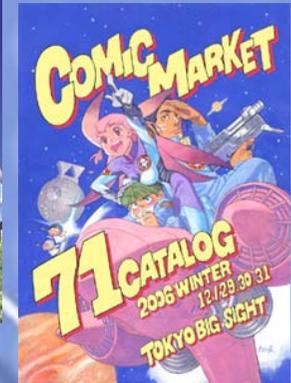


Comic Market Symposium presents



# THE COMIC MARKET TODAY AND OVERSEAS PARTICIPANTS

by  
COMIC MARKET COMITEE CO-REPRESENTATIVE  
Kō-Ichi Ichikawa



Presented at the Tokyo Big Sight on  
December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.



# COMIC MARKET

## - PAST AND PRESENT



- Excluding private industry showcases such as the Tokyo Motor Show, the Comic Market is **Japan's largest indoor public gathering** operated by a single private non-governmental group.
- Main attraction: Exhibition and sales of self-published publications (doujinshis) centered around manga, anime, video games, and other related genres.
- Commercial industry booths housing over 150 corporations accommodated in a separate wing of the exhibition complex.
- The entire Tokyo Big Sight (an international exhibition complex in Ariake) occupied for three days in both summer and winter.
- Often abbreviated as the Comiket and Comike.

## ■ Comic Market 76

- Held between August 14th ~ 16th, 2009.
- Over 35000 circles (publishing groups) participating.
- Over 51000 circles (publishing groups) applied to participate.
- Total combined attendance over three days: Over 560,000.**
- Total combined number of cosplay participants over three days: Over 16000.
- Total number of staff: Approx. 2900.
- Simplified and unverified statistics--
  - Total number of copies of books brought in: 12,160,000.
  - Total number of copies of books sold: 9,440,000.

## ■ Comic Market 75

- Held between December 28th ~ 30th, 2008.
- Over 35000 circles (publishing groups) participating.
- Over 49000 circles (publishing groups) applied to participate.
- Total combined attendance over three days: Over 510,000.**
- Total combined number of cosplay participants over three days: Over 13000.
- Total number of staff: Approx. 2700.
- Simplified and unverified statistics--
  - Total number of copies of books brought in: 11,570,000.
  - Total number of copies of books sold: 9,200,000.



# THE HISTORY OF THE COMIC MARKET (OVERVIEW)

www.comiket.co.jp



## ● The Early Years (C1 ~ C30 / 1975 ~ 1986)

- Started from 32 circles & 700 participants, grew to 4,000 circles and 35,000 participants.
- Shojō manga, Yamato, Gundam related books popular in early years.
- Congestion and circle application numbers increases dramatically from 1979.
- Notable trends: lolicon, Rumiko Takashi works.
- Captain Tsubasa mega-boom breaks out.



## ● Years of Further Expansion (C31 ~ C49 / 1986 ~ 1995)

- 4,400 circles and 40,000 participants, grows to 13,000 circles and 250,000 participants.
- Popular genres: Saint Seiya, Samurai Troopers, bishōjo (cute girls), Slamdunk, Gundam W, Sailor Moon, Evangelion, Tokimeki Memorial.
- Otaku culture bashing followed by the mass murderer Miyazaki Incident, the harmful comics controversy results in the Comic Market growing even more well known.
- Incident where doujinshi sold on consignment at bookstore prosecuted for obscenity results in Comic Market driven out of Makuhari Messe.
- 2 day format of CM becomes entrenched.
- Doujinshi related peripheral industries expand.
- Local dial-up BBS computer networks surges.

## ● The 1st Ariake Era (C50 ~ C57 / 1996 ~ 1999)

- 18,000 circles and 35,000 participants, grows to 35,000 circles and 400,000 participants.
- Female audience aimed genre's popularity wanes.
- Popular genres: Mega-boom over "galgees" (video games for male audience featuring girls), i.e. Sakura Taisen, Shizuku, Kizuato, Pia Carrot, To Heart.
- 3 day format for summer CM entrenched.
- Tax issues and copyright issues arises.
- Firebombing and repeated threats take place.

