

# Issues in archiving *manga*, *anime*, games and related cultures

## Abstract

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## KEYWORDS

*manga*, *anime*, video game, fanzine

## 1 INHERENT ISSUES

When viewed as subjects of preservation, *manga* (comics), *anime* (animated cartoons), and video games are totally different animals. *Mangas* were -- and to a large extent still are -- printed and bound media. *Animes* are mostly shot and distributed in digital nowadays, but piles of films and videotapes are left from the last century. Video games require obsolete (or to-be-obsolete) devices such as consoles and arcade cabinets if they are to be playable in their original state, and the emergence of online games further complicates the challenges of preservation. The one thing in common is that they are mostly commercially produced and are copyrighted, making archival digitization by public or academic sectors nearly impossible. Plus there are multitudes of to-be-archived materials other than the end product, such as hand-drawn original drawings, preliminary manuscripts and documents, advertising materials, all sorts of related merchandise, and fanzines, just to name a few. Institutions and communities such as *manga* libraries and preservation circles of video games do exist, but most of them dedicate themselves to a single and not multiple medium.

Yet, in Japan, in the past few years, new situations have emerged at a political level, which may encourage the interconnection and integration of archival efforts concerning these mediums, with a potential solution to overcome the copyright issue.

## 2 RECENT TOPICS

In late 2014, an all-party parliamentary group on *manga*, *anime*, and video games was established, dubbing itself as the MANGA *Giren* (MANGA: acronym of *Manga*, *ANime*, *GAMES*; *Giren*: APPG in Japanese). Core members include former prime minister Taro Aso and former cabinet member Keiji Furuya, who got involved back in 2009 with the governmental plan to erect a national center to house *manga*, *anime*, and video games together with media art. After becoming a subject of political attacks

against the then prime minister Aso, the plan was shortly terminated due to the change of government. Such is the context of one of the founding purposes of the APPG; to reboot the plan, revamped under the name of MANGA National Center.

With political efforts by the APPG, the following lines were included in the *Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform* of 2017, a major governmental policy which guidelines Japan's fiscal budget:

... plans will be made to preserve, utilize, and transmit cultural properties by putting in place central functions pertaining to opening up and utilizing cultural properties, and measures for a digital archive will be promoted.

Moreover, information hubs will be put in place for the media arts, such as *manga*, *anime*, and computer games, of which our nation is justly proud [1].

Furthermore, the *Basic Act for the Promotion of Culture and the Arts* was amended in 2017 to address the preservation of production materials of *media arts* (a term used by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan to address *manga*, *anime*, video games together with media art) [2].

One of the core concepts of the MANGA National Center, which the APPG aims to secure its execution, is to establish the Center as a branch of the National Diet Library of Japan. The NDL is the legal deposit library of Japan, as well as the institute that holds exceptional legal rights to digitize copyrighted materials for the purpose of preservation.

The presentation shall elaborate on the issues in archiving and preserving *manga*, *anime*, and video games, as well as on the recent situation that is brought about by the APPG.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Cabinet Office of Japan. 2017. *Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2017* (provisional translation). [http://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai-shimon/kaigi/cabinet/2017/2017\\_basipolicies\\_en.pdf](http://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai-shimon/kaigi/cabinet/2017/2017_basipolicies_en.pdf)
- [2] <http://www.sangiin.go.jp/japanese/joho1/kousei/gian/193/meisai/m19305193018.htm> (Japanese)