

(ABecket, 2015)



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION STUDIES

Promoting Literacy with Fanfiction to Young Adults

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Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

"Welcome to the University of Alberta. I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Territory on which we are gathered today, a welcoming place for peoples from around the world. I would like to acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose footsteps have marked this territory for centuries such as: Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux".

Outline

- Research Questions
- Data Collection
- Themes from the literature
 - Demographics
 - Literacy
 - Community and Safe space
- Opportunities for libraries
- Conclusions

Research Questions

- Is fanfiction a suitable choice to engage young adults in literacy practices and promote future engagement in literacy?
- How can youth subcultures be utilized by libraries to engaged young readers?



(ABecket, 2015)

Data Collection

- Literature review
 - 13 sources analyzed
 - Mix of peer-reviewed article, magazine articles, and books
- Case studies are used to show the applicability of this research to make up for the limitation

Limitations

- Difficulties studying underage participants
- Limited academic research on this topic



Themes from the Literature

1. Demographic information
2. Literacy
3. Safe space and community

Considering these themes, it is clear that there is an opportunity for libraries to use fanfiction as a meaningful way to engage with this user group.

1. Demographics: Gender

- There is a variety of genders represented in fanfiction communities
- Predominately a female dominated space

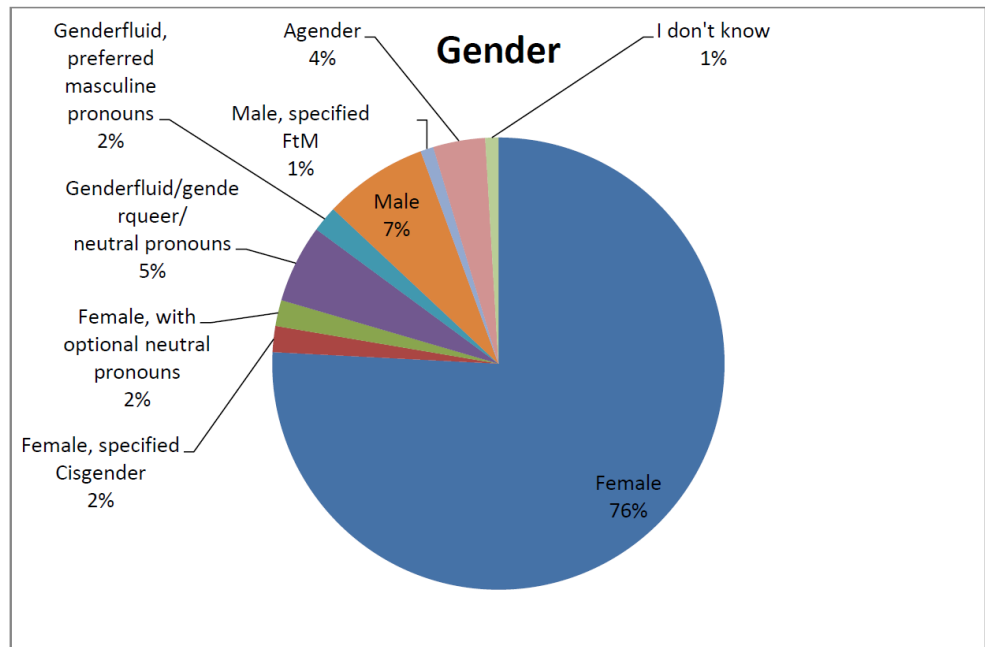
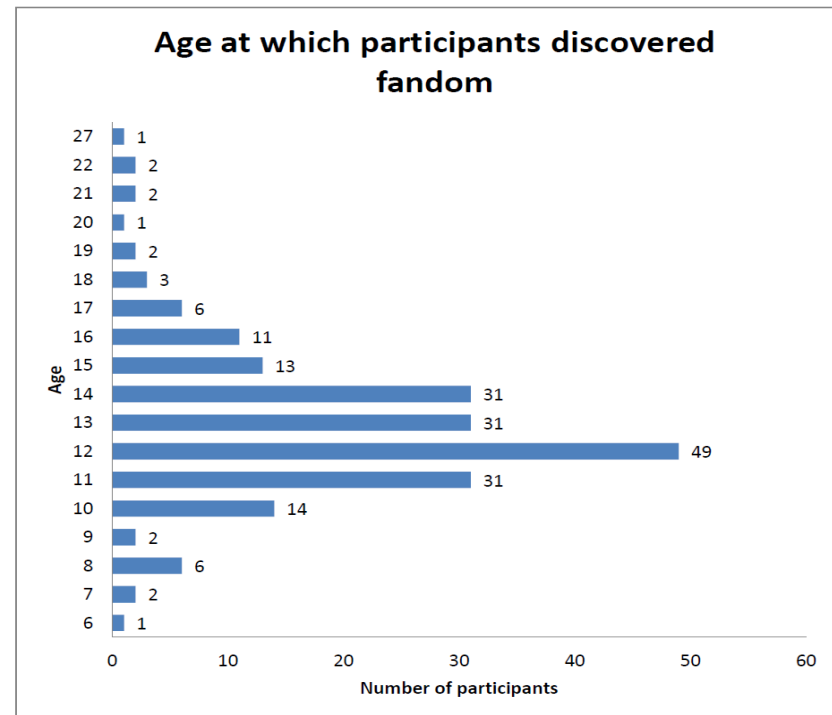


