



MK 617: Consumer Behavior
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Introduction

Cosplay is a culture in which members called 'cosplayers' impersonate particular characters with the help of costumes and specific fashion accessories. The word cosplay comes from a contraction of two words; costume and play. In 1984, Nobuyuki Takahashi of Studio Hard, was credited for coining this term in Japan (Jee, 2008). Although the term "cosplay" came later, the culture of dressing up as various characters has been around since 1940. At this time in New York, one major event of 'fan costuming' was recorded called World Science Fiction Convention or in short, 'Worldcon' (Resnick, 2009).

Cosplay involves more than donning a costume, which is why people do not consider Halloween costumes a part of cosplay culture. In our study, cosplay can be defined as:

In its purest form cosplay is akin to performance art, taking on the habitus of a particular character through costume, accessories, gesture and attitude; it is therefore not simply 'dressing up' but rather inhabiting the role of a character both physically and mentally. (Norris & Bainbridge, 2009).

The cosplay community is unique in the fact that it is global and its members can be of any age. This is a large, virtually untapped market which marketers have yet to utilize. A key characteristic of this community is loyalty. They are loyal to their fandoms and this loyalty has the potential to transfer into their buying habits.

Through this research process we aim to learn more about the cosplay and comic-con community. What makes fans so loyal, why do they create cosplay, and what makes them different from other subcultures? We would also like to discover the

potential this community has for marketers and businesses. Once we have finished conducting our research we will create a marketing communication plan for businesses wishing to target this subculture. This plan will choose one lifestyle brand and developing a marketing communications plan designed with cosplayers in mind .

In order to accomplish our research objectives we will be conducting in-depth interviews with members of the cosplay community, both in Boston and throughout the country. There will be twelve in-depth interviews consisting of an hour with each interviewee. In addition to the interviews we will be creating an online survey to learn more about the demographics, motivations and creative process of this subculture. We will distribute this survey to online cosplay groups via social media sites and at the Rhode Island comic-con on November 10th to examine the values, motivations and consumption activities of cosplayers.

Preconception

The cosplay and comic-con culture has always been viewed as a “nerd’s pastime” by those outside of this subculture. Due to a lack of understanding by the public and the media, the cosplay culture has had various negative associations surrounding its members. Reports have described people attending Comic-cons, as “fat-swaddled nerds who dress like game characters and cartoons for fun”, those who live “on the edge of society” and “cultists” (Lotecki, 2012). These unfavorable stereotypes have passed on for years even though they’re far from the truth. Most members use the concept of fluid identity, a temporary shift to another character through their creative use of costumes, makeups and prop pieces.

Our current perception of this subculture is based on what we have seen, read and heard through various forms of media. Cosplayers are super-fans of books, movies and television shows who show their love of a series through creative means. Many cosplayers spend hours creating their designs in order to portray their favorite characters for social media and comic-cons. Cosplayers have represented famous characters from action films, Disney movies, anime culture and video games. In recent years there has been more press attention to comic-cons where cosplayers can be seen packing venues and spending an excess of money on picture and autograph sessions with their favorite actors. Our research on this subculture will enable us to gain insights about how cosplayers negotiate real identity and the ideal identity they emulate in order to better understand the members of the cosplay community .

Literature Review

Environmental Analysis

Economic

Cosplay subculture shows a growing opportunity for businesses. There has been an increase in recent years of cosplayers selling their creations to other fans through creative websites such as Etsy (Butterworth, 2016). According to a report by Shanghai-based research firm CRI, in 2014 the global market size of cosplay costumes and wigs reached revenues of about \$11.7 billion and \$561.5 million respectively. By 2019, this market is predicted to reach up to approximately \$23.6 billion for costumes and \$1,129.4 million for wigs (W, 2017). In recent years, a new trend has been

cosplaying for sponsorship. This type of revenue typically involves being hired as a character for the launch of a video game, movie, or comic-con event (Plunkett, 2016).

Market

One does not have to look too far to see the booming business of cosplay. Boston's annually held comic-con is one of the region's largest gatherings of comic book, horror, fantasy and science fiction fans (Gilsdorf, 2016). This event began with just 900 participants in 2007 and has grown up to 40,000 participants in 2015. In 2016 this event cost attendees \$30 to \$45 per day just to enter and attend panels, cosplay contests, shop, and meet with fans. Taking a photo with one's favorite actor cost another \$50 to \$75. There were even special passes like a VIP pass, for \$165, and one for \$350, where fans could have the "William Shatner Experience." The annual gaming convention held at the BCEC every year, PAX East, tops the list. It is estimated that a crowd of 35,000-plus visitors attend the event per day and more than 100,000 attend throughout the weekend (Gilsdorf, 2016).

Social

Cosplayers are only loyal to and play a key role in the success of their favorite film's franchise. Shefrin describes an active fan as someone who is a hybrid of a conserving agent. These individuals band together to form a subset of popular culture in which the legacy and details of a film's franchise survives. An active fan participates in a "multi textual environment" in which they can discuss the film. It is these discussions which keep the story alive and become the driving force in carrying on the legacy of the franchise (Shefrin, 2004). As many of the 90's generation grows older, they may find

themselves dressing as their favorite Disney character in order to emulate the original Disney classics of their childhood.

