

What About Extra-Club Socialization?

Written by Sushu Xia

>> Are Anime Clubs obsolete? ~Sushu, 6 Sept 2006

>>> HELL NO THEY ARE NOT OBSOLETE! ~Jono, 16 Sept 2006

Jono, you make some good points about people, especially geeks, needing anime club as a anime-watching impetuous and anime as a point of social focus. (I really like the idea of the point of social focus) However, the question that I encountered on a mailing list that started it all was, What makes anime club different from just getting together with a bunch of friends?

Yes, anime club is a place to make new friends, according to your point 1, and I think it's a big function of anime club. But at the same time, what if you're living in a dorm, and you blast some anime? That would bring anime folks to your room, too. Anime is popular enough now that you can find fellow anime-people just by talking about anime in class, or by carrying around a popular manga. Club is not the only social arena for making friends-who-like-anime. Even for us officers, Club is not the only place we socialize. So what makes UCJAS nothing more than a glorified social circle? Why schlep all the way down the campus to sit in the dark with strange people when you've got your group of familiars right at Shoreland?

In fact, sometimes I feel that club may be harder to make friends-who-like-anime because the structure of the club restricts us to mostly talking about anime during club time. Instead of a point of social focus, it often becomes a boundary. Usually the people who become friends are the ones who stay after and talk about non-anime stuff, such as officers, and social geeks. Officer meetings give a structure to socialize by providing a point of focus, and not a boundary. Jono, did you make your friends by joining anime club, or by hanging out with the anime club officers? How many of the people-in-the-back have you ever talked to? On the other side, I know, or even are friends with, some people-in-the-back who stay people-in-the-back because anime club is actually anime-officers'-club. Is there a way to make anime club have a point of social focus?

I disagree with the point that WoW is the same as downloading anime via bitTorrent. Well, I've never played WoW before, so I can't disagree categorically. But I know people who play WoW for the socialization factor (it offers a point of focus, if you will), and others whose entire lives have become WoW. I was talking more about people who have a healthy internet structure for socializing about anime. These people write reviews on their blogs, chat with friends in Germany about the most recent anime they've watched, they share manga, participate in forums, join fansubbing groups, etc. Online is not just for downloading anime, it's also an alternate way of socializing anime.

What can anime club offer that you can't do with your own bunch of friends or over the internet?

I had an answer for this in the original post, but I don't remember it anymore.