

Dear Wisconsin Public Library Community,

Anyone can code. A child playing Scratch. A teen playing Minecraft. An adult trying to invent an app. An employee trying out a new workforce skill. Anyone can code*.

Forget the stereotype of a dude sitting silently at his computer, empty bag of chips and cans of soda on the desk, the lines of code reflecting off his glasses. Coding is for all ages, genders, abilities, and interests. More than strings of numbers, coding is about computer science, collaboration, programming, creativity, and more. Coding is for everyone--curiosity is the only requirement.

Still not sure about coding? That's ok! The Public Library Development Team will lead the way on a multi-year exploration of coding and help answer who/what/how/why questions with help from [WisCode Literati](#) and other partners.

The Coding Initiative in Wisconsin Public Libraries will:

- Provide awareness about coding concepts, such as problem solving, algorithms, etc., and coding opportunities, such as library events, professional learning, etc.
- Help libraries understand how learning to code can benefit local communities
- Identify schools and community partners with whom libraries can partner
- Showcase ways in which library staff can code to create or improve tools and software that can directly benefit the library

Wisconsin is not alone in the coding arena. The American Library Association (ALA) recently announced "[Libraries Ready to Code](#)," a nationwide examination coding activities in public libraries and schools. Through this project ALA, in partnership with Google, "explores coding activities from the earliest ages through high school."

The Coding Initiative in Wisconsin Public Libraries will officially roll out in September 2016, so stay tuned for updates and bookmark the project website:
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/technology/coding-initiative>.

In the meantime, we are looking for 20 public library sites to host a free screening of the 2015 documentary "[CODE: Debugging the Gender Gap](#)" in which filmmaker Robin Hauser Reynolds explores the reasons for the gender and minority hiring gap among software engineers.

Take this [BRIEF survey](#) to show your interest in hosting a screening as well as your curiosity about coding in general. Random survey participants are eligible for a FREE coding prize!

Thanks for your consideration,

Ryan Claringbole, Library Technology Consultant
Tessa Michaelson Schmidt, Youth and Inclusive Services Consultant

*We mean it. Anyone can code, and everyone in our state is encouraged to give it a try during the [Wisconsin Hour of Code](#), May 16-27, 2016.