Using online chat rooms, social media and YouTube, fans are maintaining connections with each other and creating a virtual and physical fan community. This community allows fans to pool franchise knowledge with one another, as no one single fan can know everything there is to know about the franchise (Jenkins, 2002).

This strong bond to a singular subject and the passion for this subject in an inclusive environment is something unique to the cosplay community. In recent years there has been a push for social advocacy and the cosplay community is a perfect environment for members of all walks of life to become accepted. Their interaction with people of like values allows them to be comfortable creating and wearing their cosplay as a way of self expression.

Technological

Through new media, the cosplay community is finding it easier to engage in group activities. Fans are able to discuss key plotlines, upcoming movies, fictional world theories and their cosplay creations across the globe using social media. Professional cosplayers have thousands of followers on Instagram and use the web to promote their own creative process. In recent years, studios have used social media to tap into the cosplay community for feedback on their productions. In China, studios are using WeChat and Weibo to connect with super-fans. They have reached out for critiques on character costuming, special effects and continuity to the original film's story (Liang & Shen, 2017). In addition to online chatrooms, film studios are engaging the cosplay and fan community with special inside look videos before a film premieres.

These videos take viewers onto the film set to give the fan an inside look of the set, costumes and in-depth interviews with the creative team before a film launches (Shefrin, 2004). New media has strengthened the interpersonal relationships of fans in the cosplay community and has allowed studios to begin tapping into this community's collective knowledge.

Consumer Analysis

Demographics

In a 2012 online survey with 198 cosplayers, Rosenberg and Letamendi found that cosplayers appear to be relatively mature with an average age of 28. Most respondents began cosplaying around age 21 and craft about three cosplays a year on average (Rosenberg & Letamendi, 2012).

A survey conducted in 2013, from 966 voluntary participants, suggested the majority of cosplayers are women (T, 2017). According to Chaka Cumberbatch, a cosplayer since 2008, cosplay culture requires sense of fashion to dress up and take care of all the dresses, wigs, styling and so on. This need for a sense of fashion is a motivation which makes women the dominant gender in cosplay.

The same study revealed that 42.3% of cosplayers held a four-year college or university degree (T, 2017). With an average age of 28 years, one can infer that most cosplayers are recent graduates just beginning their professional careers. The cosplay community is willing to spend a significant amount on cosplay materials, franchise memorabilia and comic-cons. Those who cosplay three times a year or more will spend

on average between \$100 to \$400 per cosplay (Rosenberg & Letamendi, 2012). According to a report on the Time website some 'super-fans' would spend up to thousands of dollars on their costumes. The goal for most cosplayers is to get as film accurate as possible in regards to fabric, design, coloring and construction. Jessica Al-Khalifah spent roughly \$600 for a costume featuring ornate leather-and-metal armor, and two gigantic painted scythes. Another costume included a leather bodysuit and fiberglass weapon that was electrically engineered to glow cost upto \$1,200 (Davidson, 2015).

Motivation

Most cosplayers cosplay as a way to connect themselves with the character, story and the fan community. Another factor affecting the motivation to cosplay is the need to escape. In a world that is constantly demanding more from each individual, cosplay can be a therapeutic and creative escape. Cosplay allows fans to "imitate personas of the selected characters and re-create imaginative self in reality" (Rahman, Wing-sun & Cheung, 2012). While engaged in the act of cosplay, individuals cross the border between reality and fantasy by temporarily transforming into their favorite character. This allows them to perform a role which they miss in their real life and to stray into a completely different and ideal environment for some time (Rahman, Wing-sun, Hei-man Cheung, 2012).

Many have misconceptions about the cosplay community because they don't understand why a person would want to cosplay. Cosplayers tend to be high or vested fans of a particular show or media franchise and the characters they cosplay are those with whom they have high identification (Liang & Shen, 2017). They are willing to spend

“significant amounts of money and time” on the support of their favorite character or film series (Liang & Shen, 2017). Research has shown that fans search for meaning and insight into the human experience through media, which leads to a meaningful bond with the franchise and the characters within the fictional world (Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017). Through this bond the narrative becomes part of their social identity. Fans feel that by wearing a costume, they demonstrate their connection to a certain narrative or character and thus signify, self-express their own identity (Lamerichs, 2012).

A large portion of the cosplay community revolves around one’s involvement in the fan community. This community is where “meaningful, thought-provoking and unforgettable” conversation with other fans can occur (Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017). Through this interaction sense of belonging, a fulfillment of needs and a sense of shared emotional connection is created for a cosplayer (Chadborn, Edwards & Reysen, 2016).

Values

Modern fandoms have been more accepting of social outliers such as feminism, LGBT and gender fluidity than other communities (Chadborn, Edwards & Reysen, 2016). The acceptance level, freedom of expression, and creativity involved in the cosplay community has lead to global identification in cosplayers. In recent years the cosplay community has become “aware of global issues, perceived awareness of global issues, such as the LGBT movement, as a norm and come to identify themselves with a global consciousness (Plante, Roberts, Reysen & Gerbasi, 2014). The result of this intergroup empathy and the cosplay community’s value for diversity, has led the community to support certain issues throughout the world.

Market Size

Since cosplayers are a relatively untapped group by marketers, there is no specific research on the size of this market. It is also hard to determine how many people identify themselves as being cosplayers throughout the world. In order to get a better look into the size of this market, one can look at the events cosplayers participate in, specifically comic-cons. The San Diego Comic-con is one of the largest cons in the U.S. and brings the city of San Diego \$10 million in tourist dollars (David, 2016). On average this comic-con sees 130,000 people attend each year (David, 2016). Two other popular cons are the New York City Con and Fan Expo which is held in Toronto. In 2016, New York City comic-con sold 180,000 tickets to fans to attend their event (MacDonald & Reid, 2016). Similarly, Fan Expo had over 115,000 visitors last year and it is not only the number of fans that is growing. As the number of fans at cons continue to increase, it has become difficult to lock down talent appearances. Stars of fan favorite series care now guaranteed more money, often regardless of the number of sales they bring in. Top stars are now paid up to \$500,000 per comic-con appearance (Salkowitz, 2016).



**Part 2:
Primary
Research**

Method

In order to delve deeper into the minds of the cosplay community, our group has conducted a series of in-depth interviews with members of this community. In addition, one of our group members traveled to the Rhode Island Comic Con on November 10th to interact with and observe cosplayers.

When designing our in-depth interview, we wanted to make sure to find out key motivations behind an individual's drive to cosplay. We inquired about how they research their character's story and fabric choices and how they choose which character to cosplay next. We also looked to inquire into the logistics of the cosplay build including costs, materials, and time spent on creation. We concluded the interview with questions targeting information about the individual's demographics such as income level, age and marital status. The goal of the interview was to discover key insights into the cosplay community which would aid marketers in the targeting of this subculture. We conducted twelve in-depth interviews with varying members of the cosplay community to complete this portion of the research (Appendix A).

In Appendix B you can find a participant profile of our interviewees which showcases the diversity of this community (Appendix B). A majority of our respondents were white females between the ages of 20 and 35. While cosplay is an activity pursued by both men and women, our research showed that this community is heavily populated by women. In their free time our respondents play videogames, watch TV or meet with their friends and significant others. For most cosplayers it appears that they work a variety of jobs which place them at a low to mid income level. Many cosplayers

spend months crafting their cosplay which costs them between \$200-\$500 for each design. For most cosplayers, the act of cosplaying is the ability to share their love for a character. While in cosplay they feel happy, have fun and love sharing their designs with others.

On November 10th, one of our interview members went undercover into a comic-con to observe the subculture members at this event. She observed the way in which they interacted with one another, what items they were purchasing and what mini-events they attended throughout the duration of the con. Our group member went to the con on the second day of the three day event, this day was sold out and there were wall to wall crowds to observe. In addition to walking and observing, she attended a photo session with a celebrity and a mini-event to further engage with cosplayers. In total, she spent 9 hours at the comic-con observing the cosplayers (Appendix C)

Motivations

After in-depth interviews and observations made at a Cosplay event, our research revealed some of the reasons which drive people to be a part of the cosplay community and the frustrations they face within it. After analyzing our findings we can divide cosplayers into two basic segments; devoted and moderate. Devoted cosplayers are those that follow their characters intently and spend many hours in preparing and acquiring their costumes. They attend most cosplay events that take place near their hometown and are willing to travel extensively to attend major cons across the country. These cosplayers do not mind spending a substantial amount of money on their creations and many are looking to build a career through their cosplay. The moderate

segment of cosplayers usually buy their costumes instead of making them. They also prepare for the event a week or two before, while devoted cosplayers spend months planning and creating their costumes. In comparison to devoted cosplayers, moderates usually attend one or two events throughout a year depending on whether the event is occurring near where they live.

The motivation to cosplay varies in most cosplayers, however, the major drive for most cosplayers is the identity of the character of the cosplay itself. They are a devoted and unapologetic fan of whichever character they are looking to emulate. Their love for the character, whether it's someone from a movie franchise or an animated show, is so great that they want to express it by 'becoming' the individual for a day. The feeling cosplayers have after donning a character's costume and mimicking their personality is a strong motivation for the act of cosplaying. One person said, "When I'm dressed as a hero I feel heroic. When I'm dressed as a villain I feel nefarious. It's a way to be something larger than me for a day without completely exhausting myself." (Appendix D, Interviewee 6). Another said, "I tend to choose very confident and often cheerful characters to cosplay, and putting myself in their shoes literally makes me more outgoing and friendly myself." (Appendix D, Interviewee 4) An introverted person can become social if their character is. Someone who is usually in a gloomy mood can forget negative feelings and be elated for a few hours. In many ways, cosplaying gives these people confidence and makes them do things they normally would hesitate to.

For many cosplayers, building and creating a costume was the major drive. A lot of them were artists and designers, who simply just loved bringing their character to life

through their work. They put in a lot of hours and money in their costume and felt a great sense of pride and achievement when they completed their work.

Frustrations

Our study also shed light on many of the frustrations and constraints faced by cosplayers. Financial constraints are a major point of concern for individuals in the cosplay community. A lot of them did cosplay as a hobby and usually did not have much money to spend on costumes. Others did it professionally or had jobs that could sustain their cosplay habits financially. Another frustration for this community is time, as many had to juggle other aspects of their life. Cosplayers must balance a job, family and friends with their cosplay and as a result many cosplayers cannot spend as much time on their cosplay as they'd like. Traveling to conventions is another frustration for this community. Conventions occur in major cities and travelling to them while carrying their equipment and props is often a difficult task. Cosplayers are also dissatisfied by the lack of accessible material and garments for building their costumes and props. When they order their props and fabrics online they do not have a chance to view them in person and when they arrive they do not meet their needs and expectations.

Besides the physical frustrations faced by cosplayers, there are some that were psychological in nature. Many cosplayers spoke of feeling unappreciated after putting so much effort into their costume and makeup. Some mentioned how people can view an individual's cosplay as not up to their standards and therefore look down on their costume. There is a divide amongst cosplayers as whether cosplay is for pure fan appreciation of an idolized character, or for attention. Some cosplayers believe that in

recent years new community members are cosplaying for commercial reasons of vanity and narcissism.

Lifestyle & Goals

In contrast to some stereotypes, most of our respondents appeared to be older. Although the majority of them are in their early twenties, it's possible to say that cosplay is practiced by people of all different ages and backgrounds. The oldest interviewee is 65 years old and cosplays with his 68 year old wife. Many of the other respondents are university students or individuals working low-paid jobs (their income is below the national average). This creates a struggle for cosplayers to find enough time and money for cosplay. Due to their financial concerns, cosplayers have simple expectations for life. They often express very human goals such as to having a stable, happy and healthy life with the ability to pay their bills. At the same time some looked to have career achievements later in life.

The interviewees tend to participate in several cosplay communities and attend different conferences throughout the year. Our research showed that cosplayers will occasionally coordinate their efforts with other cosplayers to create group cosplay for comic-cons. Through Facebook and Instagram, cosplayers from across the country can plan and create a group cosplay without being in the same city. For most cosplayers being able to attend a comic-con and share their creations provides a sense of community and achievement. In recent years, cosplayers have loved participating in photo shoots with their creations, which they can share through social media with other

cosplayers. Being able to interact and share their Instagram accounts at comic-cons helps cosplayers achieve a goal of gaining more followers.

Misconceptions

Our in-depth interviews found that other people's misconceptions toward cosplay are often negative. People tend to link cosplay with nerds because they consider cosplayers as individuals who "live in our parent's basements and are not part of regular society," (Appendix D, Interviewee 7). However, this is definitely not the case since cosplayers come from all walks of life and do have decent jobs, including theatre artists and teachers (see Appendix B). Moreover, cosplaying is not an activity exclusively for the young, but something for people who have passion regardless of their age. Another negative misconception is the association between cosplay and sex or porn. This results from the fact that some costumes are revealing, especially when it comes to women. People will take photos and touch female cosplayers without consent due to this association. A revealing cosplay doesn't automatically give others a free pass to take pictures or make physical contact without permission or respect. In fact, cosplaying is about showing appreciation for the character and trying to resemble the look of their costume. It is not about showing off body figures.

Through the observation and responses of interviewees, we have discovered a change in how the public views cosplay. In the past, the public used to hold a skeptical and biased attitude towards cosplayers. They regarded them as weirdos because they didn't understand this subculture or appreciate their creativity. In recent years, people have become more open-minded and the previous negative perspective has altered as

people start to think of cosplay as an ordinary hobby. In one of the interviews, the person talked about how her co-workers feel proud of her cosplay ability and tell her not to waste time working in a candy factory (Appendix D, Interviewee 6). Many cosplayers attribute this change of mind to the increase in public favor towards superhero and franchise films such as Marvel's the *Avengers*.

Reflection

Our initial conception that cosplayers are “super-fans of books, movies and television shows who show their love of a series through creative means” seems to be pretty accurate. However, the cosplay community appears to chose characters to cosplay based on their ability to identify with a specific character. If a female cosplayer really likes Loki's character (from the movie *Thor*) due to her ability to identify with his personality then she will construct a female cosplay inspired by his costume. For them it is about expressing their love of the character regardless of if the character's gender or body type reflects their own. Through this research we have learned that cosplayers may be introverted individuals who only become social when they step into their cosplay. This shows the diversity of the subculture in terms of personality and psychological makeup. Originally we believed that cosplaying was more of an individual pastime for younger individuals. However, it appears that families and the old and young all participate in the act of cosplaying. We also believed that cosplayers were enjoying purchasing wigs and stage makeup in order to be as accurate as possible with their costumes. Through our interviews, individuals have expressed an extreme dislike for the way a wig looks and feels. They will only use wigs out of necessity when they

cannot alter their own hair to match the character's image. Finally we believed there were certain entities already beginning to target cosplayers. In reality it is often the cosplayer seeking out character accurate fabrics, makeup and props from various sources.

