



'Cos It's More Than Just Play! Engaging Fandom in Public Libraries Through Cosplay

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What is Cosplay?

- “The activity of dressing up in costume as an admired character in order to express one’s enthusiasm and fandom” (Kroski). Costumes are often handmade and can utilize many different skills and techniques.
 - Combination of the words “costume” and “play” – first coined by writer Nobuyuki Takahashi in 1983.
 - Can be traced back to sci-fi conventions as early as 1939 (World Science Fiction Convention/Worldcon in NYC).

Why Cosplay?

- Public Interest in Fandom and Cosplay: In 2015, there were six different pop culture conventions in Hawaii: Kawaii Kon, Comic Con Honolulu (a.k.a. Hoku Con), HawaiiCon (on the Big Island), Amazing Comic Con Hawaii, Anime Ohana, and Anime Matsuri.
 - Plus two “MiniCons” at HSPLS branches: McCully-Mō‘ili‘ili & ‘Aiea
- Active creation, rather than just passive consumption of media.
- Connect physical/digital collections to programming:
 - Fandom connection: promote comic books/graphic novels, tv, film, fiction, anime, manga, etc.
 - Creative connection: promote non-fiction collections such as sewing, design, history, costume/theater, photography, etc.

How to Engage with Cosplay

- **Cosplay Workshops** – Cover topics related to cosplay, instruction in different techniques, invite an experienced cosplayer to speak, etc.
- **Cosplay Clubs** – Provide a time and place for cosplayers of all skill levels and interests to build community, “talk shop,” or just socialize together.
- **Makerspaces** – Not only utilizing STEM related items such as 3-D printers, but consider sewing machines or other arts & craft tools.
- **Library Cons (e.g. MiniCons)** – Provide a “comic-con” convention experience on a small scale.
- **“Release Date” Programming** – Celebrate the release of a new book, film, television show season, video game, etc.
- **Involve Patrons** – ALA & YALSA especially encourages YA programming that gets the input of, and invites teen involvement in the planning process.

Selected Citations and Resources

- ALA Center for the Future of Libraries: <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/fandom>
- Cosplay, Comics, and Geek Culture in Libraries: <http://ccgclibraries.com>
- Kroski, Ellyssa. *Cosplay in Libraries: How to Embrace Costume Play in Your Library*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Scan for More:



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