

Where Is Manga and Anime Heading Toward Within the Next Decade

Manga and anime have grown in leaps and bounds over the years and these forms of art are no longer unique to the Japanese people alone. Today, they entertain fans from all over the world. Although the industry has experienced much growth, it has also had its fair share of setbacks, not the least of which was the global recession that broke out in 2008. Since then, many agencies had been forced to downsize or go bankrupt. Companies that survived continue to grapple with dwindling or fluctuating sales, and worst of all, there's a very real threat of what piracy can do to shut these industries down once and for all. With print and animation technology rapidly changing the industry, one can't help but wonder what the future holds for anime and manga.

Because the direction that manga and anime take largely depends on what is currently trending in the industry, this article will discuss a few of those trends and what impact they may have on the industry within a decade.

Japan's Dwindling Dominance on Anime/Manga Productions

Despite the popularity of manga and anime in online communities and mainstream media, the overseas manga/anime industry is not as well-established as it is in Japan. Ten years from now, however, that may not be the case as Japanese anime studios and manga publishers continue to partner with overseas companies. A case in point would be VIZ media, which serves as the American affiliate for Shogakukan and Shueisha, two of the largest Japanese Manga publishers.

There is also a lot of outsourcing from Japanese studios as the local industry tries to squeeze out more content than it can from domestic hands. However, this is slowly resulting in the transfer of skills. Korean and even Chinese studios are now indirectly learning the art of animation in the Japanese style.

As a result, globalization of anime and manga artwork along with the socio economic implications of outsourcing are two major factors that will likely contribute to the end of

Japan's dominance in the industry.

More Digital Manga/Anime

Not so long ago in the nineties, the only distribution channels for manga and anime productions were through comics/graphical novels, television programs, and DVDs. However, times have changed so much so that now there is less emphasis on the need to own physical copies of media production works. With the advent of the Internet, people find it more convenient to access manga and anime content on websites and then download it to their PCs or handheld devices.

In order to cater to today's tech savvy manga readers and anime viewers, publishers and production studios are releasing more and more titles via video sharing websites and e-book selling platforms such as Apple iBooks, Amazon Kindle, and Barnes and Noble's Nook. It's expected that these companies will continue to expand their digital publishing and production efforts going forward in an effort to meet consumer demands.

Upsurge of Premium Based Anime Websites

The largest challenge of providing anime and manga in digital formats lies in the Internet sites that publish free content illegally. Some of these sites upload programs shortly after release dates accompanied with English subtitles translated by fans.

To counter this trend, publishers and animation creators will have to change some aspects of the industry by providing competitively priced premium content online. Some industry players have already taken the plunge into the digital world. An example would be TV Tokyo, who tied up with San Francisco based animation sharing site, Crunchyroll, in 2009 to offer high quality, ad-free anime and manga content for a flat monthly fee of \$6.95.

Efforts against Scanlation Sites and Pirates to Increase

In August of 2014, the Japanese government launched the Manga-Anime Guardian Project to battle the increasing piracy of manga comics and anime cartoons. Fifteen

major publishers joined the government-led campaign which aimed to take down illegally uploaded anime and manga works from non-official sources.

What these efforts will yield remains to be seen. But as industry players grow weary of how much piracy is costing them, one thing is for sure: efforts against manga and anime scanlation sites will definitely increase in the future because piracy continues to impact manga publishers and anime producers worldwide.