



How to host a winning virtual game night

CYBER HOUSE RULES

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Miami University Libraries

ALAO Annual Conference 2021



Miami University Land Acknowledgment

Miami University is located within the traditional homelands of the Myaamia and Shawnee people, who along with other indigenous groups ceded these lands to the United States in the first Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The Miami people, whose name our university carries, were forcibly removed from these homelands in 1846.

In 1972, a relationship between Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma began and evolved into a reciprocal partnership, including the creation of the Myaamia Center at Miami University in 2001. The work of the Myaamia Center serves the Miami Tribe community and is dedicated to the revitalization of Miami language and culture and to restoring that knowledge to the Myaamia people. Miami University and the Miami Tribe are proud of this work and of the more than 140 Myaamia students who have attended Miami since 1991 through the Myaamia Heritage Award Program.

From more information on the Myaamia Center and Miami Tribe Relations, please see: <https://www.miamioh.edu/miami-tribe-relations/index.html>

Digital Land Acknowledgement

The following acknowledgment of what to keep in mind as we participate in this digital space is written by Adrienne Wong of SpiderWeb. You can find more about her work [here](#).

Since our activities are shared digitally to the internet, let's also take a moment to consider the legacy of colonization embedded within the technology, structures, and ways of thinking we use every day. We are using equipment and high-speed internet, not available in many indigenous communities. Even the technologies that are central to much of the art we make, leaves significant carbon footprints, contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect indigenous people worldwide. We invite you to join us in acknowledging all this, as well as our shared responsibility to make good of this time and for each of us to consider our roles in reconciliation, decolonization, and ally-ship.

Below are some organizations working to support Indigenous Peoples that can use your support:

The American Indian College Fund

The American Indian College Fund invests in Native students and tribal college education to transform lives and communities.

Cultural Survival

Cultural Survival supports a movement of empowered Indigenous Peoples organizing their communities to engage the international processes, national policies and human rights bodies to respect, protect, and fulfill their rights. Cultural Survival is Indigenous-led and has a diverse board of directors bringing experiences from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds to inform our perspectives and scope of work.

Native American Rights Fund

The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) has provided legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide who might otherwise have gone without adequate representation.

In this poster we will discuss:

1. The logistic challenges of hosting a virtual game night in an academic library environment
2. The lessons learned from our event and discuss how they met or didn't meet with our expectations and goals
3. Reflections on the future of virtual events and their viability as an outreach venue

How to interact with this poster:

The first half of this poster is designed as an interactive simulation, where you will flip a coin to determine how your institution is able to overcome challenges when planning a virtual game night event.

The second half discusses what actually happened when we pivoted to a virtual event in 2020-2021.



IN-PERSON GAME NIGHTS

Our library has hosted monthly board game nights for our campus community since 2017. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we were forced to cancel our in-person events and rethink how we would deliver game nights going forward. While pivoting to a virtual event seemed like the obvious solution, we encountered numerous setbacks in our quest to make an online game night a reality.

The Challenges

Funding

While a virtual event costs less than an in-person event, there are still some costs associated with access to gaming platforms.

Marketing

Getting the word out when everything is online makes it easy for the event to get lost in the ether.

Tech Limitations

Work computers are not gaming laptops. Home internet speeds can be too slow for some online gaming platforms.

Staffing

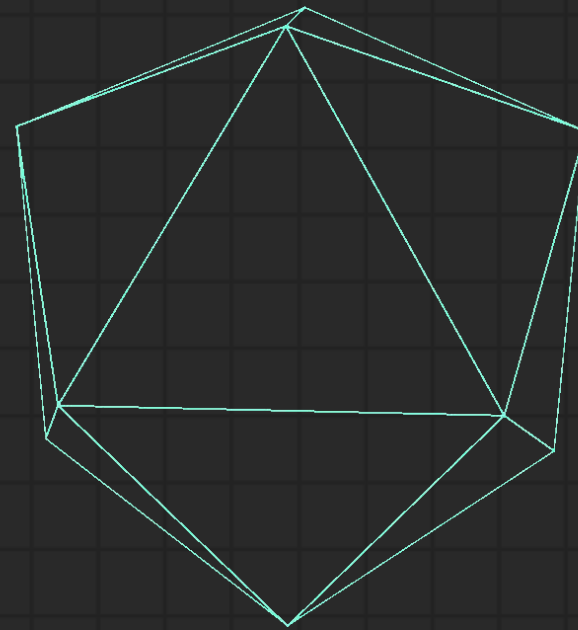
Virtual game nights require much more staffing assistance to monitor ongoing games and make sure latecomers know where to go.