Marketing Implications

The cosplaying community is an extremely diverse community made up of individuals varying in age, occupation and income level. Cosplaying can be a family, individual or friend activity in which those of any age can be involved. The diverse makeup of the cosplaying community means that the best way for marketers to reach cosplayers is through targeted advertisements. The members of this culture use various materials when crafting their cosplays. This means that marketers from different product categories have the opportunity to target this group.

This subculture is extremely loyal to their favorite franchise and this loyalty extends into other aspects of their life. If marketers create a way for consumers to identify with their products they may be able to create lasting brand loyalty. A key way marketers can accomplish this is by telling the cosplay community that they appreciate their work and passion for creativity. When marketers create brand loyalty they create a lasting relationship with their consumer. Our research has show that a cosplayer's loyalty to their franchise is forever, if marketers can identify with this group the subculture's loyalty to their brand should also be lasting. The majority of this group are millennials, they appreciate transparency and honesty. The earlier a brand can market to this group, the more genuine they will appear. With the increase in popularity of

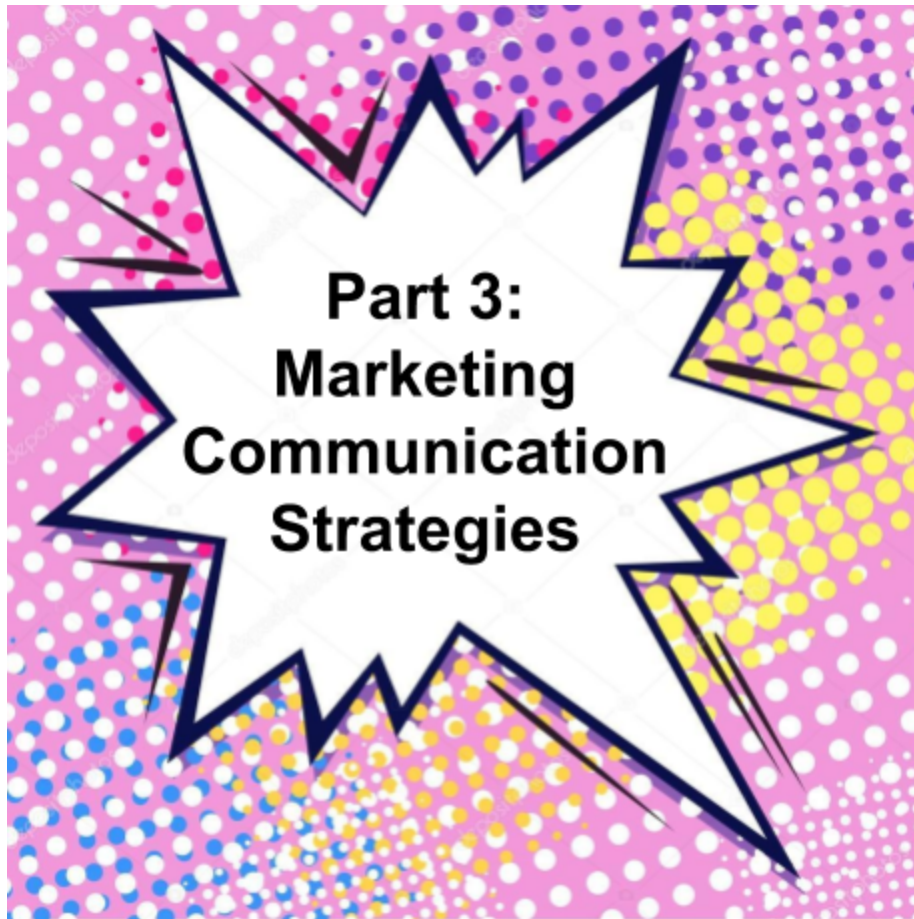
superhero and franchise movies, this subculture is growing. Beginning a relationship with this subculture before other marketers catch on will endear a brand to this group, which will result in greater profits for the brand.

Brand Choice

Many of our interviewees expressed a need to physically feel, see and touch fabric and materials before purchasing for their cosplay. They want to determine if these fabrics will lay or move like the fabrics of their character. They want their cosplays to resemble their character's costume in every way possible. Many will spend lots of time and effort searching for the perfect fabric to recreate their dream cosplay. Many did not trust the accuracy of online photos or vendors to deliver on their cosplaying needs. In fact, most of these individuals purchased their materials at regular craft stores like Joann's.

Joann's has one of the best selection of fabrics and has already begun developing a section specifically for cosplay fabrics. Many of our interviewees expressed their interest for shopping at Joann's for their cosplay fabric needs. They have a friendly staff who assists cosplayers with finding fabric, patterns and other crafting related questions. However, the store itself does not target cosplayers in their advertisements. They still focus on the general crafter and could capitalize on their growing relationship with cosplayers. We are selecting Joann's as our brand in order to help this store connect with more cosplayers and become more notable in the cosplay community. We will be offering suggestions of items to add to their current inventory which will appeal to cosplayers and providing the company with a marketing campaign

tailored to the cosplay community's needs. We want to help Joann's gain traction in the community as the go-to store for all of your cosplaying needs.



**Part 3:
Marketing
Communication
Strategies**

Creative Strategies

Advertising Objectives:

#1: For the Joann's brand to connect with more cosplayers and become more notable in the cosplay community.

