There's No Time: Rapid Front-End Reporting with Infographics

Kelley Staab—Research & Evaluation Associate, Saint Louis Science Center

Exhibit timelines at Science Centers are tight.

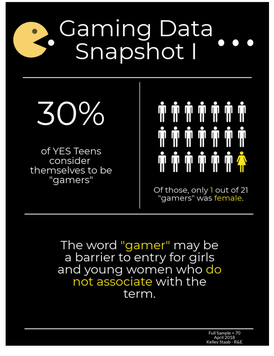
Researching, planning, designing, evaluating, building, and crafting educational messages all take time. Sometimes this means steps and processes that are seen as taking too long, like evaluation, get bypassed or compressed in order to meet deadlines.

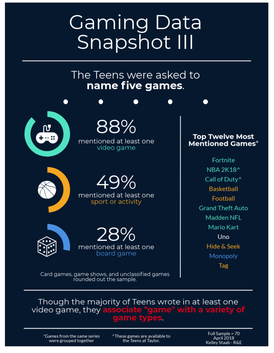
Background

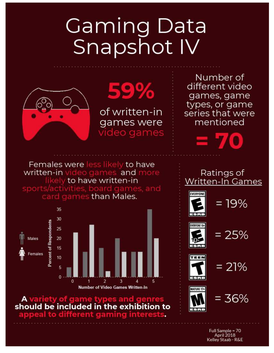
In 2018, the Saint Louis Science Center developed GAMEXPLORATION, an interactive exhibition about games and gaming aimed at teenagers. Teens were an audience that did not traditionally visit the Science Center and their input was needed. We opted to conduct a compressed front-end evaluation with teens in the Science Center's Youth Exploring Science (YES) program.

The Challenge

The formal kick-off meeting was four weeks away and a complete evaluation needed to be designed, implemented, and reported on before then. Meanwhile, the exhibit design and planning team was continuing to meet and make decisions.







The Solution

With YES teens as our participants and asking only quantitative and simple qualitative questions, we cut down on the data collection and analysis time. However, we needed a way to make the results compelling and digestible. Our solution = infographics.

Infographics are visual, fun, colorful, and creative—all traits that we wanted to embody in the exhibit—and the results worked as a series of "Snapshots" that each looked at one aspect of the data. Seven infographics were planned.

By providing smaller portions of analyzed data in each Snapshot, we were making our recommendations easier to absorb. This quick exchange of information was crucial. We didn't want to overload the exhibit team with too many findings at once, but knew we had to capture their attention. The Snapshots were dispersed one or two at a time over the course of about two weeks.

How was the data used?

Name: From **Snapshot I**, we learned that teen girls did not associate with the word "gamer." As a result, we moved away from the working name for the exhibition: *Gamer's Village*.

Games: Snapshots **III** and **IV** showed teens associated more than just video games (though popular) with the word "game." They reinforced that a mix of sports, board games, video games, etc. should make up the backbone of the exhibit.

Content: Snapshots **V** and **V.v** (not pictured) shared what the teens expected and wanted to see in the exhibit. The technology behind gaming, how games are made, and the history of games were all things teens thought needed to be included and were incorporated in the final product.

Experience: The Snapshots showed teens think games are fun, social, and enjoyable. They wanted to be able to play a variety of classic and current games with their friends in a comfortable atmosphere. Bright colors, whimsy, and group seating were brought in to create the environment. Multiplayer and cooperative games, like the oversized NES controller, were featured to encourage social experiences.

Takeaway

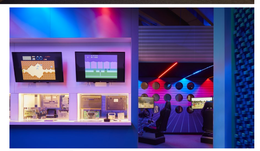
The graphic representation and flow of Snapshots connected with the team, allowing for the findings to be incorporated in the exhibit.

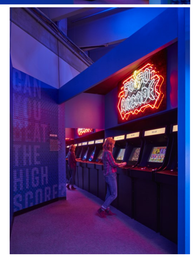
For *GameXPloration*, the use of rapid front-end infographics was a success.

Scan the QR code to see the full series of *GameXPloration* Snapshots!

Photos of *GameXPloration*

All photos © Tom Harris | Design by Gensler





SAINT LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER