, I created a free storytelling game, *Crossed Paths*, designed specifically for libraries where players take on characters from their favorite books.⁴ Finally, computer programs that allow players to create games, such as MIT's Scratch, can be not only quite inexpensive but encourage creativity, engagement, and teamwork.

Another key piece is staffing an event. At first, there will be significant enthusiasm in running the event and staffing will be easy. To be effective in growing a community, gaming programs need to be run on a regular basis, and over time, much of the initial staff excitement about the programs will wear down. Forming connections with the gaming community can be valuable in discovering enthusiastic volunteers, although this enthusiasm may need to be redirected or tempered to help these volunteers understand how games fit within library services.



OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

In order for a library to have a justifiable gaming program, it is important that the gaming program fit within the library's mission and goals. Based upon these goals, the library can develop outcomes to measure effectiveness and success. Choose games, programs, and strategies based on what your library is seeking to accomplish — e.g., targeting certain audiences, creating interaction, building community support, etc. After the gaming program, assessments can be used to see if these outcomes are being met and provide justification that connects the gaming program to the mission and goals of the library. This process is at the core of my book on the topic, *Everyone Plays at the Library: Creating Great Gaming Programs for All Ages* (Information Today, 2010).

Some of the common outcomes of gaming in libraries are players improving their relationships with people and getting to know new members of the community. Players also come away with a new attitude toward the library and learn about other library resources. One of the most powerful outcomes commonly reported by libraries is that players return to the library another time for non-gaming services.⁵

Gaming programs can bring together patron groups from different demographic groups. I helped a local public library in Fayetteville, New York, start a library gaming program over the summer. We placed the program immediately after a seniors' computer class, and some of the seniors came and engaged with

teens from the community. As the summer went on, the teens and the seniors got to know each other on a first-name basis. Due to its participatory nature, gaming can lower the barricades between players of different demographic and social groups in a way that few other programs can.

Most libraries can find ways for gaming programs to support their mission and goals. These programs can bring underserved patron groups into the library and enrich existing library programs. Gaming can build connections between members of the community and can help patrons discover that the library is still relevant to their needs and interests. Finally, gaming programs can create more positive relationships between library staff and library patrons if the staff play and facilitate positive game experiences. The community that plays together, stays together!

For additional information and resources, visit Scott Nicholson's blog, <http://becauseplaymatters.com>

- 1 Donaldson, John. *History of the MI Chess Room*. Accessed December 1, 2011. <http://www.chessclub.org/history.php>
- 2 Nicholson, Scott. (2009). "Go Back to Start: Gathering Baseline Data about Gaming in Libraries." *Library Review*, 58(3), 203-214
- 3 Print and Play Games. *BoardGameGeek Wiki*. http://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/Print_and_Play_Games
- 4 Nicholson, Scott. (2011). *Crossed Paths — An Improvisational Storytelling Activity*. <http://tinyurl.com/crossedpaths>
- 5 Nicholson, Scott. (2009). *Ibid.* **ILA**

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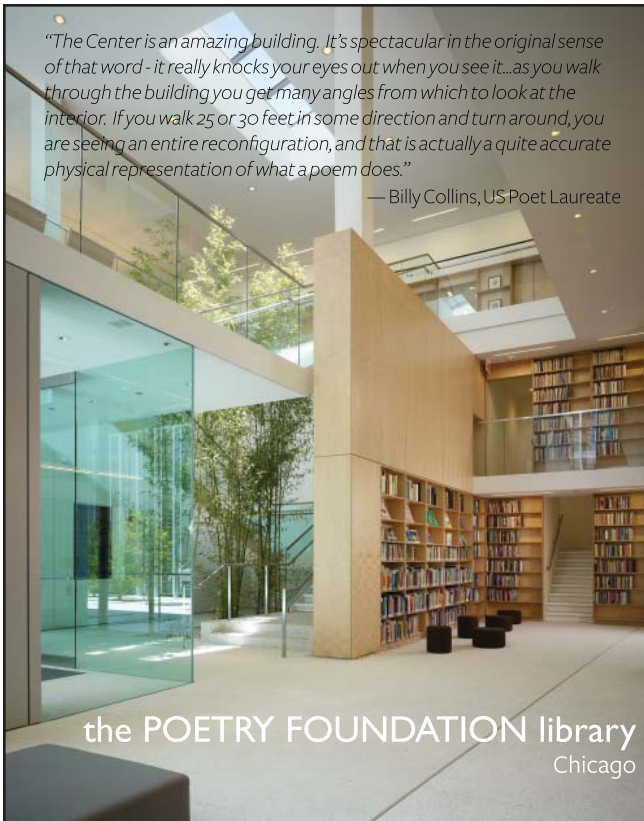
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Gaming Revolution Evolution

Do you remember the Dance Dance Revolution® of 2004? Finally! A way to bring ‘tween and teen boys into the public library, complete with physical activity. Well, that revolution is over. Like any other medium, the world of electronic gaming is shifting, and the way libraries are using games is shifting with it. When implemented properly, gaming in libraries offers a structured social output that can engage, entertain, and promote a sense of community. Programming, material acquisition, and patron education all factor into what libraries need to provide to accommodate this popular medium.

