

In January 2005, Youth.gc.ca undertook a project in partnership with Science.gc.ca to develop 3 online games based on science-related themes. The three games were as follows:

- Code Breaker
- Astro-Collector
- Harvest Race

The goal of this project was to create fun, interactive and educational games to be included on both the Youth.gc.ca and Science.gc.ca websites. Through these games, the clusters hoped to present scientific information in a way that youth would find interesting, while increasing the content and appeal of the sites.

For CYC Activity 21, CYC forum members were asked to participate in survey designed to evaluate the quality and the popularity of the new online games. One of the main purposes of this survey was to determine, based upon participant responses, whether or not the games should be added to the Youth.gc.ca website.

Eighteen CYC members participated in the survey. This report summaries the comments and suggestions they made concerning the online games.

Question One

Which of the 3 online games do you like the most? Explain.

Seven members (39%) said that they preferred Astro-Collector. Six (33%) liked Code Breaker the best, while 3 (18%) named Harvest Collector as their favourite.

One member indicated that she did not like any of the games, while another member did not respond to the question.

Those who liked Astro-Collector said that it was unique, easy to understand, and fun. It forced them to use their spatial abilities. Members enjoyed learning about how gravity is different on different planets and moons and seeing how the different gravities effected the launching of objects.

Code Breaker was popular among those members who prefer puzzle games. A few members indicated that for them, it was the game that “made the most sense,” and was the easiest to learn how to play.

Those who preferred Harvest Race also said that they liked it because it was easy to understand. One member said he liked the strategy aspect of the game.

Question Two

Is there anything you do not like about these games? Explain.

When asked what they did not like about these games, members indicated the following problems:

- **Lack of Educational Value**
While they did note that some interesting information is provided in the 'Did You Know' sections of the game templates, members still felt the educational value of these games to be quite limited.
- **Unclear Instructions**
Several members said that they found the instructions for these games to be unclear. The menu also posed problems, as the options, game instructions and control instructions are not located in the same place.
- **Incomplete 'Did You Know?' Sections**
A few members noted that some of the 'Did You Know?' sections featured on the game templates are missing text, sometimes ending in mid-sentence. When you click on these sections, the missing text is not revealed.
- **Not Sufficiently Challenging**
This was the most common complaint. Many members felt the games to be boring or else suited for a much younger audience. One member said that Astro-Collector and Harvest Race were appropriate for children aged 6 to 8, while Code Breaker was suited to 11 to 12 year olds.

Question Three

Which age group do you think would be most likely to enjoy:

A) Astro-Collector

B) Harvest Race

C) Code Breaker

In answering this question, some members chose more than one age group.

	Age Group	Number of members who think this age group would be most likely to enjoy the game
Astro-Collector	11-14	10
	15-20	6
	21-25	3
	26-30	1
Harvest Race		

	11-14	13
	15-20	4
	21-25	0
	26-30	0
Code Breaker		
	11-14	7
	15-20	8
	21-25	3
	26-30	2

According to these responses, most members feel that users aged 15-30 would like Code Breaker, while a slightly smaller group of members feel that users would enjoy Astro-Collector. Harvest Collector is seen by the majority of members as being of little interest to youth 15 or older.

Question Four

Do you think these games should be posted on the Youth.gc.ca website? Explain.

Eleven members (61%) thought it would be a good idea to post the online science games on the Youth.gc.ca website. Several members noted that they are non-violent and contain no offensive language. As well, they do have some educational value, and may lead youth to further investigate the Science.gc.ca website. Other members emphasized that games are an “attractive thing” to have on a website and may serve to draw new users.

Seven members (39%) felt that these games should not be posted on Youth.gc.ca. A few members said that the games were either not advanced enough or were suited to much younger users, while others thought that they were irrelevant to the site.

Question Five

If we were to post online games on Youth.gc.ca, what kind of games would you like to see? Feel free to provide links to examples.

CYC members suggested the following kind of games for the Youth.gc.ca website:

- Science-themed games like the ones presented in this activity.
- ‘Puzzle’ games (riddles, strategy games).
- Multiplayer games that allow members to play against each other (cribbage, backgammon, checkers, etc.).
- Games that develop math skills.
- Canadian trivia games.
- Word games (crossword puzzles, etc.)

Members provided many examples of online games they enjoy. Some are educational while others are just fun:

Geography Game: Canada

<http://www.addictinggames.com/geographygamecanada.html>

Sciman Says: Super Science Game

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/sciman/index.asp>

Who Wants to Win \$1 000 000 – The Science Game

<http://education.jlab.org/million/index.html>

Nick's Mathematical Puzzles

<http://www.qbyte.org/puzzles/>

Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley – Online Games

<http://www.lawrencehallofscience.org/kids/>

Online Action Games

<http://www.shockwave.com/sw/actiongames/>

Click Mazes

<http://www.clickmazes.com>

Mini-golf

<http://www.electrotank.com/minigolf/>

Ping pong

<http://www.liquid.se/pong/pong.html>