Security

Planning for a zoombombing is non-negotiable in an academic library environment.

It will not be a part of the simulation because it is too important.

START SIMULATION



[Move directly to Discussion >>](#)

A futuristic digital tunnel with a grid floor and glowing neon lines. The tunnel is composed of multiple parallel lines that recede into the distance, creating a strong sense of perspective. The lines are primarily purple and blue, with some white highlights. The floor is a grid of glowing purple lines. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and high-tech.

MOVING TO PORTAL 1

Click anywhere to continue >>

PORTAL I: FUNDING

AKA as challenging as trying to teach an alligator to ice skate.

Costs for a virtual game night can range from premium accounts on Tabletopia and Board Game Arena to video game systems and their related online subscriptions.

Finding funding can be an issue with tight library budgets. Student life or other campus departments may have funding available for outreach events.



PORTAL I: FUNDING

Flip a coin!

Then click the alligator that matches your coin flip.

Heads



Tails



HEADS – HOORAY!

You have received some external funding and a couple hundred dollars from your library's outreach budget! Although event funding has been slashed because of Covid, small prizes can be purchased, like premium accounts for Tabletopia and Board Game Arena.

Move to Portal 2



TAILS – OH WELL

None! No prizes are available for attendees, and you have to stick with the free accounts.

Unfortunately that means limited game options.

Move to Portal 2



A futuristic, perspective-view hallway with a grid of glowing green lines on the ceiling and walls, creating a sense of depth and movement. The floor is dark with a subtle pattern. The text "MOVING TO PORTAL 2" is centered in a stylized, white font with red and blue outlines.

MOVING TO PORTAL 2

Click anywhere to continue >>

PORTAL 2: MARKETING



Marketing is one of the most important aspects of planning an event. If you can't get the word out, you won't have many attendees, and you won't have much leverage to advocate for hosting future events.

Social media channels are an integral part of current marketing efforts, but students are not always good followers of library accounts. Emailed announcements can work well if you already have a list of interested students. Paper fliers and in-house digital screens are also normally good marketing options, but don't work when the students are spread around the globe.

PORTAL 2: MARKETING

Flip a coin then click the matching icon



Heads



Tails



TAILS – LOCKED

You tried to send out an announcement to past attendees of your in-person events, but your email account has been flagged as sending out spam and is now locked. You have to rely solely on social media and the library website, which are not typically well-used by your target audience.

Word does not spread as well as you had hoped, and your event is not well attended.