Figure 1: Pie chart that demonstrates the gender demographics of fanfiction participants (Street, 2013).

1. Demographics: Age

- Like gender though, there is a variety of ages represented
- Predominately young people engage in fanfiction
- Most fanfiction participants are 12 years old



Mean age: 12.9 years

Median age: 12 years

Figure 2: Graph that demonstrates the age demographics of fanfiction participants (Street, 2013).

2. Literacy

- Fanfiction encourages creativity and an engagement with fanfiction has led to participates being more actively engaged in reading and writing.
- Constructive criticism allows authors to develop and improve their skills.

4.2 Do young people read more after getting involved in fandom?

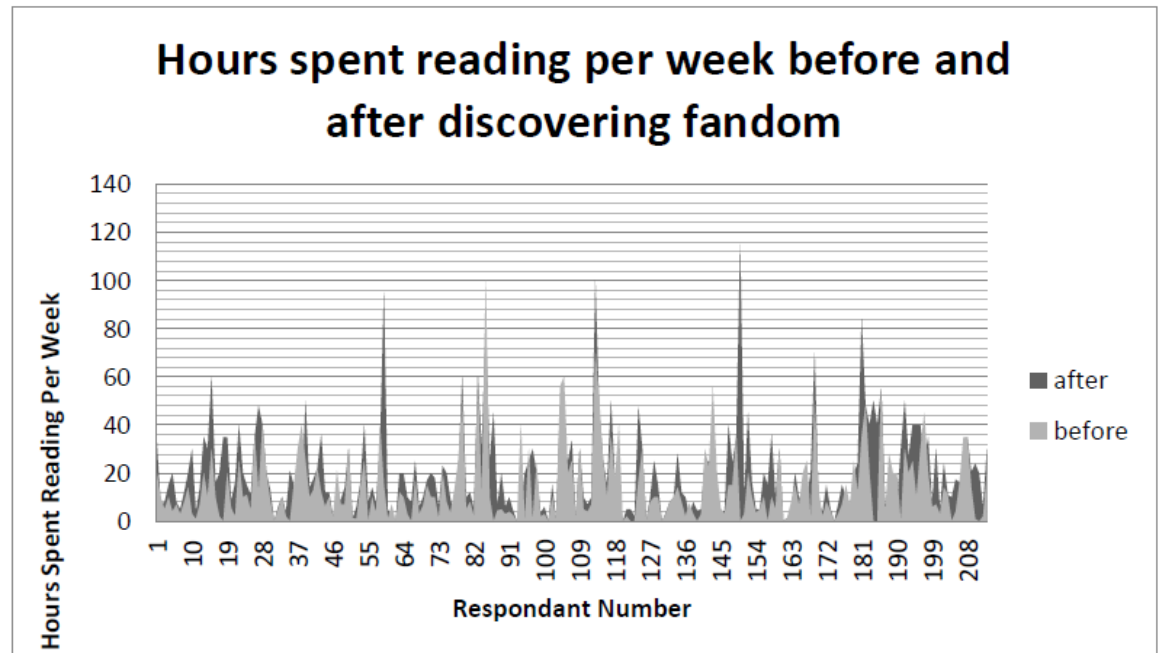


Figure 3: Chart that demonstrates the effect fanfiction had on literacy (Street, 2013).

