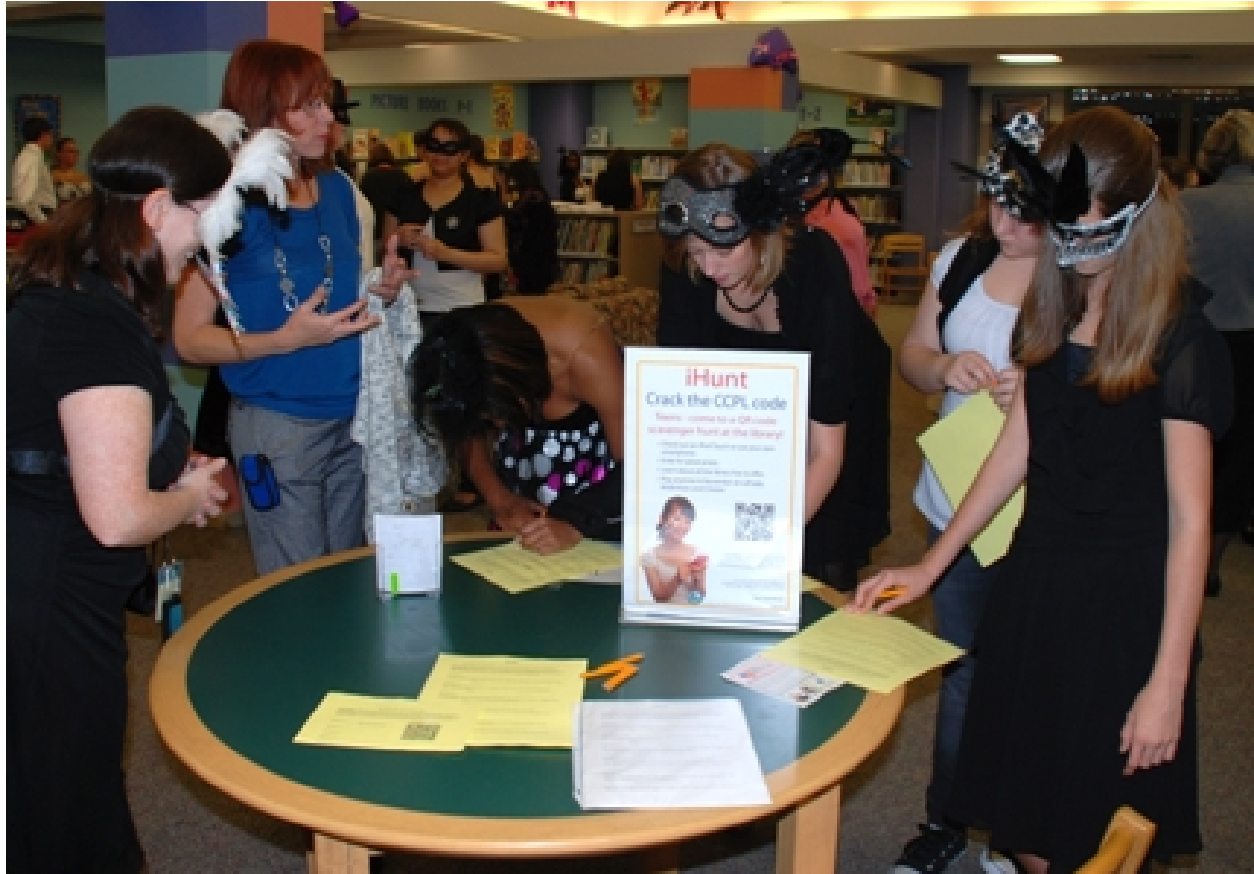


QR Code Treasure Hunt Brings Teens to Libraries

Sarah Rich | August 7, 2012



As a way to teach teens about library resources, the Chesterfield County, Va., public libraries gave them a challenge: Solve problems with the help of quick response (QR) codes.

[QR codes](#) are a unique series of patterns that — when scanned with a camera-ready smartphone or mobile device — pull up information such as facts about an object the QR code is attached to.

At the Chesterfield County Public Library, QR codes were deemed a fitting technology to use for teaching teens information about the county libraries.

“We wanted to try to reach them on their own terms, so we thought about using technology,” said Carolyn Sears, the library services administrator for community services. “... that’s how we got the QR code idea.”

In November, the county libraries tried a two-month program called “iHunt: Crack the CCPL Code.” The program challenged teens to learn about library resources by completing a digital treasure hunt inside the library.

Librarians strategically placed signs equipped with QR code readers throughout the facility for the teens to find.

Participants started by answering a question about one of the library's resources. By following the clues in the question, they could find the item the clues led to. They'd also find a sign with a QR code, which when scanned would give them the clues for the second question.

For example, the hunt tasked its participants to locate a specific DVD title. Once participants located the DVD, they'd find a QR code that would help them find the next item in the hunt.

Teens were allowed to use their own devices such as iPhone and iPod Touch, or could borrow a device from the library to complete the challenge. Sears said while the program wasn't overly challenging – the hunts consisted of about eight questions – the big-picture goal was to show teens connect what's available.

“We wanted to do a teen program because teens are notoriously hard to reach in the library setting,” Sears said. “They don't tend to know what resources are available and they don't tend to use them as much as other groups do.”

The contest also came with an additional incentive. Winners received prizes such as an Amazon gift card.

Three of the county's nine libraries hosted a hunt, bringing in a total of 54 participants. Chesterfield County libraries won't make the QR code hunts a regular activity, but Sears said similar hunts will be conducted for specific occasions.

The program was funded through a \$500 grant awarded by the Library of Virginia, an agency of the state government.

For more ideas on integrating QR codes into libraries, click [here](#).

<http://www.govtech.com/e-government/QR-Code-Treasure-Hunt-Brings-Teens-to-Libraries.html>