



North Yorkshire Libraries

Shortlisted for Family Learning to Support STEM in partnership with Maths on Toast

North Yorkshire Librarians are a group of 42 libraries run as a mix of community led and staff led libraries. In addition to delivering key library services, they have four strategy groups, Communities, Literacy and Learning, Health and Wellbeing and Digital. The Digital Team at North Yorkshire Libraries work on improving digital inclusion and access.

STEM learning for every generation

The Digital Team has been running a programme of digital events including a workshop called MicroBit Detectives. This series of digital workshops and digital maker events were created to support the STEM agenda and facilitate intergenerational STEM learning that was accessible and engaging for everyone no matter their digital literacy proficiency. The team put a particular focus on areas of high deprivation or rural isolation within the county.

The Microbit detectives' sessions allowed families to work together to solve the clues and work towards the common goal of retrieving the treasure. To increase engagement and inclusivity with this STEM activity a story scenario was created which led to a live-action role-play activity. The aim is for the families to explore and engage in a fun and interesting way.

The digital divide

The digital divide is present in North Yorkshire and a significant portion of the county does not have access to digital devices in the home and only limited access in schools. In a high percentage of cases this is due to economic reasons creating pockets of digital poverty throughout the region. The approach taken by North Yorkshire Libraries Digital Team is benefitting families by overcoming preconceived notions and barriers as to who can participate, enjoy and engage with STEM activities in a free fun and family friendly environment.

By attending the digital workshops, families have learnt new digital skills through narratives and role play. Families are also able to borrow books about coding and learning computer skills for free to enrich family learning and they can book time with an IT volunteer.



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What's next

Having seen the value in creating fun sessions to boost staff and volunteer confidence and to engage members of the public, the team intends to develop other similar sessions to build on the interest and confidence this digital event has sparked.

They also intend to adapt the session to be run as a more formal, guided group session to target different groups who need digital support.