## ● The 2nd Ariake Era (C58 ~ C71 / 2000 ~ 2006)

- 35,000 circles and 430,000 participants, grows to 35,000 circles and 510,000 participants.
- Popular genres: Shōnen Jump titles, i.e. Prince of Tennis, Reborn. Also Gundam Seed, Fullmetal Alchemist.
- Moe (infatuation over girls) boom hits: Key, Type-Moon, Marimite, Nanoha, Haruhi, etc.
- Extreme congestion in the corporate booths section.
- Increase of doujinshi consignment bookstores.
- Otaku subculture itself becomes a major fad in Japan.
- Increasing CM participants act like store patrons.
- CM and doujinshi activities more linked with the Internet.

## ● Latest Trends (C72 ~ / 2007 ~)

- 35,000 circles and 560,000 participants.
- Many CM boom arising from the Internet: Miku Hatsune, Hetaria, Toho Project, etc.
- Maximum utilization of all facilities of the Tokyo Big Sight.
- The need to safely and smoothly guide an ever increasing number of participants to the CM.

# CHRONOLOGY OF GENERAL ATTENDEES AND PARTICIPATING CIRCLES STATISTICS.

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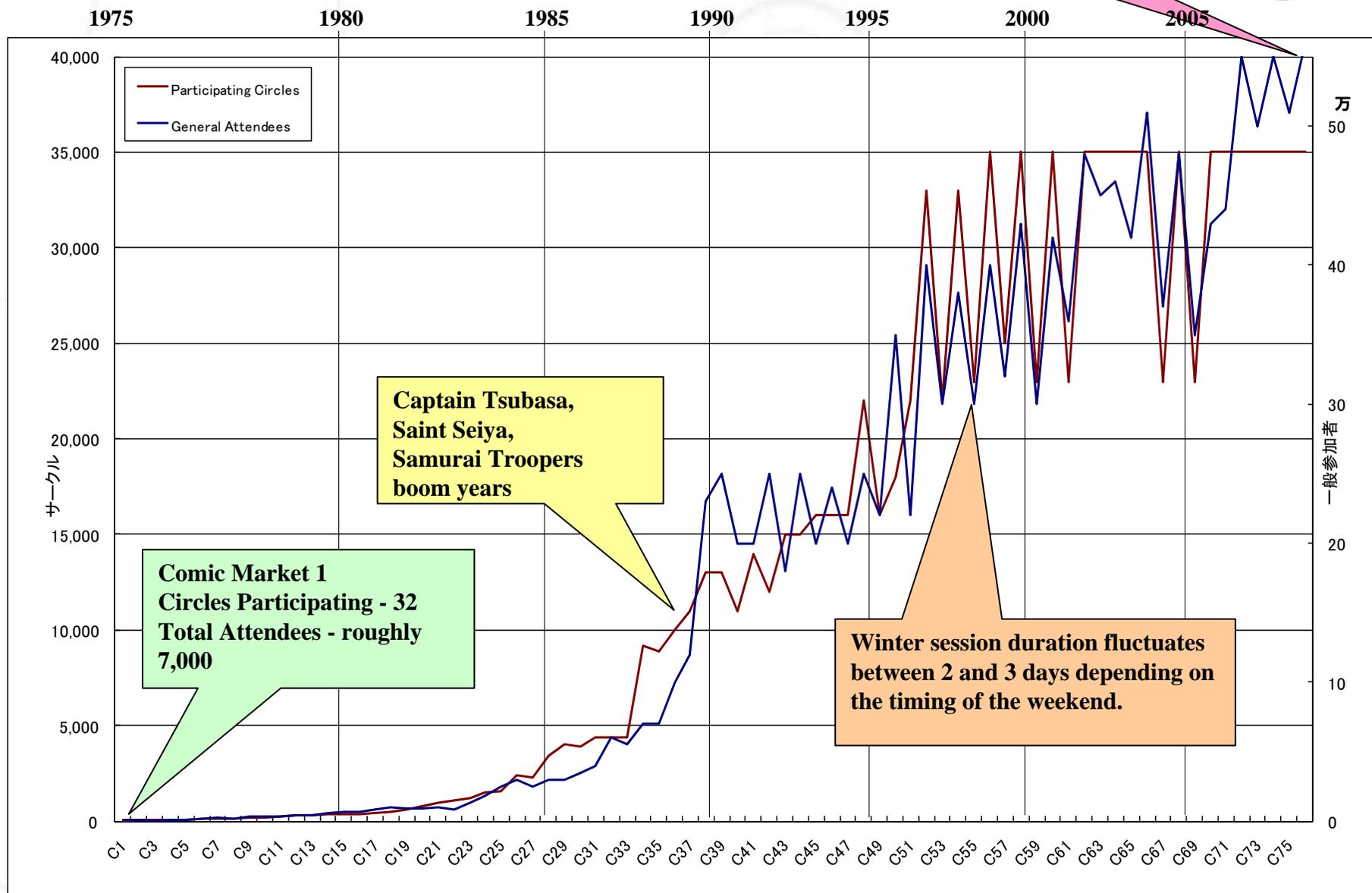
1975 / 1980 / 1985 / 1990 / 1995 / 2000 / 2005

