In 2016, a partnership between the J. Murrey Atkins Library and the College of Computing and Informatics at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte launched a gaming lab to support the educational needs of Computer Science students in the artificial intelligence, robotics, and gaming concentration. A second-floor space, that housed shelving for videotapes, was repurposed within the library’s new Area 49 technology hub for the exploration of digital games, specifically their roles as cultural and artistic artifacts. The purpose of the Gaming Lab is to ensure availability of equipment and required course materials for all artificial intelligence, robotics, and gaming students. Furthermore, students and other patrons not enrolled in the game design program may also use the lab for personal enjoyment of interactive media. The Gaming Lab is part of an effort to build collaborative spaces in an academic library where new ideas and technologies are accessible to all.

**ABSTRACT**

In 2016, a partnership between the J. Murrey Atkins Library and the College of Computing and Informatics at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte launched a gaming lab to support the educational needs of Computer Science students in the artificial intelligence, robotics, and gaming concentration. A second-floor space, that housed shelving for videotapes, was repurposed within the library’s new Area 49 technology hub for the exploration of digital games, specifically their roles as cultural and artistic artifacts. The purpose of the Gaming Lab is to ensure availability of equipment and required course materials for all artificial intelligence, robotics, and gaming students. Furthermore, students and other patrons not enrolled in the game design program may also use the lab for personal enjoyment of interactive media. The Gaming Lab is part of an effort to build collaborative spaces in an academic library where new ideas and technologies are accessible to all.

**GAMING LAB**

Area 49 provides multiple methods of gaming. The Gaming Lab houses an Alienware Gaming PC, an Xbox 360, a Playstation 4 Pro, a laptop gaming connection, and an Atari 2600. The Gaming Lab availability coincides with the library building hours. However, games, controllers, and headphones may only be borrowed when the Technology Desk is staffed.

**CURRICULUM SUPPORT**

Computer Science students in the Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Gaming concentration must play a variety of Digital Games as part of their studies:

- Students develop their reflective writing skills by writing log entries about their game play experiences.
- Students apply their knowledge of game design principles by observing and analyzing the design of games they play.
- Students evaluate their game play experiences, which develops critical thinking and writing skills.

Access to a diverse set of gaming technologies and games is crucial for students’ education as future game designers and developers.

**Digital Games are cultural and artistic artifacts with relevance to contemporary events, social dynamics and knowledge transfer.**

In creating the Gaming Lab of the library, we ensure that experts in cataloguing and management of information are in charge of providing access to a curated repository of carefully selected games that not only support curriculum but further the Library’s mission of providing spaces to collaborate and seek knowledge.

The Atkins Library Gaming Lab ensures that the necessary technologies and media discussed in the course are available to all students.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Atkins Library Gaming Lab was made possible through a collaboration with the College of Computing and Informatics and cooperation with Joe Matejich, CGI Technology Solutions; Office Executive Director of Technology, and Academic Affairs. Additionally, our appreciation goes to Dr. Anne Cooper Moore, Dean of UNC Charlotte Libraries for allotting space in Area 49; Dr. Rebecca Croxton, Head of Assessment, for formatting and performing the statistical analysis of the Gaming Lab survey; Somaly Kim Wu, Head of Library Technology Innovation, for overseeing the development and management of the space; Beth Canino, Digital Pedagogy & Emerging Technologies Librarian, for administering the daily operations and management of the space; Beth Canino, Digital Pedagogy & Emerging Technologies Librarian, for administering the daily operations and evolution of the gaming lab; Thomas Crocker, Technology & Multimedia Production Coordinator, for taking Area 49 photographs and managing daily operations, and Ryan Miller, Graphics/UX Designer, for poster formatting.