

## National Forum on Libraries and Game-Based Education

American University and FableVision Studios will partner to host a national forum on the future of libraries and game-based education. The forum will bring together diverse stakeholders including school, public, and university libraries to address this critical topic. The project partners request \$100,000 in funding to host the forum and to broadly share the forum's insights.

### **Statement of Broad Need**

Libraries and librarians have a long history of digital innovation and can be powerful advocates in their communities for game-based education.<sup>1</sup> Outstanding public<sup>2</sup> and school<sup>3</sup> libraries have leveraged overlapping roles as media mediators and outreach organizations to connect games and learning for younger audiences. Librarians, themselves, have unique skills that make them experts in schools and public spaces in areas of media literacy and interpretation.

Librarians also face a host of issues in implementing game-based education. Anecdotally, these limitations often revolve around lack of internal support, relevance, resources, and issues of access. This forum would more clearly define these interconnected limitations and identify opportunities for the field to move forward.

### **Project Design**

The primary goals for the national forum are to more clearly identify and document institutional barriers to the use of game-based education in libraries and their potential solutions. Additional outcomes include improving opportunities for libraries to support their communities through training, educational opportunities, and research on this topic. Written reports alone are unlikely to capture the spirit of the forum's findings. FableVision Studios will create visualizations of data collected during the forum as well as actionable recommendations from the forum captured as interactive guides and animations that can be used to drive professional development recommendations and future work.

The two-day forum will be structured as a combination summit, unconference, and public arcade to be hosted at American University in February 2019 with approximately 100 summit attendees. Attendants will include K12, public, and university librarians, affiliated formal and informal educators, ed tech thought leaders, as well as administrators from each of these spaces. August and September will be used to identify key participants and to structure the forum. October through January will focus on promoting the summit for general attendance. March through May will be used to analyze the results of the forum. The white paper and interactive components will be published in June of 2019.

The forum will feature leading experts in libraries, education, and game-based education who will provide framing for the event through expert panels. This will be followed by guided roundtable events

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<sup>1</sup> Games & Gaming Roundtable of the American Library Association, *Obstacles and Challenges*. <http://www.ala.org/rt/gamert/obstacles-and-challenges>

<sup>2</sup> Chicago Public Library, *Library of Games*. <http://libraryofgames.org/>

<sup>3</sup> American Association of School Librarians, *Gaming as Meaningful Education*. <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2016/01/aasl-and-gamert-invite-you-game>

to expand on discussions introduced by the panelists. The second day of the forum will feature an arcade of entertainment and learning games to facilitate transitioning theory into practice.

[American University's Game Lab](#), led by [Lindsay Grace](#), is a leading figure in exploring the use of games in non-traditional settings. With the support of the American University Library, the Game Lab will provide hosting and framing for the event along with [Dr. Benjamin Stokes](#). American University has a history of creating innovative arcades to foster conversations, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum Arcade which hosted over 18,000 attendees, and in catalyzing conversations on the game-based education field, such as the 2017 [Games+ Summit](#).

[FableVision Studios](#) is an award-winning developer of digital educational media co-founded by children's author and illustrator Peter H. Reynolds. FableVision Studios will create the visualizations and interactive guides to better communicate the results of the forum with the field. FableVision will also commit [James Collins](#), formerly of the Department of Education, to help organize the summit. James organized game-based education summits for the Department and supported the work of the Department's [Future Ready Librarians program](#).

### **Diversity Plan**

The forum will include public, private, school, and university library and librarian voices. Every effort will be made to include representation from urban, rural, and other underserved populations as has been the focus at prior American University events such as the annual [Diversity in Games Summit](#). The organizers will leverage [partnerships](#) with education and technology organizations aligned with the Future Ready Librarians program to increase the reach of the reports and to sponsor travel.

### **Broad Impact**

Forum participants will leave with actionable recommendations for removing institutional barriers. The forum's conversations will be amplified by a forum white paper, interactive visualizations of forum and survey data, and interactive guides for guiding professional development decisions. These will be disseminated through multiple channels including librarian and university networks, library conferences, FableVision's educational publishing service, twitter chats, and other social media.

The project team will measure the impact of the forum through quantitative and qualitative surveys issued to participants before and after the forum. The project team will also measure the dissemination of the reports and guides. Analytics and follow-ups will capture their reach and impact.

The project requests \$100,000 in total funding from IMLS. \$40,000 of this funding will be used by American University to provide hosting for the event, organize the arcade, and provide speaker fees. \$20,000 will be used to provide travel to underserved participants. \$20,000 will be used by FableVision Studios to develop the visualizations and animations. The remaining \$20,000 would be used to develop the white paper and interactive guides.