Ending Big Projects

Advice from Closing a Library-Run Minecraft Server

What is a Minecraft Server?

- Dedicated online space, continually running
- Owners can set their own limitations
- Able to be modified by owner

At Our Peak

- Building relationships with teens
- Recommending library resources
- Creative competitions
- Teens gaining levels of responsibility

Developing Issues: Technical

- Server issues (server re-starting every 20 minutes)
- Technical issues in MiniGames
- Microsoft purchase of Minecraft led to expiration of plugins for 1.8.0
  - *Could not update due to loss of crucial plugins*
  - *Staff began to look for ways to upgrade*

Developing Issues: Behavior

- Griefers
- Spam in chat
- Cursing and insults
- Disrespect to staff
- Trolls trying to get attention/create drama
  - *"It's all coming back now. I was queen. I was Queen of Trolls."* (3)
- Helpers/Mods not doing their jobs
  - *"I was the first one to get my rank removed. I was always first for everything."* (2)

Developing Issues: Staff

- Losing admin staff
  - *Started with 4-5 staff, continued to drop members*
- Audience shift
  - *Original intention of server was for teens*
  - *Most players were tweens*
- Peak playing time not matching up to when staff could be on
  - *Peak time for library use and Minecraft use was 6-10pm*
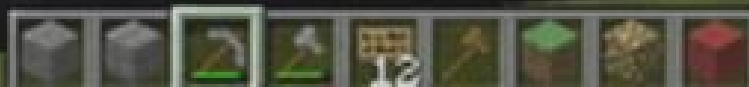 - *Staff often on the desk and on Minecraft at the same time*

Questions we Asked Ourselves:

- What is the library getting out of this service?

- What are our patrons getting out of this service?

- Are the benefits worth the time & effort that staff are putting in?

Sustainability

- Who will be able to take over if the staff running the program can't continue?

- How are replacement staff trained?

- Are there more sustainable ways to fill the void left by the end of this service?

Decision to Shut Down

■ We wanted to make sure it was a positive experience
  – *Want to provide options for teens to continue to use Minecraft*
  – *Wanted to maintain relationship with teens*

Shutting Down

- Announcements in-game

- Announcements on website and social media

- Allowed teens to wreck the world & world economy as a final farewell

- Closed as of Jan. 1, 2016

If we could time travel…

- Would have made decision to close earlier
- Would have delayed the actual closing date
- Would have connected with Communications Department regarding closing announcements
- Would have been available on Minecraft more often before shutting down

What we created was a digital 24/7 Teen Center that needed more attention than we were ultimately able to provide.

Ideas for Ending a Project

- Research alternatives before ending something

- Get staff buy-in for closing the project

- Communicate reasons for ending project

- Give yourself a realistic timeline for ending the project

- Give your project a "graduation"

- Follow up to make sure everything is closed properly
    - *"It was open for a couple weeks after it was closed. It was like an apocalypse." (2)*

- Review what worked and what you could have done differently

Ending a Project isn't Bad!

- Failure isn't bad
  - *"...leads to personal and professional growth." (1)*
- Experimentation is healthy
  - *"You always miss 100% of the shots that you don't take." (Wayne Gretzky)*
- Share the lessons you learned
  - *"Sharing our failures helps ourselves and others learn from our failures." (1)*

Where We Are

- Have guest passes open to anyone under 18

- We help teens & tweens set up their own temporary worlds or access free servers

- Minecraft building programs and challenges

- Relationships remain
    - *"Daaang, this is nostalgic."* (2)

Thank you staff!!!
lcplminecraft.com

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(3) Minecraft nickname Minnie

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