High Fantasy Cosplay Conventions: An opportunity for library programming
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Abstract: *YA High Fantasy conventions can be a fun interactive way for teens to enjoy the genre. This article outlines ways libraries can include these conventions in their programming.*

When thinking about high fantasy it is easy to conjure up images of elves, magic warriors, jedis, and all sorts of famous mythical characters. So rich are these images, and the stories they come from that it is no wonder that cosplay has exploded with popularity. There are cosplay conventions that target audiences of comics, superhero films, anime, and high fantasy. As such a fun way for audiences to interact with their favourite books, films, and video games, library programming can jump onboard with the trend!

Although many teens still view libraries as holders of things, there are so many exciting programs out there that libraries are doing. Using a similar structure to a comic con, but for YA high fantasy, libraries can encourage to current and new users alike to come out for the exciting event. It can be beneficial to the community, local shops that sell High Fantasy products, creators of high fantasy content, and of course it shows off how fun the library can be. Heidi Macdonald (2014) explains the connective value for everyone involved in a comic con:

> "But bringing the pop culture carnival of a comic con—complete with costumes and creator signings—to the library environment has had unique benefits for all involved. Besides being a grand old time, comic cons benefit libraries by bringing in new readers and showcasing particularly strong graphic novel collections. They also allow publishers and creators to build connections with fans and expand relationships with particularly supportive libraries". (para. 3)

The connections built at a comic con style convention can build new partnerships with the library or strengthen partnerships that already exist.

As far as the details for a YA high fantasy convention, that can be up to the individual library, however it is important to note that if the budget is limited, it can still be a big success. Workshops on digital art, drawing, map making, costume competition can all be done on the cheap (Teen Services Underground, 2019). The Massachusetts Library System even did a webinar for library users, with instructions on different costume creating techniques (Massachusetts Library System, 2019). This could be a safe option during Covid-19, and one day those costumes could be worn for an in-library event. Enjoying high fantasy can go beyond reading and watching, and interactive opportunities to enjoy the genre can be beneficial to libraries, and library users alike.

References

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