Red - Participating Circles

Blue - General Attendees



**Tokyo Big Sight  
Three Day Operation  
Attendee Peak Number  
560,000 (at C76)**





- A bird's eye view of the East Halls 1 ~ 3.



- Prior to the 10:00 a.m. opening of the Comic Market, tens of thousands of general attendees must be organized into lines and guided within nearby parking lot grounds, parks, and other open spaces.
- To help cope with the massive influx of people, nearby mass transit--such as the Yurikamome elevated train line, the Rinkaisen train line, Tokyo Metropolitan Bus lines--change their operating schedule and increase service to accommodate the crowds.
- No charge for admission (but purchasing of the catalog is strongly encouraged.)



## INSIDE OF THE COMIC MARKET - PART III LINES INSIDE THE COMIC MARKET

[www.comiket.co.jp](http://www.comiket.co.jp)



- Long lines may form at doujinshi circles that are particularly popular.
- Circles that are very popular are positioned near the loading bays so the lines can be arranged to be extended out into the truck yards.
- Some circles will sell a 1,000 copies and more of their books at a single session of the Comic Market.





- Participants enjoy dressing up to appear like their favorite anime, manga, and/or game characters.
- A dedicated dressing room just for cosplay is setup at the 4th floor of the West Wing, separate room for the two sexes, cost -- 800 yen (roughly \$9) per person for registration, et al.
- Because of congestion, regulations regarding cosplay is more restrictive at the Comic Market compared to other events.
- Ratio of cosplay participants by gender -- Male 1 : Female 4~5.

# A PROFILE OF COMIC MARKET PARTICIPANTS - PART I

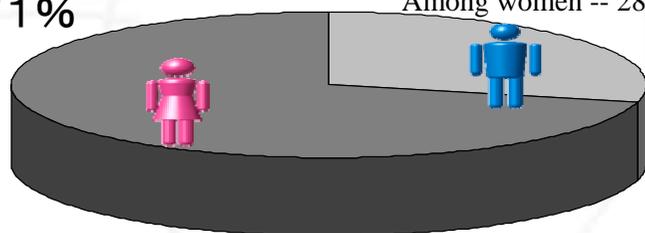


- Comparison of data from the 30<sup>TH</sup> Annual survey (2004) and CM77 (winter of 2009).
- In contrast to popular belief, **most participants are female, but male participants are increasing.**
- Average age of fans of genres popular among youth: Toho - 24.8 yrs., Hetalia - 26.6 yrs.

## Participating circles gender & age breakdown (30<sup>TH</sup> Annual research):

Average age of circle organizer:  
 Overall - 28.4 years old  
 Among men -- 28.6 years old  
 Among women -- 28.3 years old

Women  
71%

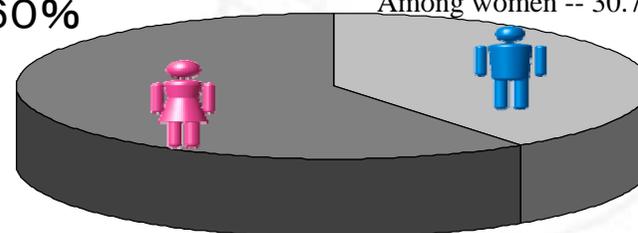


Men  
29%

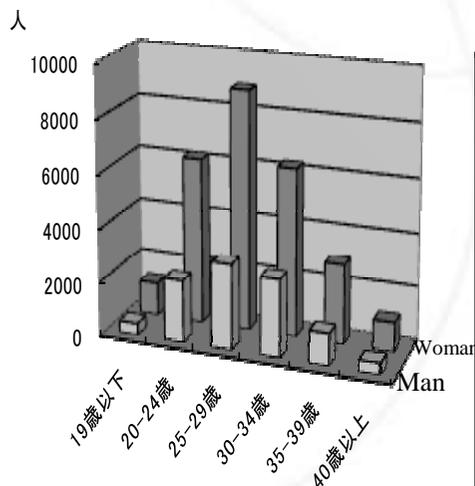
## Age demographics of circle organizer (Comic Market 77 research):