3. Community and Safe Space

- The community building aspect of fanfiction websites is a significant attraction for many people
- There is a variety of people who participate in fanfiction and it is a safe place for LGBTQ+
- Fanfiction creates strong friendships and that is among the highest rated reasons young people are attracted to the genre

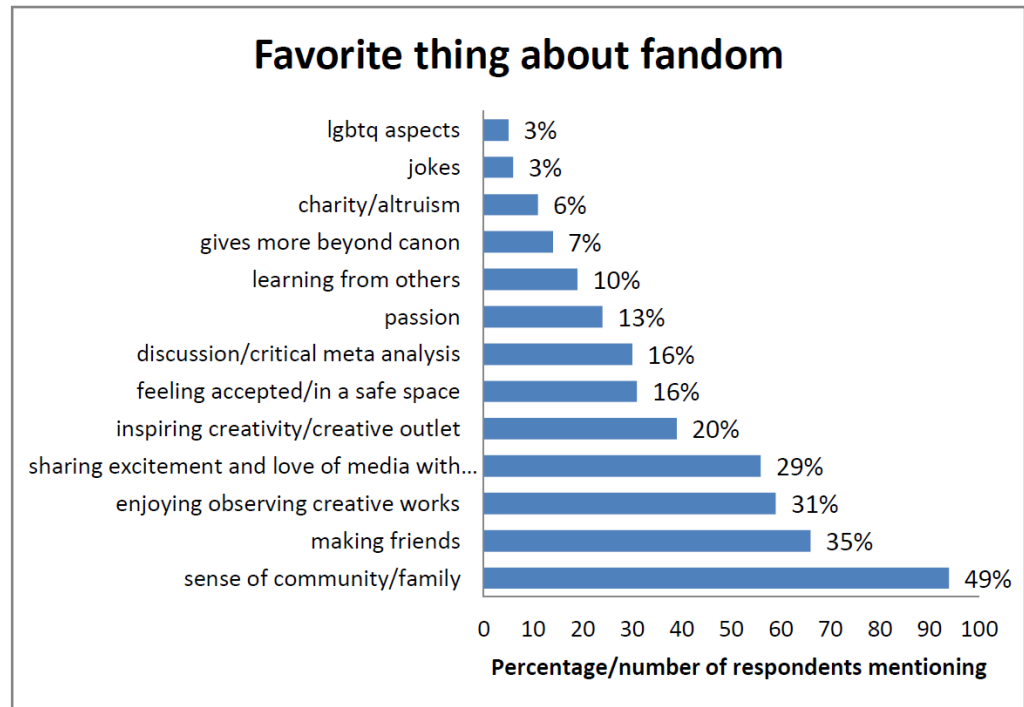


Figure 4: Bar graph depicting the aspects of fanfiction that attracts participants (Street, 2013).

