Games, Libraries, and 21-Century Information Skills

The Library Starter Deck is inspired by *The Jejune Institute*

The *Jejune Institute* was the first segment of a four-part, interactive narrative created by Nonchalance. It was woven into the fabric of San Francisco, providing residents and tourists a way to interact with the city that offers surprise and adventure. (http://thachr.com/the-jejune-institute/).

By embedding games into their neighbourhood, libraries who use *The Library Starter Deck* will likewise encourage community residents and visitors new to the community to explore and learn about where they are and give them permission to play in the space where they live.

Libraries are generally not thought of as a place of social experience.

For most teens, gaming is a social activity and a major component of their overall social experience. Teens play games in a variety of ways, including with others in person, with others online, and by themselves. Although most teens play games by themselves at least occasionally, just one-quarter (24%) of teens *only* play games alone, and the remaining three-quarters of teens play games with others at least some of the time.

The above finding is from the 2008 Pew Research Center Report, Teens, Video Games and Civics, http://www.pewinternet.org/2008/09/16/teens-video-games-and-civics/, which also recognized that "the characteristics of game play and the contexts in which teens play games are strongly related to teens' interest and engagement in civic and political activities".


Card decks as creative tools

As part of a resurgence of interest and use of analog games, we see successful use of card decks as creative tools and collaboration devices. Two recent examples: the award-winning *The Thing From The Future* (above), by futurist Stuart Candy and Situation Lab, and *Space Deck* by Nina Simon, author of *The Participatory Museum*.

Card decks are useful platforms for creative insight for many reasons, but the main ones might be (a) because they can generate (and express) very complex interactions, and (b) because they are easy, even pleasant, to use.

Explore the Top 20 Most Active Futures
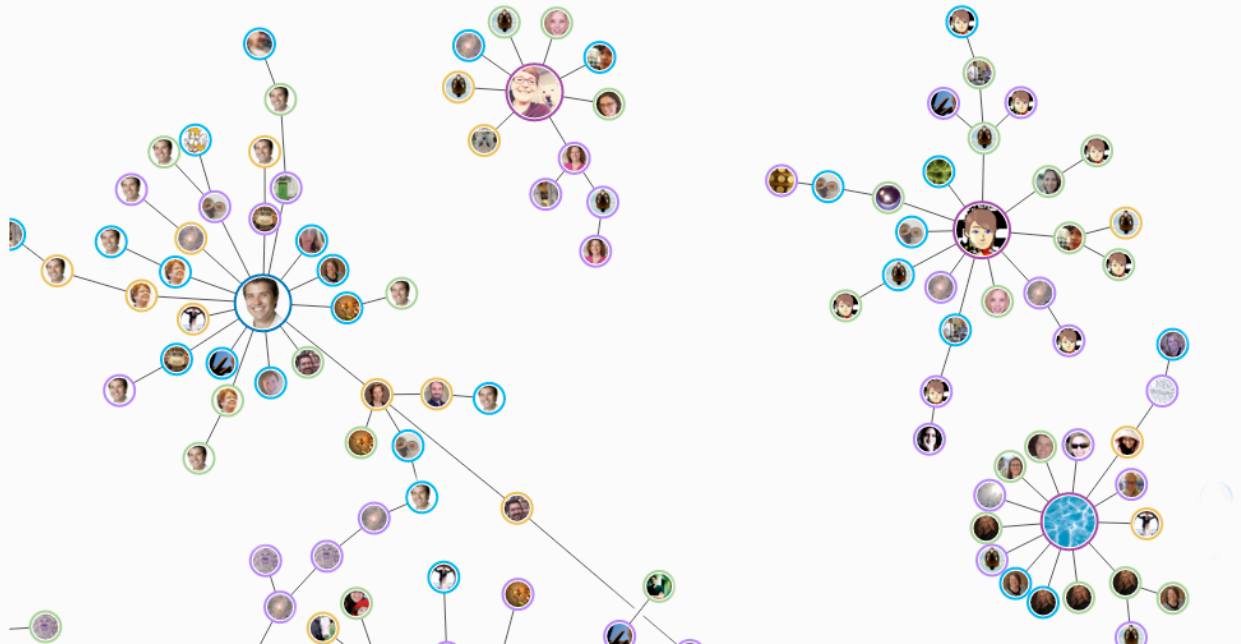
Games and futurethinking

As *The Thing From The Future* highlights, games and play are increasingly being used to solve a difficult problem: getting people to think creatively about the future. The Institute For The Future has used games extensively since 2008, as collaborative tools to encourage thinking about likely futures and to invoke crowd-sourced insights and generate action. In 2016 IFTF created *Learning Is Earning*, exploring the future of education itself.