Average age of circle organizer:  
 Overall - 30.3 years old  
 Among men -- 29.6 years old  
 Among women -- 30.7 years old

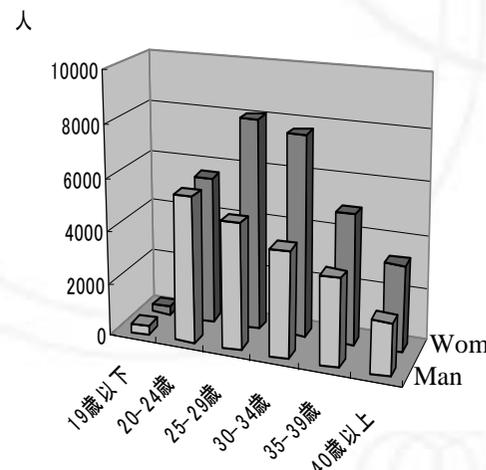
Women  
60%



Men  
40%



Category	Men	Female
19 and under	4.1%	4.6%
20-24	22.1%	23.2%
25-29	30.5%	33.4%
30-34	27.6%	23.5%
35-39	11.6%	11.2%
40 and above	4.1%	4.1%

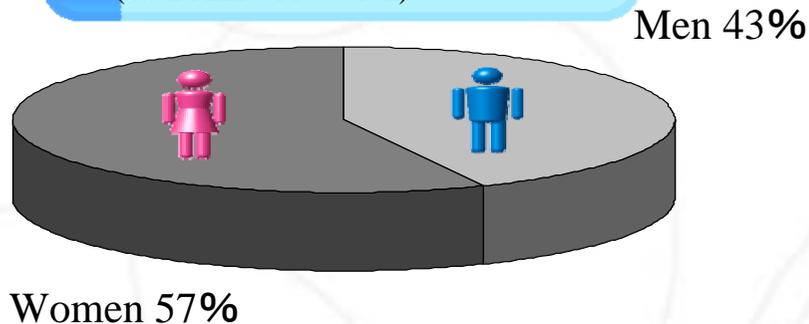


Category	Men	Female
19 and under	1.6%	1.0%
20-24	27.9%	18.9%
25-29	24.0%	27.0%
30-34	20.2%	25.6%
35-39	16.5%	16.6%
40 and above	9.8%	11.0%



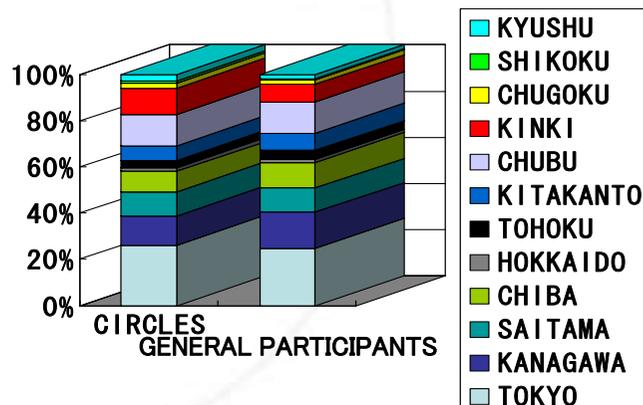
- The average age of the general participant is about 2~3 years younger than that of the participating circles.
- The greater Kanto region accounts for roughly 60% of total aggregate CM attendance.

General participant gender breakdown  
(30th Annual research):



The best guess is that the ratio of female / male among general participants is roughly 50:50 at this time.

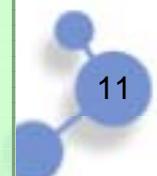
General Participants  
(30th Annual research):



Samplings from C77 indicates very little deviation from the 2004.

### Addendum:

The circle application to the C78 included a survey form as part of a 35 year anniversary research project being conducted by the Contents Research Team, a group centered around researchers at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. The Comic Market Committee is cooperating with this project. The project is aimed toward revealing a more detailed and clearly picture of the Comic Market participants.