Move to Portal 3

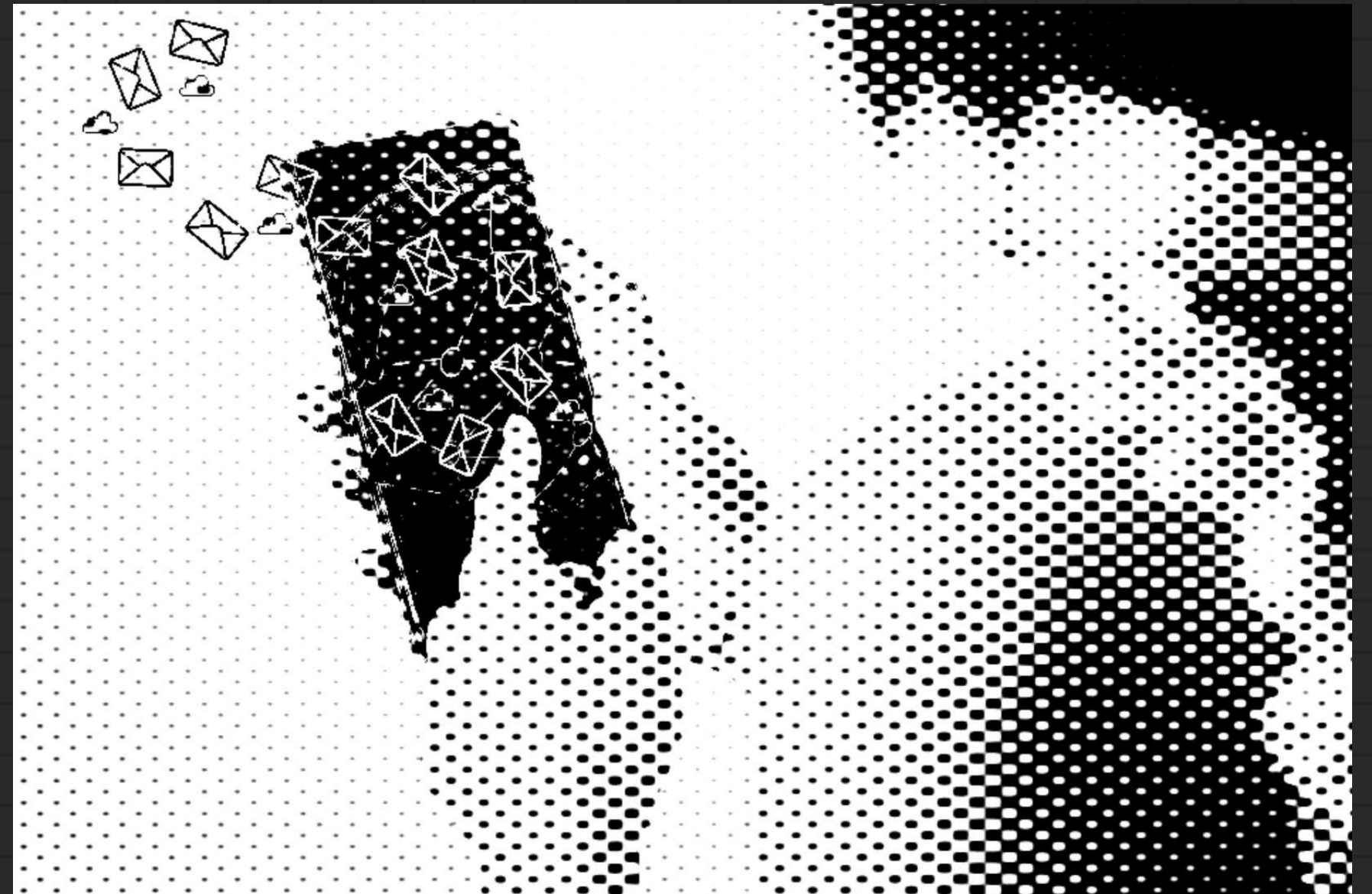


HEADS – SENT!

Your emailed marketing campaign works! Word is sent out to all past attendees of your in-person events, and your registration list keeps getting bigger.

Your social media campaign is also successful, attracting the attention of alumni as well as current students, faculty, and staff.

Move to Portal 3





MOVING TO PORTAL 3

Click anywhere to continue >>

PORTAL 3: TECH LIMITS

Even if you aren't running robust video games, the online versions of board games can have significant system requirements. This is especially true if you are also trying to use voice chat services like Discord at the same time.

In addition, most online platforms require all users to create their own accounts before they can play. This means that participants can't just show up and play - there is some pre-work required.



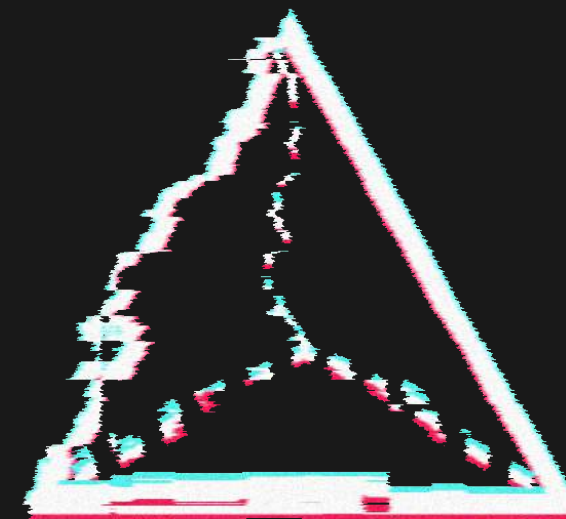
PORTAL 3: TECH LIMITS

Flip a coin. Then click on the corresponding icon.