FUTURECOAST

Ken Eklund, on our team, has worked with IFTF on futurecasting games and pioneered others, most notably *World Without Oil* (2007) and *FutureCoast* (2014), with Columbia University; both were finalists for Webby awards.
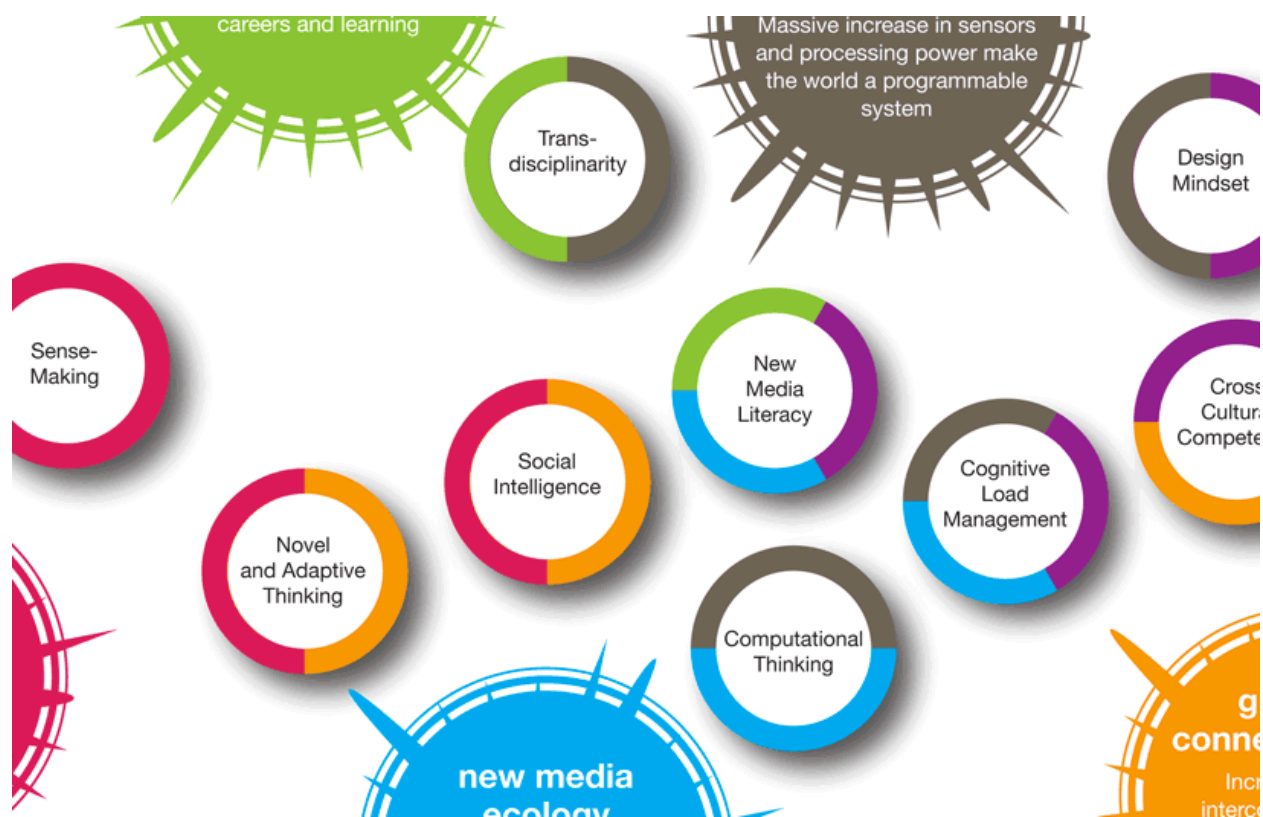
Games are an excellent vehicle to explore and learn 21st Century Skills

Looking at anticipated drivers of change, IFTF has generated a 2020 forecast of work and life skills which are resilient to coming changes. Skills such as Sensemaking, Novel and Adaptive Thinking, Computational Thinking and many others readily map to skills acquired when engaging in social, library-friendly games.

