

# The Role of Games in Community Building in an Urban Public Library

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# Melbourne Library Service

- Six branches across the City of Melbourne
- 1,142,025 people visited a Melbourne Library Service branch in 2014-2015
- 54,000 of those attended a program or workshop run by the library service



# Why do we care about our patrons and gaming?

- Four of the six Melbourne Library Service branches offer consoles and board games for the patrons to play
- All branches currently offer console games for borrowing from current and last generation consoles
- Patron enquiries about having a board game and pen and paper role playing game lending collection





## Who completed the Survey?

- 30 patrons completed the gaming survey between December 2015 and March 2016
- A majority were young adults (15-30 years old)
- Many were already playing games with others either in person or online
- There was an almost even split between those identifying as male or female

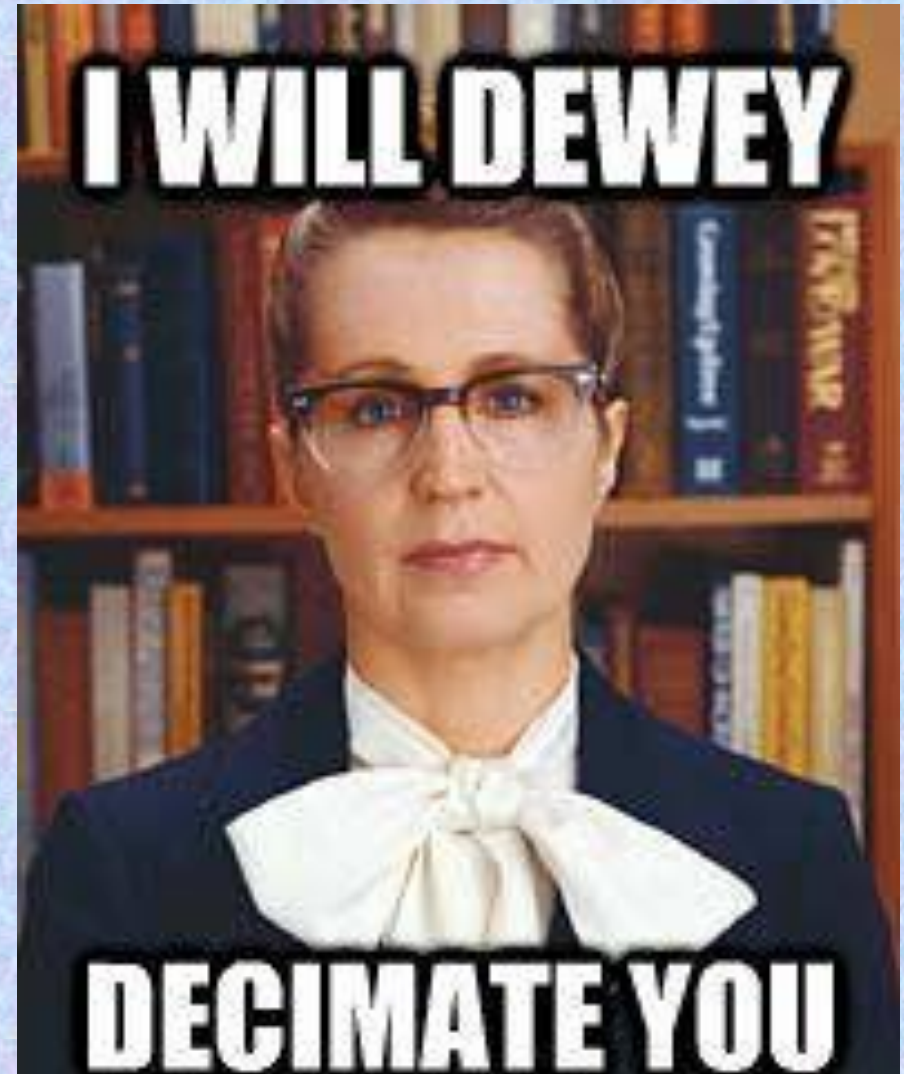
# Young Adults and Community

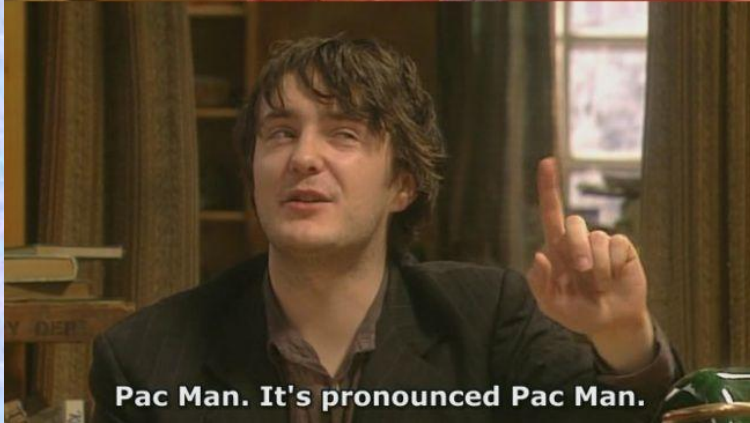
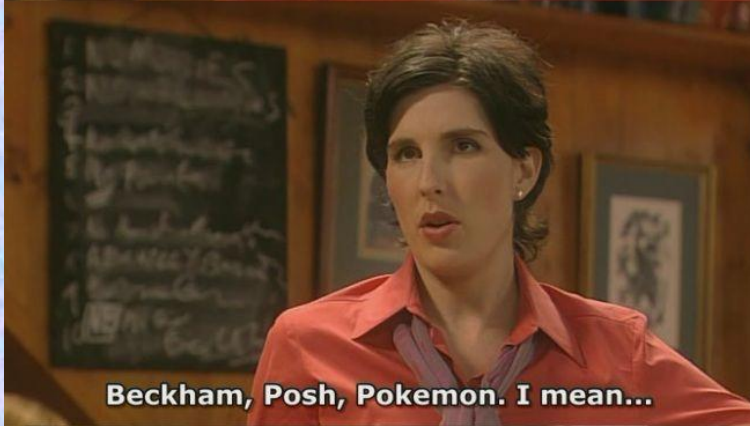
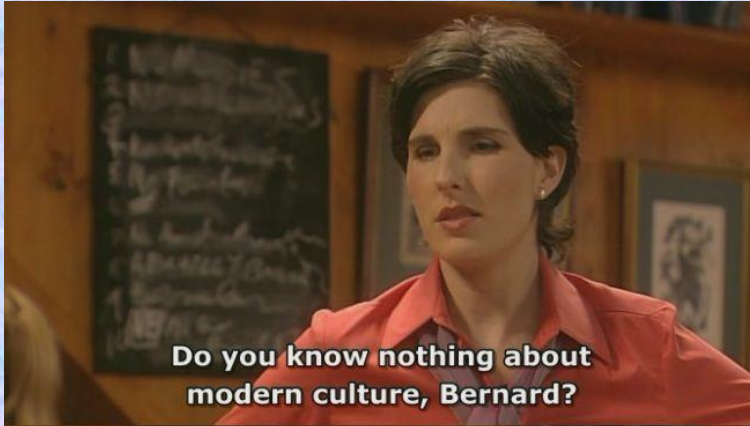


- Friendships reach peak importance during young adulthood
- Young adults experience multiple upheavals as they move through school and in to work
- Multiple upheavals cause a loss of a sense of identity and community
- Lack of community and identity put young adults at higher risk of anxiety and depression

# Games in libraries

- Libraries have a history of supporting gaming through Chess and Scrabble
- Most libraries already have an extensive Audio/Visual collection
- Easy to link to literacy, community engagement and collection promotion
- Libraries can provide a safe space in which people feel comfortable engaging with strangers





# Games as a Catalyst for Community Building

- Video and board games occur in a social context
- Games give people the chance to practice a range of interpersonal skills
- Gamers have the opportunity to connect over shared experiences
- Ongoing board and video game programs allow participants to build social networks

# What sort of Games?

- Do your research!
- Console games should be couch co-op or pass and play
- Know what sort of board game you're buying
- Is the card game collectable or customisable?
- Pen and Paper RPG systems may require multiple books and special equipment to play





# Facilitating Play

- Demographic?
- What types of games are you playing?
- How many people are you expecting?
- What equipment will you need?
- How will you set up the space?
- SNACKS!



# Start Playing!

- Ben Manolas
  - [Ben.manolas@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:Ben.manolas@melbourne.vic.gov.au)
- ALIA International Games Day
  - <https://www.alia.org.au/ideas-campaigns-and-events-your-library/international-games-day>
- ALA International Games Day
  - <http://igd.ala.org>

