Createch

Philosophy
Teens are hesitant to walk into a program cold. But if they're welcomed into a room with iPads, comfy seating, music, a welcoming mentor - they'll hang out there. Mentors work to develop relationships, tech skills, and “cultural capital.”

In addition to offering a persistent space to hang out with technology, we will occasionally offer options for “messing around” with technology, though it is not mandatory for being in the space. It relaxes the feel of the program, and helps tremendously in attendance and participation.

History
The Teen Tech Crew (TTC) is a collaboration between the Saint Paul Public Library, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, and the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM) Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center (KAYSC).

In winter of 2012, nine high school Youth Job Corps (YJC) workers were hired and trained by the SMM team. They work together in teams of three to create hands-on creative technology workshops at Rondo Library, Rice Street Teen Zone/Library and the Arlington Library.

At the same time, the libraries and parks received the IMLS Learning Labs grant. We wrote into that grant that we would create a mobile lab. At the time, we envisioned offering technology to out-of-school time agencies. However, we quickly learned that the mentor/teen relationships were what made technology programs successful. Our advisory board suggested that we not create drop-in mobile lab. Instead, we create a persistent space for teens that the mobile lab could complement.

In the Spring of 2012, the TTC offered sporadic classes using Scratch animation. During the summer months, the classes were offered weekly. The TTC renamed their sessions “Createch Labs” as they branched out from Scratch animation, and ventured into offering a variety of “messing around” options with science, technology, and engineering. Our attendance spiked.

In the fall of 2012, when the TTC teens had to scale back to teaching once/month, libraries and parks decided to implement what it was learning through the IMLS Learning Lab grant. The library and parks started offering “hanging out” time with the mobile lab to keep a persistent teen activity offered weekly. This, having consistent staff, and supplementing with Legacy funded special events has made the Createch a success. Attendance is high. Relationships are flourishing between teen participants and staff. Teens are feeling an ownership at their library and parks sites.

In November 2012, we shortened “Createch Labs” to “Createch” and added one more site – this one with a partnership with Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN) to teach video production. Having tried intermittent programming in libraries in the past, SPNN were thrilled to have a space to try their programming biweekly. This will start in January 2013.
IMLS grant: SPPL & Parks and Rec receive grant, and want to create a mobile technology lab for teens throughout the Sprockets network.

Teen Tech Crew: SMM & SPPL want to start this program where youth are trained to deliver tech programs for teens at SPPL.

Problem: Knowing the importance of relationship building with teens, with our plan of “dropping” technology into a space without relationships

Problem: knowing the value and impact of a persistent space for teens, with the reality of the Teen Tech Crew’s schedule

Createch: a space in libraries or parks where teens can ‘hang out’ with technology, be guided to ‘mess around’ with technology with mentors. Mentors are both teen (Teen Tech Crew) and adult (SPPL, Parks, and SMM staff).

Timeline

February – May 2012
  First Teen Tech Crew workshops
  Teen Tech Crew begins

June – August 2012
  Createch labs named
  Regular times scheduled
  Weekly Teen Tech Crew: increase attendance and relationship building

September – December 2012
  Createch changes:
    Libraries and parks run hang out space with mobile lab
    Teen Tech Crew supplements monthly with messing around time

January – May 2013
  Teen Tech Crew will survey attendees
  Bring in 3 new Teen Tech Crew students (to fill gaps in availability)
  Marika visits TTC meeting to discuss goals & give a context to curriculum
  Read Brave (Born Brave Bus tour)
  Reconfigure Arlington’s Createch space (open after hours?)
  Marika = baby

June – August 2013
  Maker Corps (Keith Braafladt)
  Youth Science Day (SMM)
  Current funding ends

September – December 2013
  Employ Cityspan tracking of data

January – May 2013
  Payne/Maryland and Learning Lab opens
What I learned from what worked/what didn’t with HCL:
- Librarians that built relationships had successful programs
- Core interests of the librarian guided what the kids did. (music, film, poetry)
- Librarians that struggled to make the commitment at the library – their programs failed
- Connect the programs with other stuff going on – new projects came out of the work...
- Enclosed spaces are best – lack of persistent space is hard on the program.

Partnerships
- SMM trains the Createch staff and the YJC workers who make up the TTC. The TTC do classes 1 week/month during the school year, and more during the summer months.
- SPNN will offer classes through their CTEP every other Monday at the Hayden Heights library
- Parks and Recreation provide space, staff, administrative assistance, and have donated the YJC time
- Legacy Programs enhance these hang out times
- Maggie Struck – U of M researcher who observed the sessions for one month, and conducted a focus group with the Teen Tech Crew YJCs. Will present findings in December 2012, and will continue research throughout her doctoral program.

Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mondays</th>
<th>Hayden Heights</th>
<th>SPNN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>Rondo</td>
<td>SMM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesdays</td>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>SMM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursdays</td>
<td>Rice St. / Teen Zone</td>
<td>SMM</td>
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Delivery schedule daily: mmc (a.m.) ➔ HH ➔ AR ➔ RC ➔ RD (noonish)

Technology: 2 mobile labs include (in each)
- 1 – MacBook & dongle
- 5 – iPads w/ Garage Band and iMovie & dongle
- 1 – set of speakers (& one donated speaker)
- 1 – heavy duty case w/ wheels
- 5 – headphones

Resources
- Mediamashup.ning.com/groups
- Teentechcohort.tumblr.com

Goals/needs/next steps/ideas for the future
- Program R&D
- Train TTC (Youth Develop Facilitation)
- Learning Place for Youth: Flexible Model – Createch
- Develop library & parks youth workers
- Develop tech mentors (TTC & SPPL staff)
- Co-learning (adult/youth/staff/patron)
- Cityspan connection
- Implement a survey for participants (perhaps with Maggie Struck’s help)
  - Why do youth come?
  - What other technology/tools would you like to see?
  - If you’re not here, where are you hanging out?
- Communicate to the teens – this is our goal & vision and they are a part of this goal.
- Use of iPads/mobile lab with teens at English conversation circle (AR – Mondays)
- How do we keep girls engaged?
- What kind of feedback is most useful from our staff? IMLS needs for feedback vs. SMM needs?

**Teen Tech Crew Staff / Mobile Lab staff**

SPPL staff:
- Karen Kolb Peterson (project manager & Youth Services Director)
- Janos McGhie (project coordinator – Rice St.)
- Lora Bloom (Arlington)
- Tayo Adefuye (Rondo)
- Jen Larson (Hayden Heights)
- Marika Staloch (Youth Services Coordinator, & IMLS)
- Debbie Willms (Deputy Director, SPPL & IMLS)
- Andrea McKennan (Advertising/Technical advisor)

Parks & Rec staff:
- Ofir Germanic (formerly Danielle Fleming) (St Paul Parks and Rec, North End Teen Center)
- Kathy Korum (Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation & IMLS)

SMM staff
- Peter Kirschman
- Joey Adamji
- Keith Braafladt

SPNN
- Nicola Pine
- Emily Krumburger (CTEP)
  - 2 YJC workers (tbd)

Fundraisers
- Larry W (SMM)
- Wendy Moylan (The Friends of SPPL)