

Minecraft Me!

Using the Maker Lab to Create Vinyl Print T-Shirts for Teens

Marketing Plan

2014-2015

Management of Libraries and Information Centers

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## **Introduction**

Wrightwood-Ashburn branch is located in the southwest side of Chicago near the corner of 85th street and Kedzie Avenue and supports the Wrightwood and Ashburn neighborhoods. The library was dedicated on August 21, 1997. As a part of the Chicago Public Library, the Wrightwood-Ashburn branch shares the same mission:

“We welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and lifelong learning. Working together, we strive to provide equal access to information, ideas, and knowledge through books, programs and other resources. We believe in the freedom to read, to learn, to discover.”

In the near future, Chicago Public Library’s Wrightwood-Ashburn branch will be gaining a Maker-lab to support the expanding teen YouMedia program. This Maker-lab will include a programmable vinyl cutter. There is a new high school, the Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy, that recently opened in 2012 nearby, and with the addition of the YouMedia program and the Maker-lab, the Wrightwood-Ashburn branch hopes to attract these teens with innovative, creative, and high-tech programming.

## **The Program**

As a way to utilize and promote the new Maker Lab at the Wrightwood-Ashburn branch, I propose a program where teens can come in to the library to create Minecraft themed T-shirts using the digital program Adobe Illustrator, heat-sensitive vinyl paper, and the library’s new vinyl cutter. Using the 8-bit character model from Minecraft, the teens will:

- Design their own character skin with MS Paint, Paint.net, or Illustrator.

- Transfer the skin as a vector drawing on Illustrator.
- Print it out on heat-sensitive paper on the vinyl cutter.
- Iron the vinyl onto blank T-shirts provided by the library.

Due to the simplistic nature of Minecraft's character designs, which use enlarged square pixels in 8-bit style, the transfer to vector art in Illustrator and the printing will be very simple and a great starter for new users and for those who are intimidated by the vinyl cutter.

## **Minecraft**

While video games are usually not treated with the same respect as other forms of entertainment and learning, such as books or film, it is important for libraries to give serious thought to including games, whether as a part of a program or as part of the media collection for patrons to check out. Also, incorporating video games is one of the best ways to attract teens, preteens, and children to the library. As Kat Werner, a librarian from Benton Harbor Public Library, says in her article "Bringing Them In," "Children and teens are living in an increasingly digital world, and libraries struggle with ways to continue to be relevant to the younger generation" (790).

Minecraft is an online virtual sandbox creative/survival game. It was created by Markus "Notch" Persson, a Swedish independent game developer, in 2009. It can be played on the computer, the Xbox 360, XboxOne, Playstation 4, and on certain handheld devices. As Wired magazine described it: Minecraft is "'a virtual version of Lego' that has 'no instructions, no levels, no mission structure, no story, no lives, no points, no clear goal.'" The player loads into a large, randomly generated world and, depending on the difficulty setting, must immediately find a way to survive using the environment. As Erica Gauquier and Jessica Schneider, in their article

“Minecraft Programs in the Library” write: “players have the freedom to alter the world and create how they play within the game” (17). The player is given total freedom to do as they choose, whether it is to build enormous structures, explore vast worlds, find villages to trade with, or domesticate animals and farm the land.

By adding a Minecraft-theme to this program, it will attract teens and youth who are familiar to this very popular game while still allowing them to be creative. The teens will also gain more than just cool T-shirt with their own character skin on it: they can also transfer the character image file to the game itself.

### **Purpose**

According to the CPL’s recent Strategic Plan Report for 2015, they list under strategic vision that they plan to work to: *nurture learning, support economic advancement, and strengthen communities*. To ensure this and ensure access for all its patrons, CPL is “designing programs, services and collections based on Chicagoan’s evolving needs and interests by efforts that give people access to new technology” including: “the Maker Lab, which allows users to access 3D design and printing technology” (CPL Strategic Plan Report 13-14).

Also, for their teen patrons specifically, the CPL plans to:

1. Provide knowledgeable, well-equipped and well-trained staff.
2. Create engaging and welcoming spaces for teens to support learning.
3. Offering interest-based activities and mentorship.
4. Facilitating access to materials, “including state-of-the-art technology and digital resources.”

5. Providing exploration opportunities as a pathway to college and career.

(CPL Strategic Plan Report 20)

In order to fulfill the vision and goals of the CPL's strategic plan, this Minecraft Vinyl T-shirt program will enhance learning by introducing teens to new technology: the new vinyl cutter, Adobe Illustrator, vector art, T-shirt design, and iron-transfer. For teens who are interested in art, digital design, printmaking, and video games, this program will draw them in and encourage them to continue to explore these new highly-advanced but accessible technologies.

### **Program Outline**

First, the Maker Lab and the vinyl cutter need to arrive at the Wrightwood-Ashburn Branch. The new Teen Library Associate must then be trained on the use of the vinyl cutter, Adobe Illustrator, and make sure everything is in working order. This is will all take place in July through August.

Once this is in place:

#### *September*

Step 1: Detail plan and gain approval from Branch Manager.

Step 2: Secure a source of funding for blank T-shirts.

Step 3: Talk with school librarians from local Sarah E. Goode STEM High School and other local high schools

Step 4: Design blog post for website, tumblr, and social media, and physical fliers.

