

Zines!

(Article by Megan Clark)

Zines are self-published creations usually written and made (often with a photocopier) by one person with the intent of sharing ideas without attention to profit making (Todd, 2006). Zines tend to be produced in small print runs, and are sold and exchanged within zine communities online, through the mail, or at conferences, symposiums, and fairs (Duncombe, 1997). Both zine collecting and zine making are great ways to diversify library collections and incorporate more local, community, and patron created content. Zine-creation is perfect for teens, as the creation process is cheap, casual,

and fun, while still offering a great scope for creative output. Did I also mention that zines can tackle any topic? Wherever your interests lie – make a zine about it!

Zines predate the mashup/remix movement. In many ways zines foreshadow the movement in their emphasis on collaboration, the sharing of resources and materials, the greater communication between creators and readers, and the culture of sharing and trading they foster. Zine production also offers an alternative to traditional copyright and publishing.

Notable libraries with zine collections:

- Salt Lake City Public Library Zine Collection
 - one of the earliest large scale collection/programming projects originally focused on teens
- San Francisco Public Library's Little Maga/Zine Collection
- Halifax Public Library, Tantallon Branch YA Zine Collection
- Vancouver Public Library
- Toronto Public Library RAMP Collection

Useful resources about zine culture:

- Broken Pencil magazine: <http://www.brokenpencil.com>
- Zine World: <http://www.undergroundpress.org/>
- Alternative Press Review: <http://www.alternativepressreview.org>
- Factsheet5: <http://www.factsheet5.org/>

Actively seeking and encouraging zine awareness and culture in your library has many benefits, including (Freedman, 2006; Bartel, 2004; Stoddart & Kiser, 2004):

- Attracting new patrons with alternative materials that better represent their lifestyles and interests;

- Attracting new teen audiences by purchasing materials teenage patrons don't expect to see at a library and creating opportunities for unique content creation programming that gets library users more involved with the library and artistic community; and
 - Supporting the role of the public library in making available a wide range of intellectual, recreational, and artistic material that represents a myriad of voices and opinions.
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References

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- Todd, M. (2006). *Whatcha mean, what's a zine? The art of making zines and mini comics*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.