Heads



Tails



HEADS – OH NO!

Everyone's computers shut down to prevent overheating because they can't handle the system requirements.

Time for trivia over Zoom?

Move to Portal 4



TAILS – HOORAY!

Attendees follow the pre-event instructions and are prepped and familiar with the platforms.

They are able to engage with the virtual games seamlessly.

Move to Portal 4



MOVING TO PORTAL 4

Click anywhere to continue >>

PORTAL 4: STAFFING

Volunteers needed.

When running a virtual game night, multiple library staff are needed for various duties, such as:

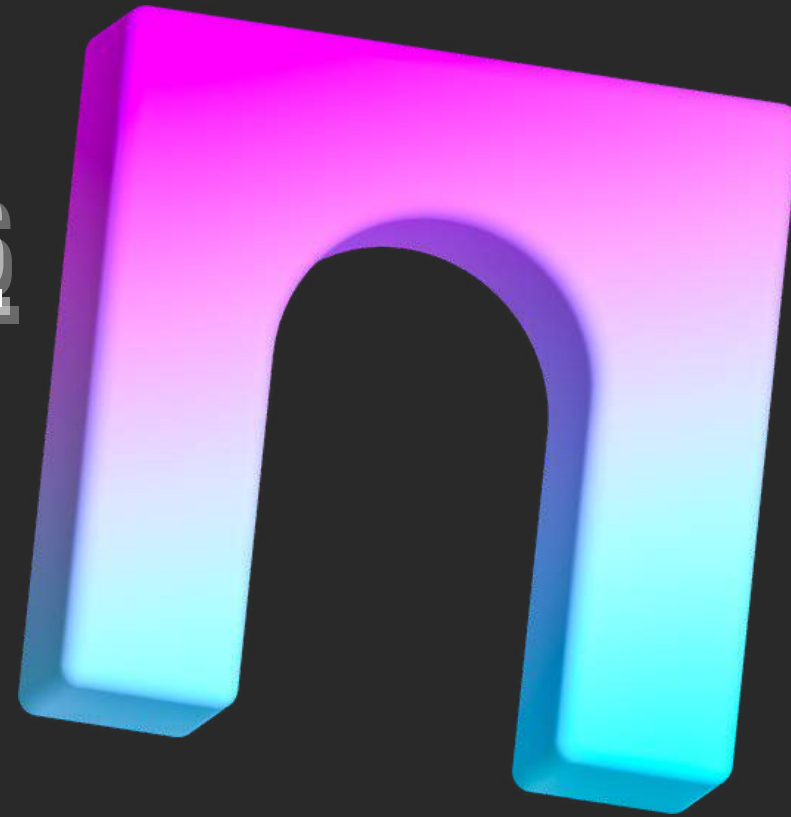
- shepherd attendees to the right virtual game room
- teach attendees how to use the platforms and play the games
- monitor for any technology issues or conduct violations