#### *October*

Step 5: Publish advertisements for program online (website, social media), at the library, and at the local high schools, and teen hangouts.

Step 6: Begin registration.

Step 7: Speak with students directly at the local high schools with a short demonstration

*November*

Step 8: Hold the program on the assigned date.

Step 9: Keep track of registration, attendance, performance, and observations for evaluation.

Step 10: Evaluate the program and assess the possibility of holding another one in the Spring.

### **Marketing Plan**

As mentioned in the program plan, the marketing of the program will be done within the library and externally through online and physical media such as: blog posts, images, classroom/school library discussions, and fliers. These will begin soon after the program and will allow for time to gain interest before registration begins. With these advertisements, the library hopes to not only gain interest and registration from local teens, but also to showcase and promote the new Maker Lab and YOUmedia program. See Appendix A-B for examples.

### **Evaluation**

This program will be evaluated based on registration, attendance, participation, observation, and verbal feedback from the participants and observers (e.g. parents). Using this data, the library staff will determine if the program met its goals: Did it successfully teach teens how to use the

vinyl cutter? Adobe Illustrator? Do they know what “vector art” is? Did they enjoy the program? How likely are they to attend future programs or experiment with the equipment on their own?

**Demographics**

While this program is specifically geared towards teens, if there is a great deal of interest from middle school or preteen patrons interested and not enough teens registration, there may be some allowances for them to participate. Generally, however, the program will fit into the teen YOUmedia demographic of high school teenagers preparing for college and future careers. If this program proves to be successful, there can be future programs that can be created for older and younger patrons as well as more technically advanced programs for the more technologically savvy patrons.

**SWOT Analysis**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Maker Lab technology</li> <li>• Unique program to this library branch</li> <li>• Free for patrons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with new high school</li> <li>• Promote new Maker Lab and YOUmedia</li> <li>• Popularity of Minecraft</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-shirt cost</li> <li>• New/daunting/complex equipment and software</li> <li>• Potential burns from ironing on vinyl</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of proper public transportation</li> <li>• High school may not participate</li> <li>• Not enough teen interest/registration</li> </ul>

**Challenges**

The biggest challenges for this program are: teen interest and cost. Securing the funds for the blank T-shirts and heat-sensitive vinyl paper may be impossible if the branch has no funds set aside or if no one is willing to contribute out of pocket. Also, if there is not enough interest from

the local teens and poor registration, the program may not be worth the time and effort, or may need to be expanded to allow younger or older patron involvement. The program may take multiple days or several hours to complete. Another issue is technical: the programming for the vinyl cutter, Illustrator, and vector art may be too complex or frustratingly buggy for the librarians or teen library associate and the patrons. Also, where the Wrightwood-Ashburn library is located, there is poor access to public transportation. It is far south of the CTA Orange Line and can be only accessed by the 85th street bus or the Kedzie bus. This can be very tough for high school students who cannot drive. One way to overcome this is to provide direct transportation from the school on the day of the program by working directly with the high school.

### **Strengths**

The greatest strengths of this program are: learning, access, and connection. By taking advantage of the popularity of the creative video game Minecraft and giving teens access to advanced design and printing technologies with the use of the vinyl cutter and Adobe Illustrator, the teens will be able to apply this learning experience to their own interests and hopefully become interested in other Maker Lab technologies, the YOUmedia space, and teen-focused programs that the library will be offering.



## References

“Building the Library of the Future.” *Chicago Public Library Strategic Plan Report 2015-2017*. 2014.

Gauquier, Erica, and Jessica Schneider. 2013. "Minecraft Programs in the Library." *Young Adult Library Services* 11, no. 2: 17-19. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 17, 2014).

Ludwig, Sarah. 2013. "Block Party." *School Library Journal* 59, no. 3: 34. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 17, 2014).

Werner, Kat. 2013. "Bringing Them In: Developing a Gaming Program for the Library." *Library Trends* 61, no. 4: 790-801. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 17, 2014).

## Appendix A

Blog/Social Image Media Post (Will be a single graphic image resembling this):

Want to make your own Minecraft shirt featuring YOUR  
Minecraft character?



Well you can!

Register for a free class in vinyl printing at the Wrightwood-Ashburn Branch Library and try out our new Maker Lab, a part of the new teen YOUmedia program for YOU.

## **Appendix B**

Text post (will accompany T-shirt image on blog post or flier):

The Wrightwood-Ashburn Branch Library now hosts a Maker Lab and a YOUmedia space! For those of you who have seen the Maker Lab and YOUmedia center downtown at the Harold Washington Library know that this is a wonderful experience and opportunity for YOU.

To introduce you to our new equipment, we want you to participate in our first ever Maker Lab program:

Minecraft ME!

When: November 4th-6th, 3-5pm

Try out our new vinyl cutter and design technology to create a T-shirt with your very own Minecraft character that YOU create.

What you get to do:

- Create your own Minecraft skin (you can even use it in Minecraft!)
- Learn about Vector art.
- Use Adobe Illustrator
- Print with our new vinyl cutter using heat-sensitive vinyl
- Iron!
- Get a free T-shirt!

Call or visit in person to register by the end of October.