- **Comic Market's self-declared proclamation (reprinted from the *Comiket Manual*)**

- We conceptualize doujinshi as the medium through which creators can explore and expand the realms of manga, anime, games, novels, and other related peripheral genres. This exploration may even bear fruit in other forms, not limited to doujinshis. Our aim is to maintain a venue and forum at which creators can showcase these efforts to the public.
- To encourage creative efforts that break the mold from what is established within the realms of commercial publishing and other conventional forms of self-expression, and to support those that research and celebrate this unique brand of creative efforts, we provide a distinct venue upon which enthusiasts can congregate and intermingle, and hope that the venue will act as a catalyst to compel further creative achievement through interaction and discovery among their peers. The goal is maintain a social forum in the shape of a doujinshi marketplace but also acts a gathering place for manga and anime enthusiasts.
- A **venue** where people who seek new possibilities in self-expression can find numerous such works, as well as a venue where people who seek to present such works will find a willing audience.



- Since the goal is to maintain **this unique venue and forum**, the Comic Market is committed toward attempting to accommodate every circle and people which express an interest toward participating as best as possible within the physical constraints that limit the scope of the event.



### - Transformation of the Comic Market itself.

- A "festival" that celebrates manga, anime, and games. Its popularity no longer limited to hard core fans.
- Increasing public exposure of the event.



- **An ever increasing number of participants. Rapid increase of overseas participants.**
- **Direct word of mouth communication increasingly giving way to indirect communication via the Nets.**



### - Transformation of the creative contents culture and business model.

- The normalization of the otaku.
- The increasing ubiquitous nature of information with the advent of the Internet.
- The overseas exportation of Japanese creative culture.
  - > Increasing number of overseas hard core fans of Japanese creative culture.



# COMIC MARKET AND OVERSEAS PARTICIPANTS



- **In 1985, Robotech broadcasted in the United States.**
  - Robotech was an American adaptation created by editing together three Japanese animation series, *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*, *Super Dimension Cavalry Southern Cross*, and *Genesis Climber MOSPEADA*.
  - American fans of subculture and alternative entertainment start to take notice of Japanese animation in part thanks to Robotech. (Popularity of anime preceded manga.)
- **In mid 1980's, commercial computer communication services such as CompuServe and GEnie were popular.**
  - Animation discussion forums were setup in both services. Information was actively exchanged and communication between fans all over the world thrived.
- **As home VCRs become more common place, fans gather to have anime viewing sessions.**
  - Anime video rooms grow common at established science fiction conventions and fans intermingle.
  - This eventually leads to the creation of dedicated anime conventions. In 1983, the first dedicated anime convention, YamatoCon is held.
  - In 1990, Project A-Kon begins.
  - In 1991, AnimeCon is launched.
  - In 1992, the first Anime Expo is held.



- **Beginning early 1990's, the number of fans of anime and manga increases in Asia and America, and thus helps bring about the birth of anime conventions.**
  - In 1993, the Comic Market was invited to attend Anime America.
  - Since then, the Comic Market has been invited to attend Katsucon, Yaoi-Con, and Romics (Italy).
- **In 1993, the movie director Jean-Jacques Beineix arrived to Japan and attended the Comic and filmed the Comic Market as part of his documentary *Otaku: fils de l'empire du virtuel*, released 1993.**
- **In 2004, the Comic Market participated in the Venice Biennale as part of the 9th International Architecture Exhibition, specifically the "OTAKU: persona = space = city" presentation housed in the Japanese Pavilion.**
- **Starting from the late 1990's, the International Desk, a department devoted to helping participants from overseas, was created within the Comic Market Committee. People from overseas start to participate at the Comic Market as circle publishers around the same time.**
- **The Comic Market Catalog begins to include guidance information aimed for overseas participants.**
  - English information page, beginning from C56 of 1999.
  - Four language information page, featuring Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean, beginning from C68 of 2005.