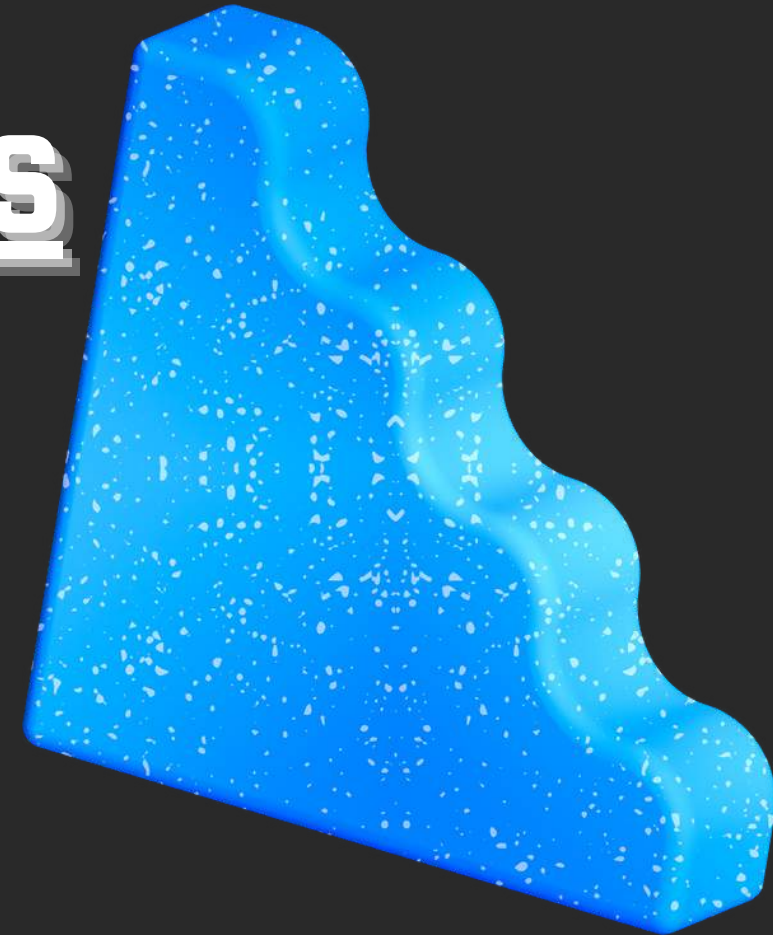
PORTAL 4: STAFFING

Flip a coin and click on
the matching shape

Heads



Tails



HEADS – NO TAKERS

You get a small pool of volunteers, which leads to confusion for attendees about how to join a virtual game table. Plus, no one really knows how to play advanced board games well enough to teach attendees.

But Board Game Arena does have checkers and chess!

Move to End



TAILS – ALL IN!

You have plenty of volunteers! You can plan to have a variety of games for attendees to play. Even though some participants experience technology issues, volunteer staff are able to help them troubleshoot and the event overall is quite seamless for participants.

Move to End



GAME OVER

PLAY AGAIN?

YES

NO

MOVE TO DISCUSSION...

HOW IT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

We held a Virtual Game Night on April 24, 2021. We had 21 total participants, roughly half of whom were library staff.

We got a small amount of funding

A student events organization gave us some funding, which allowed us to purchase premium accounts with Tabletopia and Board Game Arena, as well as a few small prizes.

Our email account was locked

Our entity account was flagged as a spam account. We weren't able to send out marketing emails to past attendees as planned, and had low attendance.

Some attendees couldn't play

Most of our attendees didn't notice that there was some pre-work involved, and some had to leave without playing after they were unable to get their computers set up.

We had plenty of volunteers

We had several library staff volunteer for our event. This allowed us to have enough staff to monitor for conduct issues, as well as offer a variety of games.

SATURDAY 24 APRIL 6-9PM
LIB.MIAMIOH.EDU/GAMES



VIRTUAL LIBRARIES GAMES NIGHT



Library Game Nights
to bcc: me
11:55 AM (10 minutes ago)

This message seems dangerous
Similar messages were used to steal people's personal information. Avoid clicking links, downloading attachments, or replying with personal information.

Hi all you Miami gamers,

Hope you are all staying safe and well as we work through the rest of the semester remotely.

Please fill out this survey about your interest in participating in a virtual library game night (or nights) to replace the ones we had to cancel: <https://forms.gle/2iy7M273GKwK4Jy47>

Thanks!

Abi Morgan
--
On behalf of Library Gaming Knights committee

Google **G Suite - This account has been disabled**

This account has been disabled
We are unable to process your request at this time, please try again later.

False Starts ★★☆☆

Because of all the challenges, the Library Game Night Committee had several false starts at hosting a virtual game night over the course of 2020.

We attempted an internal virtual game afternoon open only to library staff as a pilot in April 2020. From that event, we realized that it would difficult to scale up properly for a wider audience.

In Fall 2020, we discussed attempting a virtual game night, but as staff, we were too overwhelmed in our regular job duties with the transition to remote learning to also coordinate a new event.

