Where'd You Get Those Nightcrawler Hands?
The Information Literacy Practices of Cosplayers

THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL

Information Literacy

In the face of rampant misinformation, people of all ages need to use information literacy to evaluate the veracity and usefulness of the material they encounter in all media formats (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Most information literacy instruction treats information literacy as:

- confined to school or work,
- individual,
- linear, and
- skill-based. (Martin, 2012)

People need to use information literacy, however, not just at school or work, but in all settings, including social settings.

Information Horizon Maps

To gather data on individual practices, information horizon mapping interviews were conducted with 10 cosplayers, transcribed, and analyzed using qualitative coding and a variation on social network analysis. Cosplayers were asked to draw a map that included themselves, the resources they go to when they need cosplay-related information, and connections between and among themselves and these resources.

These maps were analyzed for frequency of and relationship between terms and combined to form an aggregated information horizon map.

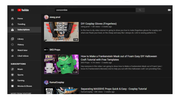
Interviews provided more detail into how participants engaged with the resources mentioned on the maps.

Affinity Spaces

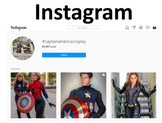
Information literacy practices in affinity spaces, spaces where people gather around a shared interest, can offer insight into how people engage with information in a naturalistic setting and inform future information literacy instruction. Affinity spaces can be in-person, online, or blended (Gee, 2018; Martin, 2012).

Local Groups

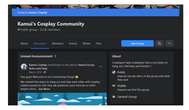
YouTube



Instagram



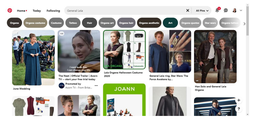
Facebook



Conventions

Reference Materials

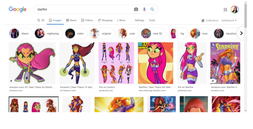
Pinterest



Comics

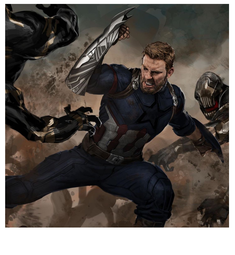
Screenshots

Google Images

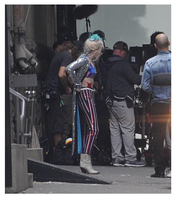


Action Figures

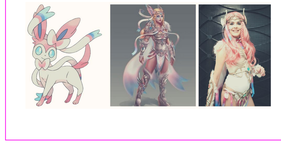
Concept Art



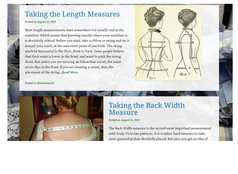
Set Photos



Fanart

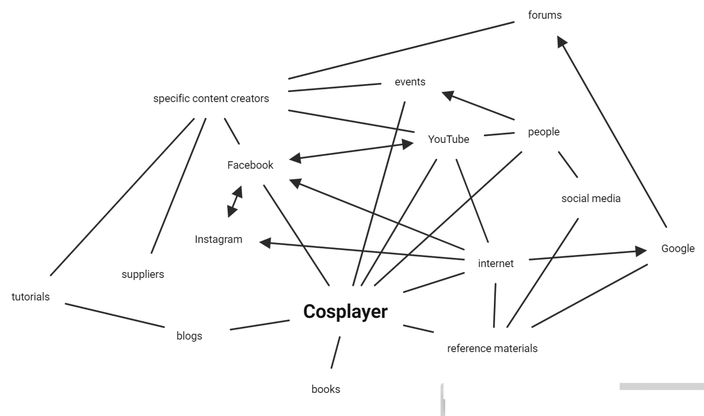


Historical References



Official Cosplay Guides

Aggregated Map



Resource Categories

Resource/category	Frequency
people	10
YouTube	8
reference materials	8
suppliers	8
instagram	6
specific content creators	6
internet	5
Google	5
events	4
social media	4
tutorials	4
Facebook	4
blogs	2
forums	1
books	1

References

Gee, J. P. (2018). Affinity spaces: How young people live and learn online and out of school. *Phi Delta Kappan, 99(6)*, 8–13.

Martin, C. (2012). *Information literacy in interest-driven learning communities: Navigating the sea of information of an online affinity space* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Accession Order No. AAT 3516797)

Pew Research Center. (2017). *The future of truth and misinformation online*. Retrieved from

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