3. Community and Safe Space

4 Effects of being in fandom

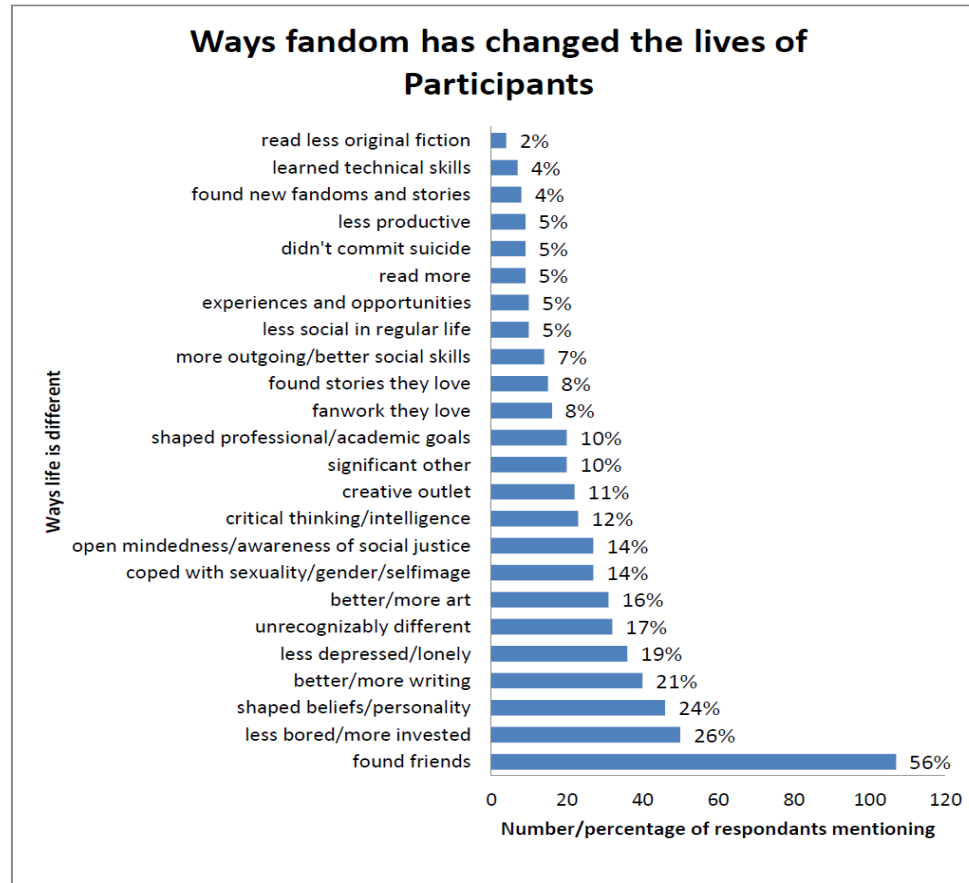


Figure 5: Graph depicting how fanfiction has affected their lives (Street, 2013).

