Fans = Readers, Writers, Creators... Information Organisers?

MAIN DISCUSSION POINT: How do we harness the passion of fans in the library?

Fans are information managers par excellence. Many of the functions we are currently trying to institute in the library were pioneered and/or are heavily used by online fan communities. For example....

#### **Community tagging/folksonomies**

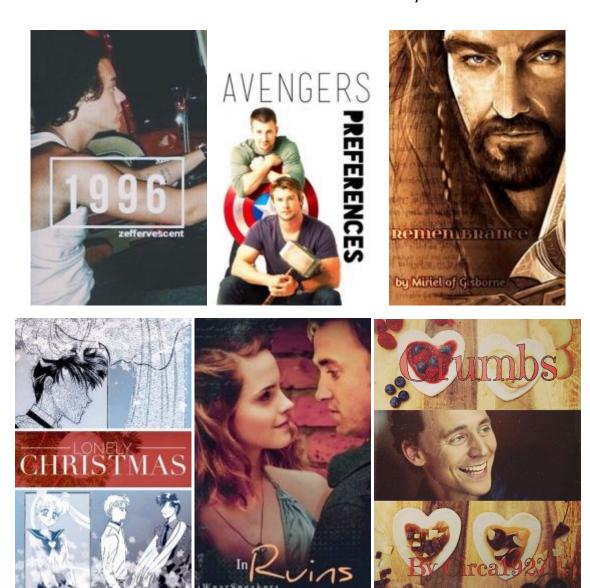




**DISCUSSION POINT:** How popular are the community tags on your public library catalogue? Are they used often? How to you think users can be encouraged to use them? Do you think they are even useful when compared to subject headings, for example?

#### Fans as creators

Book covers! We like to see book covers in our online library catalogue. Fans can get together to create the most amazing and professional looking book covers for their fanfiction! Check out these examples from Wattpad:



**DISCUSSION POINT:** How can we harness user creativity in the library?

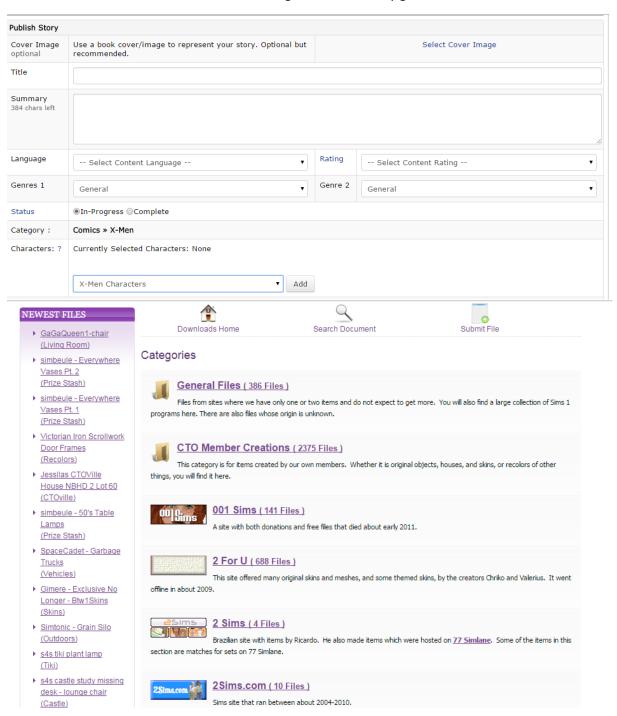
## **Categorisation**

Fans are really passionate about their fandom or their interests. Some fan repositories are very refined and pay great attention to the categorisation of their collections.

Fanfic authors are scrupulous when it comes to categorising their works. Categories are defined for a) fandom; b) pairing; c) genre. Genre is extremely important when it comes to fanfiction. Here are some of the genres created and used by fanfic authors:

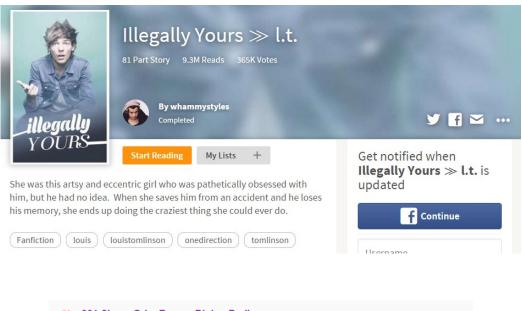
- Gen
- Het
- Hurt/Comfort
- Darkfic
- Fluff
- Angst

Readers always want to make sure they can easily find the *exact* genre they are interested in, featuring their favourite characters and fandoms. Therefore, genres can be very granular.



## Stats and circulation

Fans highly prize this kind of information. Most fan sites will display this information to the user. This helps to gauge the popularity and usefulness of the item.



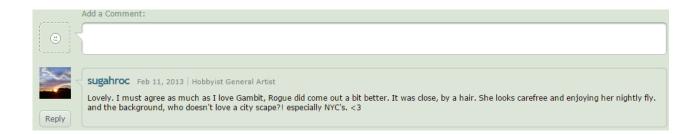


**DISCUSSION POINT:** Do you think it's useful to show your circ stats to the public?

#### Community

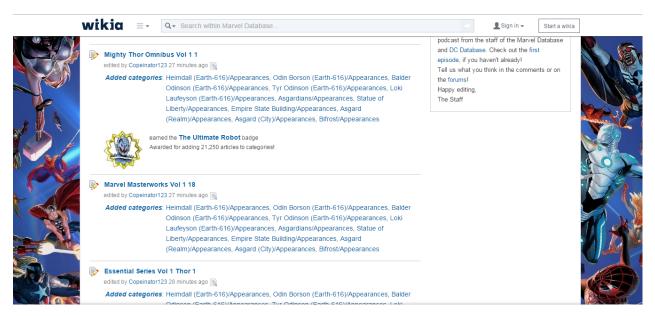
Reviewing, voting and commenting are a big deal for many online repositories and stores. Buyers on Amazon can rate and comment on their purchases, helping other customers to find the best deals. Fandom is no different. Fans can put their work up for review by their peers, and even enter competitions.





#### Crowdsourcing

Fans are brilliant crowdsourcers. Practically every fandom you can think of now has a Wiki. Fans pool their knowledge to try and make these information resources as complete as they can, and all in real time. Many of these Wikis are better than official sites and books, and involves accessing sometimes rare source material, scanning and uploading images, creating new classifications and categories, and moderating the contributions of others.



**DISCUSSION POINT:** Crowdsourcing is a growing practice in the GLAM sector. Have you used crowdsourcing in your institution? If not, would you and why? Do you have any success stories to share?

**FINAL DISCUSSION POINT:** Are there any similarities between fans and researchers, academics and students? How can we harness these similarities as librarians and information professionals?