#2: To make Joann's known as the Cosplay Command Center

#3: To boost brand loyalty by partnering with prominent cosplayers

Creative ideas of brand:

In order to accomplish these advertising objectives we suggest that Joann's begins by compiling a panel of prominent cosplayers. This panel will advise the brand on what materials and items they believe would be beneficial to add to store inventory for cosplayers. Adding materials, such as worbla, which Joann's currently does not supply will make the shopping experience easier for cosplayers. This panel can also participate in video advertisements for social media, explaining the benefits of shopping at Joann's. We suggest in addition to the advertising campaign that Joann's begins to insert itself into cosplay community activities. This would mean sponsoring comic-cons and festivals in order to get brand name exposure with the community.

Positioning Strategy:

Joann's is known as the fabric and craft store. We suggest they build upon this solid foundation and create an advertising campaign directed at cosplayers entitled the "cosplay command center". Sci-fi is one of the most popular genres among cosplayers. In this genre the command center is the hub of the ship or organization. Similar to this ship, Joann's will have various materials, tools and knowledgeable personnel in one

central location. We want to position Joann's as the main center for the cosplay community.

Functional, emotional, or self expressive benefits we want to deliver in the ad:

With the idea of the "cosplay command center" we want to create a sense of community between Joann's and cosplayers. Our staff is known for being helpful and friendly, we want to expand this feeling to our cosplay consumer. Educating our salesforce in cosplay materials and what this consumer is looking for in a shopping experience will create a more personal touch to their visit. The idea is that the consumer will believe Joann's is invested in helping them pursue their passion for cosplay. This support will build a loyal customer base for Joann's to tap into.

Executional styles/message tactics:

The first step in getting the word out to cosplayers is to persuade them that Joann's has customized the cosplay shopping experience to meet their needs. This can be done through testimonial advertisements. For these testimonials we would like to feature prominent cosplayers from the cosplay community. These are individuals whom the community looks up to and admires for their skills as cosplayers. By partnering with these individuals our target market will be able to better identify with the Joann's brand. After establishing a connection we want to demonstrate to the consumer that our brand can fulfill their needs. We can partner with cosplay bloggers and sponsor "how-to-videos" using our store's products. Challenge the bloggers to create a beginner, intermediate and expert level cosplay using materials found in our stores. These videos will be launched simultaneously on the blogger's personal pages as well as to Joann's

Youtube page. This partnership can launch into product placement of the Joann brand name in future blogs and digital advertisements on prominent cosplayer's social media feeds. The final message tactic we want to address is the defining of our brand image. Joann's is known to most people as a great place to go for crafting needs. We want to develop an advertising plan which is adjacent to this image. This plan will focus on Joann's as the "cosplay command center" where all of an individual's cosplaying needs are at their fingertips. Joann's will be there encouraging cosplayers to take command of their craft and continue to create. We want Joann's to be the helping hand in every cosplayer's crafting process.

Media Mix

A concentrated media mix is the best marketing mix for Joann's to pursue when targeting the cosplay community. The cosplay community has a specific set of interests and a passion for creativity. However, their interest in film franchises sets them apart from Joann's typical target market. When choosing to target cosplayers Joann's must design a specific campaign which will appeal to the interests and needs of the cosplay community.

The cosplaying community is an extremely diverse community made up of individuals varying in age, occupation and income level. Cosplaying can be a family, individual or friend activity in which those of any age can be involved. The diverse makeup of the cosplaying community means that the best way for marketers to reach cosplayers is through targeted advertisements. Using tools such as Google analytics to discover which individuals would be most likely to be interested in cosplay would help

marketers determine where to place ads. Our interviewees used Facebook and Instagram most often when interacting with other cosplayers. A digital marketing campaign using Facebook, Instagram, website banners and Youtube ads would be most successful when targeting cosplayers. Another way to reach this community would be through comic-con sponsorship. Comic-cons are attended by thousands in the community and are a great way for a company to gain visibility and credibility with cosplayers. Whether through whole event sponsorship, free photo areas or simply setting up a booth with free items, Joann's participation in these events will boost brand awareness. Our research revealed that many cosplayers enjoy participating in photoshoots of their creations which they share with the community through their social media accounts. This subculture would be ideal for freelance photographers, videographers and studios to target when offering photo and video packages. Finally, the research showed that many who participate in cosplay are hindered by budget and time. This group would be more likely to use coupons offered by fabric stores and online outlets when looking for materials for their cosplay builds. Offering these incentives would be a key factor in gaining the loyalty of the cosplay community.

Visual:
Joann's Cosplay Command Center
Print Ad

A man dressed as Thor, with long blonde hair and a beard, is shown in a Joann's store. He is wearing his iconic red cape and black armor with gold accents. He is holding a power drill, which he is using to work on a piece of his costume. The background shows shelves stocked with various fabrics and materials. A large green starburst graphic with the text "TAKE COMMAND!" is overlaid on the right side of the image. There are also smaller green starburst graphics near the bottom right. A dark green banner at the bottom contains promotional text and the Joann's logo and website.

Take command of your cosplay.
Make your dreams a reality with the help of Joann's.
Stop by our stores to check out the latest in
cosplay fabrics and materials,
including Worbla and Foam.