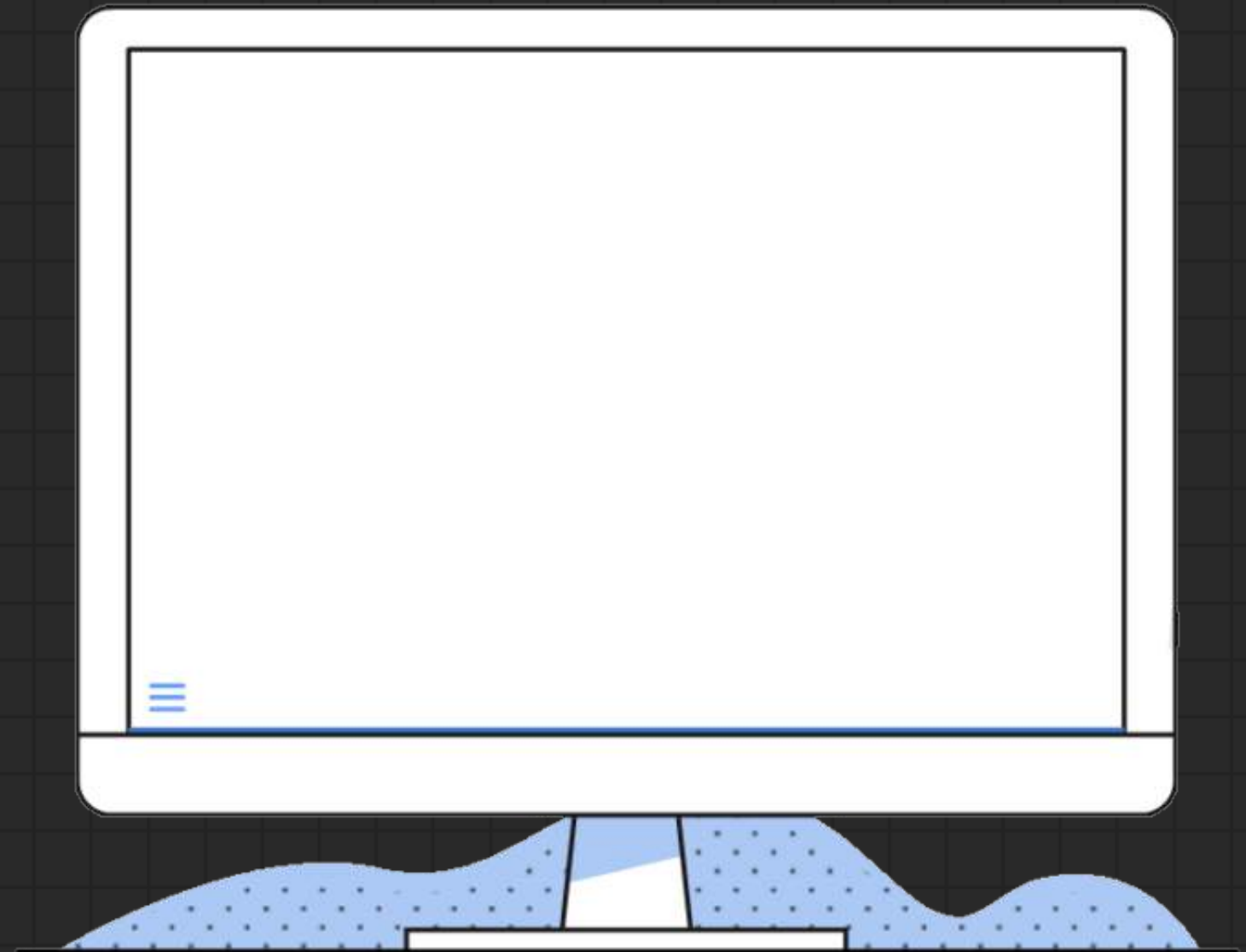
In Spring 2021, we were finally able to realize a Virtual Library Game Night.

ASYNCHRONOUS OPTIONS

At the beginning of the pandemic, we created a [libguide](#) with links to online board games. We also added links to books and films related to board gaming.

To offer an asynchronous option for our Virtual Library Game Night, we created an [Escape Room Game](#) via Google Forms for those who might not be able to attend synchronously due to time zone differences or technology barriers.

These options were important to us because they offered a measure of outreach, albeit passively.



ZOOOMBOMBING

WARREN

ZOOMBOMBING PREVENTION TIPS

By the spring of 2021, while Zoombombing couldn't be completely eradicated, some best practices had emerged for how to prevent and respond to disruptive events on video conference platforms.