- **Cosplay's original birthplace -- America's science fiction conventions and worldcons.**
  - Cosplay was a fixture in Japanese science fiction conventions and manga events.
  - Costume players (masqueraders) started appearing the Comic Market starting from Comiket 5 of 1977.
  - As popularity of anime heated up in the 1980's and games became popular in the 1990's, so did cosplay at the Comic Market.
  - The preferred term the English had been "masquerade," but from 1990's the term "cosplay" become increasingly used overseas as well. It is believed that the first time the word "cosplay" was used was in an article about world con featured in the Japanese *SF Magazine* of 1984.
- **Anime and manga events overseas tend feature numerous activities combined together rather than focusing on single aspects of fandom and creativity. Cosplay is a very popular event at numerous overseas conventions.**
- **The World Cosplay Summit's popularity.**
  - Launched in 2003 where three nations were participating. In 2009, fans from over 15 nations are participating.
  - In 2007, the World Cosplay Summit was incorporated as part of the Japanese Government's "Visit Japan" campaign.
- **Cosplay featured often in YouTube. Many involving overseas fans acting out various character sequences to camera.**



## - Press coverage.

- Increasing share of press people have prior knowledge of the Comic Market's characteristics.
  - > At the 2007 C73, a correspondent for US gay lifestyle magazine came to conduct press coverage at C73, while a Frenchman cross-dressed as a female character from *Lucky Star* and also conducted press coverage.
- Some notable press coverage examples.
  - > At the 2007 C73, press came from the Netherlands, Brazil, and Australia.
  - > At the 2008 C75, press came from Turkey, Qatar (Aljazeera), and Norway.
- Publicizing Comic Market to Overseas
  - > At 2007 C73, Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranges for footage of the Comic Market in session to be filmed as part of an video introduction on modern Japanese culture.

## - General Participants.

- Total number of overseas general participants is unknown. (Primarily because it is virtually impossible to distinguish Asian overseas participants compared to other Japanese participants.) However, subjective estimation indicate numbers increasing.
- At 2006 C70, a group tour of nearly 60 people suddenly appeared. (Comic Market currently cannot provide Spanish assistance.)
- At 2007 C72, a Korean general participant became "lost." (The participant had lost contact with companion originally befriended on the nets. Participant could no speak Japanese.)

## - Cosplayers

- Total number of overseas general participants is unknown. (Primarily because it is virtually impossible to distinguish Asian overseas participants compared to other Japanese participants.) However, subjective estimation indicate numbers increasing.
- From 2005 C68, increasing numbers of Italian and Indian nationals participating as cosplayers.



### - **Rapid increase of overseas circle publishers.**

- Many trends among general attendees occur within the ranks of circle participants later on. This holds likely to be the case with overseas participants as well.
- Online communities of creative expression, such as Pixiv and YouTube, many be contributing toward an influx of overseas circle participants.
  - > Example: Pixiv access during November to December of 2009.  
Total hit numbers: 29,000,000.
  - > 8% of hits from overseas users. (Mostly Taiwan, United States, China, and Korea.)
  - > In 2008, overseas users constituted 5%. Two years prior, 1.6%.
  - > Overseas users percentages consistently increasing since Pixiv started operating.

### - **Comic Market has unique restrictions over circle participants.**

- CM requires application must be filed by **an individual with a home address within Japan.**
- In truth, overseas circle participants are dependent on friends in Japan to be their surrogates.

### - **Some overseas circles are becoming highly popular.**



- **The language problem: An independent division such as the International Desk is increasingly strained.**
  - Languages demanded continues to increase.
    - > International Desk can currently deal with English, German, Chinese and Korean.
  - Overall increase of participants creating numerous strains everywhere.
    - > The number of general participants, cosplayers, circle participants dramatically increasing.
  
- **Issues over medium of communication: Comic Market's difficulty in standardizing communication with non-domestic addresses.**
  - How can the Internet be utilized?
  - "The language barrier" is a major issue.
    - > Starting from the C77 application form, a clause was inserted indicating applicant must be able to intelligently understand the material that is provided by the Comic Market Committee. (In other words, they must be able to read Japanese.)
    - > Furthermore, applicants must be able to insure that someone who speaks Japanese must be on hand while conducting business with the Comic Market Committee during the Comic Market itself.
  
- **Intercultural issues.**
  - Rating guideline difference between nations.
  - Japanese doujinshi culture is heavily influenced by traits unique to the Japanese publishing industry. Some of these traits are overt and codified, while others are difficult to discern.
    - > Characteristics of the manga publishing industry, Japanese resale price maintenance scheme in the publishing industry.

# THANK YOU!

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## ■ Photographs by:

- Kaichiro Morikawa
- Comic Market Committee Records Office Group

## ■ English Translation:

- Dan Kanemitsu

## ■ Special Thanks

- Tokyo Big Sight
- Pixiv Inc.