JOANN
www.Joann.com

JOANN's "Your Cosplay Command Center"

Visual:
Joann's Cosplay Command Center
Social Media Native Ad



socialcostumes
Dragon*Con >



311 likes

socialcostumes ● || Game over... || ●

was able to take Rey to the darkside with the help of @joann's new stock, thanks guys!



#rey #reysolo #reyskywalker #reykenobi #starwars
#starwarscosplay #darkrey #sithrey #lightsaber #sith
#darkside #firstorder #dragoncon #dragoncon2017
#cosplay #cosplayer #daisyridley

View all 11 comments

socialcostumes @brittlabyrd oh stop! You are the queen!



socialcostumes @owl_feathers thank you sarah!

SEPTEMBER 7

Verbal:
 Joann's Cosplay Command Center
 :60 second spot
 Pandora

Sound Elements	Voice
<p>SFX: Superhero flying in and landing his hammer. Low hero music in background</p> <p>SFX: Computer typing and ding!</p> <p>SFX: smashing hammer and epic hero music increases in volume</p>	<p>“Thor” VO (smooth and confident): Hello ladies, Sean here. You may say doesn't that sound like Thor? I'd say I wish I was that beautiful creature. Sadly instead of saving galaxies I am saving dinner reservations.</p> <p>“Thor” VO: Now you don't get confused for Thor without looking the part. (slight pause) How do I get to look this good? Well I visit my friends at Joann's. They've got more than just fabric, worbla, foam, paints you name it they've got it. And they have a skilled crew waiting to help you with your next cosplay.</p> <p>“Thor” VO: From beginners to experts, you can achieve greatness with your next cosplay with the help of Joann's....Your cosplay command center.</p>

Conclusion

When our group began researching the cosplay community we believed that cosplayers were nerds and super-fans of books, movies and television who show their love through creative means. Through our literary research, in-depth interviews and observation we discovered a unique and diverse group of individuals. These cosplayers showcase their creative talent and passion for their franchise through their creations. By participating in comic-cons and online fan groups, this group has grown into a global subculture. This group is supportive of their members because they believe that creating a cosplay should not be limited by gender or body types. Instead, showcasing one's love of a character through the crafting of a cosplay is a respected pastime. This means cosplayers can be men or women, young and old. With the growing popularity of superhero and comic movies, the cosplay community is growing in strength.

The cosplay community is characterized by their loyalty to their franchises which is a trait that can be translated into potential for marketers. A loyal consumer can be a valuable asset for a company. The growing size of the cosplay community means that marketers who can recognize this group's potential will be the first to capitalize on profits. This group is more likely to trust a brand which approaches them early on and displays an interest in their passion for cosplay.

When choosing a brand for this project we looked to the process cosplayers went through when creating their pieces. The most important part of this process was picking out fabric which closely resembled that of the character they were looking to portray. Cosplayers wore their creations for many hours at comic-cons and during photoshoots,

so these fabrics must also be comfortable. The importance of this initial stage in the cosplaying process led us to choose Joann's as our focal brand. In fact, many cosplayers already have positive shopping experiences at Joann's due to their friendly staff and wide selection of fabrics.

After studying this subculture our group has realized the importance of belonging to a small community. These subcultures allow individuals to find a sense of community in a place which they can be themselves. For cosplayers they are not seen as weird or different by their subculture members. This sense of community and loyalty to one another can be translated into other habits of their lifestyle. If marketers can find ways to connect honestly with subcultures, they can find new loyal consumer bases with whom they can build lasting relationships.

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Appendix A

In-Depth Interview Questions:

Please answer each question with as much detail and any personal examples as you can.

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.
2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?
3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?
4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?
5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?
6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?
7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?
8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?
9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?
10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?
11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?
12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.
13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?
14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?
2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?
3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.
4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.
5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?
2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?
3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?
4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?
 - a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?
 - b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?
5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

Part 4:

1. How old are you?
2. What do you do as a full time job?
3. What is your average income level?
4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?
5. What gender do you identify with?
6. What is your ethnicity?

Appendix B:

Demographic Profile

Informant	Age	Full-time job	Average Income Level	Marital Status	Gender	Ethnicity
1	24	Part-time comics store	X (not enough)	Dating	Male	White
2	30	Freelance theater artist	\$7-12K/year	Dating	Female	White
3	65	High Pressure boiler operator	<\$50K/year	Married	Male	White
4	23	Consulting agent	80,000/year	Single	Female	White
5	21	Teacher & costumer	X	Dating	Female	Mixed
6	32	Candy factory line leader	\$400/week	Dating	Female	White
7	25	Office manager at real estate company	\$40K/year	Single	Female	Asian
8	26	Restaurant manager	X	Divorced	Male	Hispanic
9	23	Claims representative	\$40K/year	Single	Male	White
10	22	Full-time Student (Vet in the future)	X	Single	Female	Asian
11	24	Full-time student	X	Single	Female	Asian
12	21	Full-time student	X	Single	Female	Asian

Appendix C:

Observation at Rhode Island Comic Con:

I attended this event on a cold and windy Saturday. Despite the weather conditions thousands waited outside the convention center in the cold waiting to go in. Once the doors opened it took some individuals over an hour to enter the building. Regardless of the weather the cosplayers were in full costume and excited to participate in the second day of the three day con. During this event I attended a photo session with a celebrity. I paid \$80 to take a photo with Elijah Wood and while in line talked to cosplayers. It appears that most of these individuals had purchased multiple photo sessions this weekend for hundreds of dollars to take a photo with their favorite celebrities. However, when I walked into the session I had all of 30 seconds to talk with Elijah Wood before I was rushed out the door. These sessions with celebrities tend to be cattle calls, where the con attempts to get as many fans through the door as possible within a certain timeframe.