3. Community and Safe Space

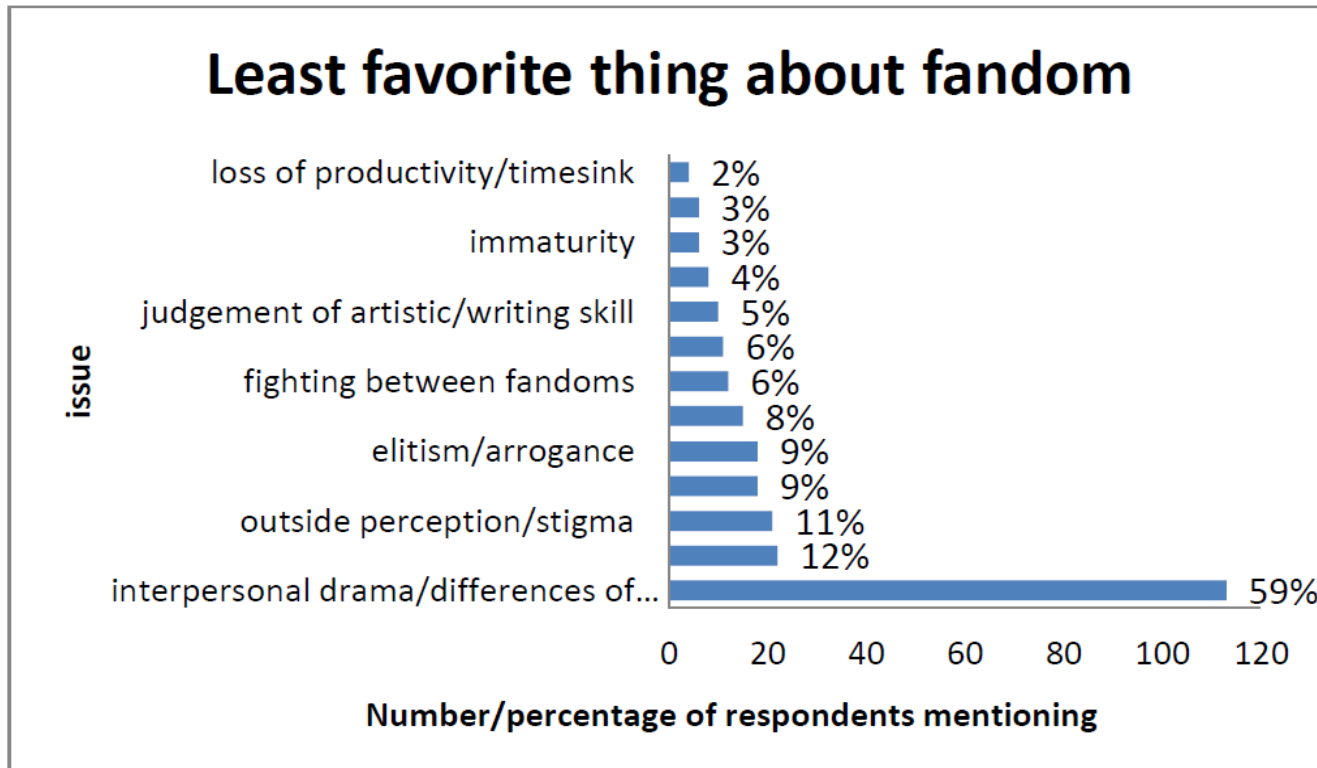


Figure 6: Graph depicting aspects of fanfiction that people do not like (Street, 2013).

Opportunities for Libraries

- Toronto Public Library is one example of a library that has taken the initiative to explore the potential uses of fanfiction as a program
- Fanfiction could be used as an alternative means to engage young readers in literature and developing their skill set.
- Fanfiction may attract a different demographic and encourage reluctant readers to be more engaged



(Johnson, 2016)

Toronto Public Library

- The Toronto Public Library's fanfiction program's description states it is was an LGBTQ+ safe spaced
- Example of a library utilizing fanfiction in their programming

The screenshot displays the Toronto Public Library website interface. At the top, the library logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'You are not signed in', 'Your Account', and 'Contact Us' are on the right, along with a search bar. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with links for 'Books, Video, Research & More', 'Programs, Classes & Exhibits', 'Hours & Locations', and 'Using the Library'. The main content area features a pink square graphic with a crown icon and the text 'KEEP CALM AND WRITE FANFICTION'. To the right of the graphic, the program title 'Adult Fanfiction Writers' Coalition' is displayed, followed by the time '6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. on recurring dates listed below' and a duration of '120 mins'. The program is led by 'Lillian H. Smith'. A descriptive paragraph follows: 'If you read, write, or are just plain enthusiastic about fanfiction, this is the group for you. Join us each month to discuss each other's work as well as all things fandom, including periodic movie nights. All adults 18+ welcome. This is a LGBTQIA2S+ safe space. Call 416-393-7746 or visit the branch to register. Drop-ins welcome.' Below this are sections for 'Categories:' (Adult, Book Clubs & Writers Groups) and 'Upcoming Dates:' (Tue Nov 15, Tue Nov 29, Tue Dec 13, Tue Dec 27). On the right side of the program details, there are social sharing buttons for 'Email', 'Print', 'Facebook', and 'Tweet'. At the bottom of the page, a dark blue footer contains four columns of links: 'About the Library' (Vision, Mission & Values; Customer Feedback Standards & Practices), 'Accessibility' (Accessibility at Library Branches; Services for People with Disabilities), 'Media Relations & News Releases' (Media Contacts; Key Facts), and 'Connect with Us' (Sign Up for Our eNewsletter; Blogs by Librarians).

Figure 7: Website of Toronto Public Library's Fanfiction program (Toronto Public Library, n.d.).

Don't Wait, Act Now!

- The next step is to develop programs and test the applicability of fanfiction

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