Step 1

Dig into Zoom settings

[Zoom instructions on security settings.](#)

Step 2

Find your institution's policies

[Here are Miami's policies.](#)

Step 3

Create a response protocol

These articles are highly recommended:

- [A Plan for Resisting Zoombombing](#)
- [Steps To Take During a Zoombombing Incident](#)

Our Zoombombing Preparations

Report Zoombombing

at Virtual Library Game Night. Email address/name is not being collected unless you choose to provide it.

What breakout room did the incident occur in?

Short answer text

Describe what happened to the best of your memory:

Long answer text

Do you have any screenshots you can provide?

Yes (if so, we will need to follow up with you)

No

Code of Conduct

We seek to provide a welcoming, fun, and safe gaming experience for everyone.

Only Miami University students, faculty, and staff may enter these rooms. In order to enable everyone to participate fully, these rooms may be monitored for technical and other problems. Your conduct in these rooms is subject to all applicable Miami University rules and policies, including the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Please report any violations of the Code of Student Conduct to the Games Ambassador through Zoom chat during the event, or submit a report through [this form](#). If deemed necessary, incidents will be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#). This includes conduct that is:

- Defamatory
- Harassing or Discriminatory
- Obscene
- Inciting or facilitating violence including threats of violence or harm and intimidation

By registering for this event and entering this virtual environment, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this message and agree to abide by these standards of conduct.

[Add / Reorder](#)

Apr 23, 2021

ip (please note, if you want to share your screenshots)

Zoombombing Prep

It is highly unlikely that we will face any kind of zoombombing. However, the link to the event is being shared fairly widely online/through social media, which seems to be the way that these events get targeted.

We have already restricted the event to users with Miami IDs and Ginny has put in place a lot of security measures for the meeting that should limit the most egregious harassment.

Once in the meeting there are additional security options. See this article for the security options in Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360041848151-In-meeting-security-options>

Most notable:

- Under Security - Suspend Participant Activities, which turns off all video, audio and ability to share screen
- Disable chat
- Remove participant(s) (but record their names first)

Steps to take during a zoombombing:

1. Take a deep breath and try not to panic. Ground yourself by focusing on your immediate surroundings - where are you sitting, what can you feel with your hands, etc.
2. Start recording the meeting as soon as you can
3. Take screenshots - For Windows users it is the print screen function key: PrtScr. For Mac users it is ??
4. Take any necessary actions outlined above to stop the malicious activity
5. Once the bad actor(s) have been removed, address your participants and identify how these incidents may harm people. [See this article for more information](#)
6. Invite participants to use grounding techniques to refocus themselves. Try to create an environment for them to express their emotions. If appropriate, offer people an opportunity to process how their bodies responded while also honoring everyone's choice to leave the meeting in favor of other self- or community-care strategies.
7. Ask participants to submit a report to [form?]
8. Once the session is ended, make sure to make note of the chat saved on your computer. The chat will download automatically.

These steps were adapted from these articles about how to respond to a zoombombing: [Steps to take during a zoombombing](#)

