

# English Summary

In the Pugs of Pokemon. Japanese Popular Culture in Finland

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The beginning of the twenty first century has presented the rise of Japanese popular culture around the world, including Finland. The phenomenon spread to Finland relatively late, but in less than ten years *manga*, *anime* and *cosplay*, to name some, have attracted tens of thousands of fans.

The research is based on interviews of fan organization representatives, publishers and other related business representatives in Finland and Japan. Fans were included with a questionnaire at a convention. The related fan sites on the Internet have also been extensively explored. Results indicate that the fandom of Japanese popular culture in Finland has changed rapidly, and is no longer a hobby of male university students. Currently the majority of fans are teenage girls. The fandom was initially organized as more than a dozen local registered associations with a loose national level coordinating network. Recently, however, the fandom has become more dispersed with many unofficial groups and individual actors taking more responsibility.

The research shows that without the Internet the spread of Japanese popular culture would not have happened as quickly. For the fans the Internet is a shopping center for legal and illegal material, a channel to new information and discussions, a place to meet other fans and a space to publish fan production. Peer-to-peer (p2p) networks have been the reason for the quick spread of *anime* in particular. Although utilizing p2p is often considered problematic by the fans themselves, they note that the majority of the material available through p2p will never be licensed for the European markets. Other reasons for using p2p is that official translations become available too late after the initial publication in Japan and are too expensive to buy as DVDs. The spread of *manga* has more domestic effects. Since 2003 the two major publishers of *manga* (Sangatsu manga and Egmont kustannus) have published about 60–70 titles per year in Finnish. Currently *manga* is read and known by most high school aged youth in Finland. The publishing market is yet to be defined with recent acquisitions and new firms entering the market in Finland.

The spread of Japanese popular culture has caused discussions about its values and means of expression in relation to Finnish culture. Outside the fandom there has been some media panic concerning sex (pedophilic features in particular) and violence in *manga* and *anime*. Within the fandom these discussions are often considered dilettantish and stereotypical, since by the fans disturbing features and phenomena in *manga* and *anime* are often explained as belonging to Japanese culture and as such acceptable if not understandable. Within the fandom there is rarely discussion of the fact that in Japan the same features have caused public uproars.

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