The IMLS Project Team and Task Force developed a similar list of '21st Century Skills' and modified it slightly to better align with library and museum priorities. Their list included: critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, visual literacy, scientific and numerical literacy, and cross-disciplinary thinking. As well as basic literacy, they included information literacy and media literacy, and ICT literacy, as well as global awareness, financial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, and environmental literacy. The IMLS also want to promote flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability and leadership and responsibility. *Again, these skills can be achieved through games.*

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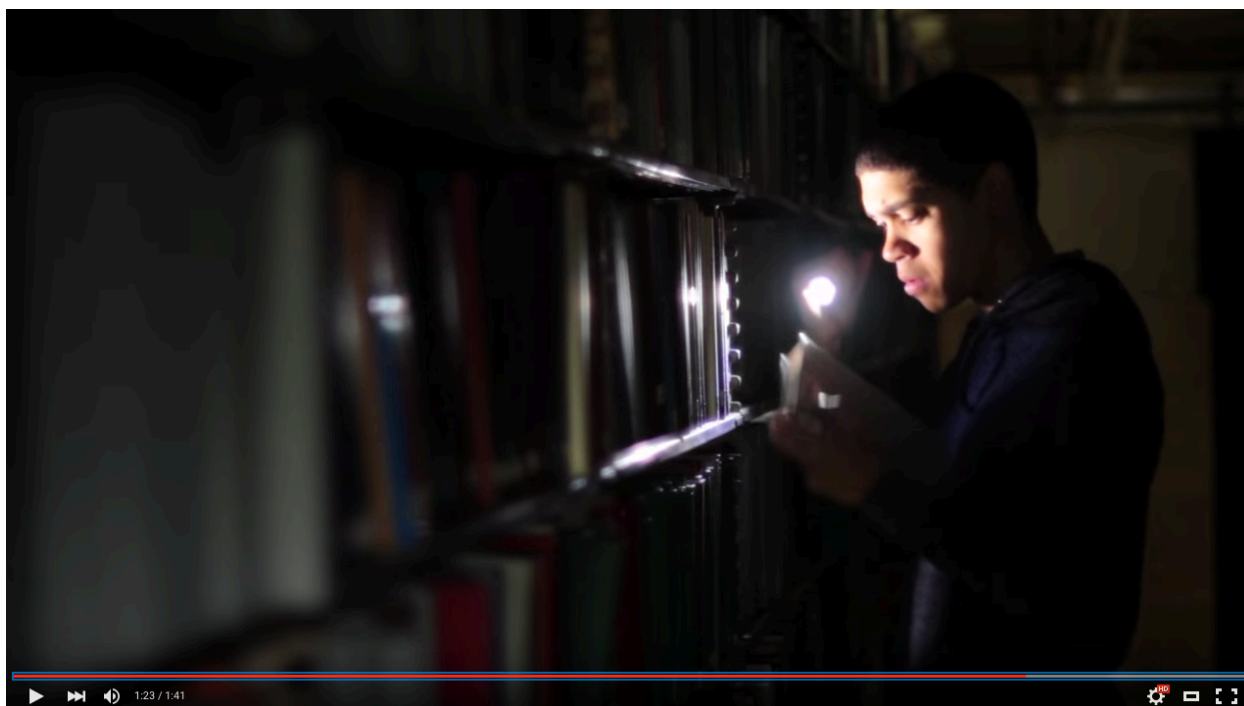
Amazing connections between games and libraries are already here - they just need to be more evenly distributed

From the epic night of the New York Public Library game *Find the Future* designed by Jane McGonigal, to the six years of *The Summer Game* designed and hosted by the Ann Arbor District Library, library games have already demonstrated that they can succeed in bringing their community together to play and learn together.