We have begun to recognize that video games are libraries’ “loss leader.” They’re expensive, they’re often the most stolen items in the collection, and they’re sometimes returned damaged, but the profit is quickly observable. Video games draw in groups that have traditionally been difficult to reach in the public library: boys, teens, and parents not wanting to fork over \$60 every other week for the newest games. Treat video games like a true loss leader and place them in a location that requires patrons to walk past other sections that they may not have realized are in the library. You may find a new audience for other materials and services simply by placing them in the path to the video games.

While schools are great at providing extracurricular activities for the academics, the dramatics, and the athletes, they offer little for the gamers. Libraries can create a haven for gamers and give them something they’ve never had at other institutions: ownership. Listen to your teens’ suggestions, because they are the educated consumer base that will make your collection development simple.

Video game programming is still an important way to bring patrons into the library. “Lock-in” programs provide safety for you and your teens, but reinforce that the teens must be in the library before closing. Feed them to quell their inner beasts, as this usually prevents them from complaining about hunger. Afterwards, host a mandatory tournament in which everyone participates. Games like Super Smash Bros.® and Mario Kart® for the Wii have a low learning curve and are popular enough that most attendees have at least passing familiarity with the titles. Give participants a choice between more tournaments or online gaming. Again, by allowing ownership of the activity, you are more likely to get regular attendees and make them consistent users of the library.

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Public access to computers allows patrons to engage in online gaming in a safe and social environment. Plainfield Public Library has fifteen computers in its children's section and an additional eight in a computer classroom. The fifteen computers are designated for open play, but the classroom can be reserved by a group that wants to work on missions or quests in the popular subscription games (e.g., Counter-Strike®, RuneScape®, Minecraft®, World of Warcraft®). One of the benefits of free play is seeing teens organize their own games and tournaments.

Another way to bring patrons into the library is by providing free wireless Internet access. Tablets, handheld gaming devices, and apps that feature games have made gaming portable. At first glance, it may seem that these devices isolate the players, but with a Wi-Fi connection, they link gamers to each other in ways that were impossible in the past. Like everything else, electronic gaming is becoming increasingly social. Where people are socializing, thinking, learning, and solving problems together, there is a place for the public library. Parents will thank you for giving their children and teens an outlet and a place to belong, and giving teens a sense of belonging makes gaming a library thing. The most

important thing we can do is continue to change with technology to provide our patrons with what they actually want.

Beyond planning many hands-on games for programming and selecting console games to add to our circulating collections, librarians need to keep up with what's happening in online and app gaming. Libraries should be working to find a way to incorporate those into existing services, collections, or programs.

People need the public library in the new gaming world. They need us to figure out a way to provide online and app content to patrons who cannot access it otherwise because of socioeconomic constraints, lack of resources to find educational games for children, or lack of time to explore the vast world of gaming for learning and cultural connections. They also need a space for them to congregate, play, discuss, and create their games, and that space is the library.

A new revolution in gaming is upon us and we must be prepared—VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN! **ILA**

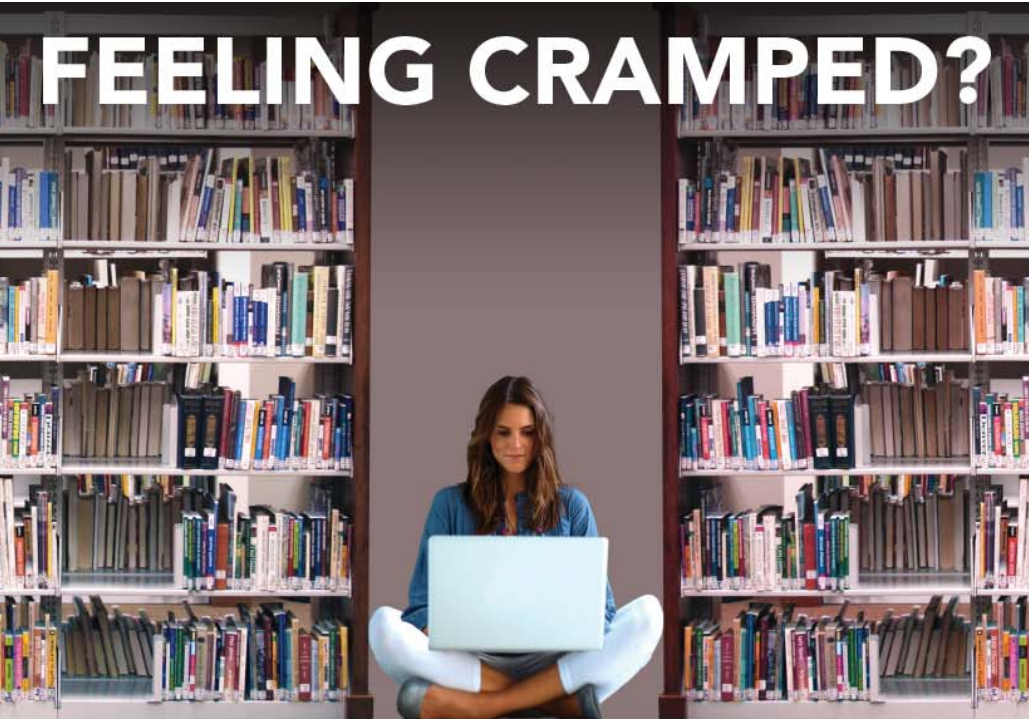


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