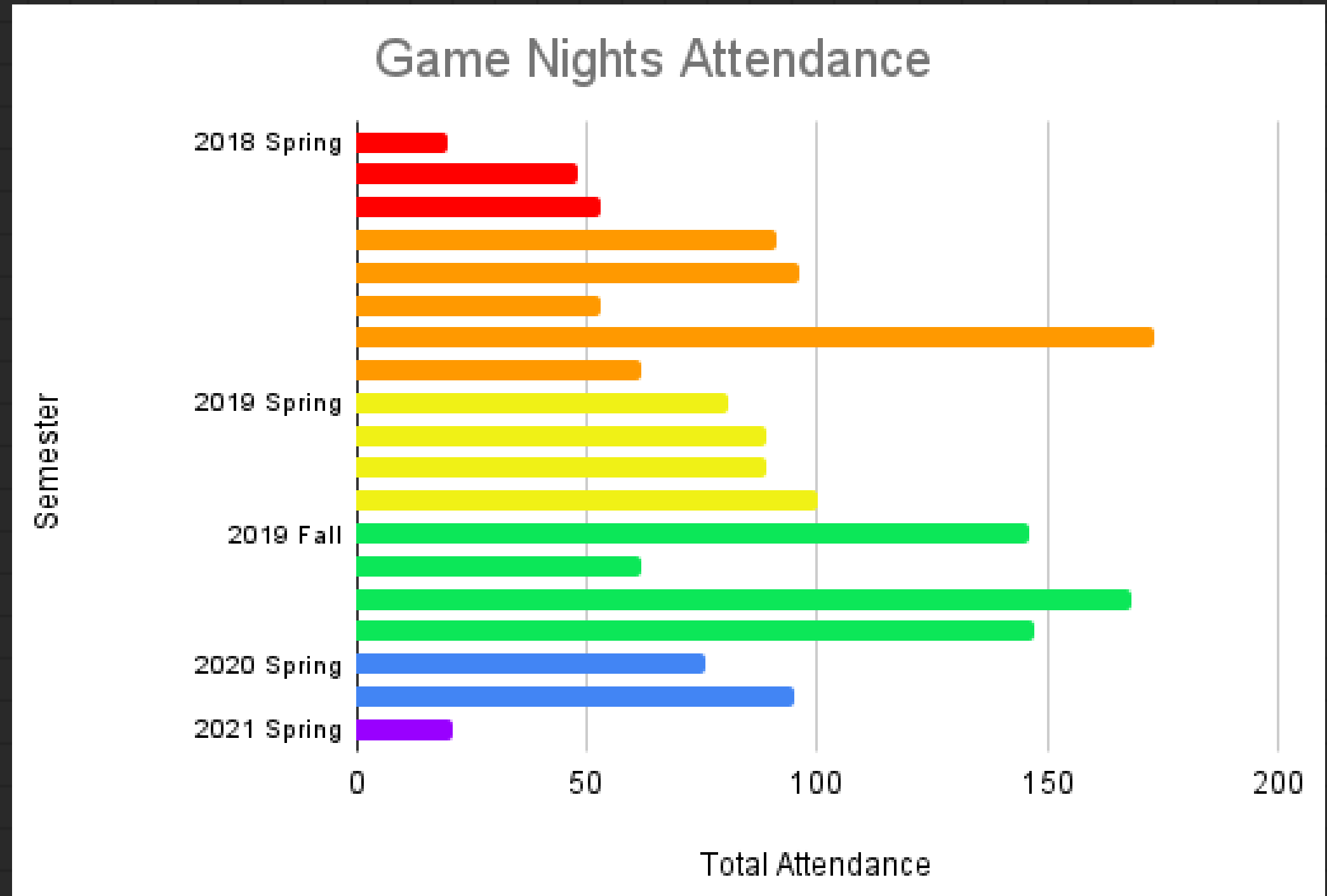
[A Plan for Resisting Zoombombing](#)

News article from Miami IT: <https://miamioh.edu/it-services/news/2020/09/zoom-security-tips.html>

ATTENDANCE & ZOOM FATIGUE

As mentioned, our attendance was very low, especially compared to our past in-person events.

We also heard from staff and attendees that they were exhausted by virtual programming and activities.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Feedback was mixed

Participants and planners vastly prefer in-person events over virtual, as virtual events require a lot more work from all involved parties.

Participation was low

Our total attendance for the virtual event was around 25% of our typical attendance for in-person events, and most of those were either library staff or students who worked for the student organization that provided funding.

Technology was problematic

Tabletopia has a large game catalog, but its interface has a steep learning curve and is very resource-heavy.

While we believe that a **virtual game night can be done successfully as long as all the challenges we identified can be mitigated, ultimately,**

we do not plan on trying to host another virtual board gaming event.

SHARE YOUR STORIES

Did you try holding virtual events during the pandemic? Were they new events, or did you try to transition a previously in-person event to a virtual environment?



What were your successes?



What were your challenges?

THANK YOU!

We look forward to your questions and discussion.



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CREDITS

▶▶ Neon background

[Background vector created by pikisuperstar - www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

▶▶ Our colleagues on the Miami University Library Game Night Committee

Heather Barbour, Cara Calabrese, Lori Chapin, Justina Kaiser, Elizabeth Staarmann,
John Williams, Jerry Yarnetsky

▶▶ Dice Guys

(c) Sean Poppe. Used with permission.