

Market Analysis of Cosplay Websites

By Karen Wang
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The Internet is vital to cosplayers who depend on it to share and connect across countries time zones. Thus, the Internet is booming with cosplay culture--a Google search for "cosplay" returns over 100 million results. Nevertheless, the vast majority of cosplay websites can be separated into three general categories.

The first category is cosplay social networks and galleries, where individual cosplayers from all over the world post their cosplay photos and interact with one another. Examples include Cosplay.com and WorldCosplay.net. Cosplay.com claims to be "The World's Largest Cosplay Community", and has pages for users to create profiles, record their ongoing cosplay projects, post on forums, and even shop in an online wig store. However, it is not the most popular cosplay social network out there, with fewer user comments than other social networks such as WorldCosplay or Facebook pages. For beginner cosplayers, its forums are the most valuable aspect, where users can find over 4.5 million posts on topics ranging from sewing craft to the New York Anime festival. The layout is simple and easy to navigate.

WorldCosplay.net is also a cosplay social network. It reaches a broader audience than Cosplay.com by offering the site in 12 different languages, from Dutch to Korean. In addition, it aggressively advertises its social element, with invitations to the user to rate and follow other users, share their favorite photos via Facebook, Twitter, and Weibo, and check the site rankings. Like Facebook, registered users can favorite, comment, and post their own photos. WorldCosplay does not have forums or cosplay-making advice for users.

Unlike these sites, CosPlayGround is not a social network where users register and create profiles to upload their cosplay photos. Instead, CosPlayGround is solely an informational site. Instead of going through the process of Google-ing everything, going through Cosplay.com forums, and trial-and-error, visitors to CosPlayGround will find that they can learn more about cosplay, how to make them, and where to find anime conventions, all in one place.

The second category is cosplay tutorial websites, which are typically created by individual cosplayers who draw on their own experience and expertise to detail some aspect of making a cosplay. However, these tutorials are generally scattered across the web, and each one only focuses on a specific element of such as how to make this character's sword or where to buy that character's wig. CosPlayGround looks for the best tutorials out there and recommends them to its audience.

The third category is online cosplay stores such as the Cosplay.com marketplace, COSPLAYFU, and eBay vendors. CosPlayGround also looks for the best stores that have great products and services, and directs beginner cosplayers to these sites.

CosPlayGround is different from these categories because it acts as a liaison to bridge these different categories of cosplay sites and provide the audience with all they need to know about cosplay in one place. Users no longer have the trawl the web looking for good information on cosplay; they can find it all on CosPlayGround.

In direct competition with CosPlayGround are sites like Cosplay Tutorial. Cosplay Tutorial is an example of a cosplay help website that includes a tutorial list, where to buy, and articles and guides. Similar to CosPlayGround's model, Cosplay Tutorial aggregates links to other cosplay websites and

features tips on making cosplays. The site is well laid out and includes good design strategies such as bullet-pointed lists and actionable information. It includes lots of useful information such as how to save material and reuse patterns for handmade cosplays, and the pros and cons of making versus buying cosplay. The amount of information provided can also be overwhelming, however, and may not be friendly to the beginner cosplayer who does not yet know what specialty terms like “wonderflex” is. CosPlayGround is aimed at the beginner-level audience, while Cosplay Tutorial is a great general resource website.