The mini-event I chose to attend was Sci-Fi Speed Dating. In this session I was able to meet 24 gentlemen of the cosplaying community. Through short two minute sessions I was able to observe that these men varied in personalities from extremely shy to super fans of different franchises. Many of the men expressed their interest in growing their hair and facial hair to match their character in lieu of using wigs. They also expressed interest in Marvel, Star Wars and video games as some of their inspirational genres.

Overall throughout the course of the day here were some general observations which I made:

- Cosplayers were excited to see cosplays which they recognized and often asked to take photos with these individuals.
- There were many families and young couples with babies.
- Hundreds of people were waiting in lines for photograph and autograph sessions with celebrities.
- There were themed free photo areas such as Star Wars, Pirates, Goonies, Scooby Doo and Back to the Future. Individuals were taking photos with the DeLorean, Storm troopers, R2-D2, and masked pirates. They were asked to consider giving a donation to charity but other than that these areas were free (but sponsored by others).
- There were more guys than girls interested in Speed Dating and the men were willing to pay \$20.
- People were buying a lot of franchise memorabilia or props.
- People were also interested in the artist alleyway which is where artists create images, accessories and toys inspired by favorite franchises.
- There were three booths set up where you can pay a discounted rate to get a franchise inspired tattoo
- The event had one main sponsor, Cardis, a mattress store in the Providence area.
- Cosplayers 21 and up were attending an after party where you can hang out and drink with other cosplayers and sometimes a celebrity or two.
- Most people seemed to spend the whole day (10am-7pm) enjoying the con and getting to know one another

- Group or couple cosplays were popular. There was a group dressed like the characters from Toy Story.
- People of all ages were at the comic-con
- The most popular cosplays were superheroes, everyone seemed to be a superhero.
- There were quite a few gender-bent cosplays (female versions of male characters).

Appendix D:

Transcripts

Interviewee 1:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I've done TV, book, modern military, and videogame cosplay. For TV, I've done the 4th Doctor from Doctor Who. That involved buying the replica scarf, obtaining a tweed coat from my grandfather, and getting some vintage-looking shirts and slacks. I also did the 11th Doctor. My friend bought me the replica coat, and I bought a vest, boots, a fez, and bowtie. I also repainted the replica sonic screwdriver. For book, I cosplayed Harry Dresden, from The Dresden Files. That was easy; black trench coat, black stetson, a pentagram necklace, and a stick for a "staff". I also made his "shield bracelet", out of a leather strap and some metal brads. For Modern Military, I have a huge amount of Russian MilSurp gear, which I just kinda threw together. For Video Games, I've done a Diamond Dog Soldier from MGSV, Big Boss from MGS: Peace Walker, and a Gurlukovich Mercenary from MGS2. The Diamond Dog was just OD Green BDUs, a balaclava, a cheap holster, black brassards, and a pair of Diamond Dog patches. Big Boss involved Tiger Stripe BDUs, purchasing a SPIE/STABO harness, tracking down a Bianchi M12 Holster for an M9 pistol, an UnderArmour shirt, a custom leather eyepatch, making a bandana, and buying OD Green "jungle boots" along with an MSF Patch and a FOX Patch. I also made a replica of The Patriot, out of a cheap M16A5 replica, and double-drum mag from another airsoft gun. The Gurlukovich Soldier involved dying a set of "urban camo" BDUs, an old Soviet Tanker helmet which my friend gave me, a different style of balaclava, a pair of Russian VDV Paratrooper patches, a double-riveted black belt, tracking down a Soviet RD-54 backpack, a leather Makarov holster, a pair of jackboots which I already had, and a cheap replica AK74, which I painted. For my Elite Knight/Oscar Of Astora cosplay, from Dark Souls, I bought almost everything from Medieval Collectibles, save the helmet, which I got off of Amazon. The only custom part is the tabard, which my girlfriend sewed, and I painted. I also bought Cold Steel training weapons; a Hand-and-a-half sword, parrying dagger, and buckler, which I leather-wrapped the handle of.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

My favorite was probably Big Boss, because I can do his voice decently well, and it's always a hit at conventions.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

I think I was 14 when I did a really garbage cosplay of Sasori from Naruto. Let's not talk about that.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I cosplay because I really don't like myself, and if I can be someone else for a little while, I really enjoy that.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

Pretty good.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Usually pretty hot. None of my outfits are particularly heat-efficient

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

I cosplay what catches my eye, for whatever reason. If a character looks really cool, then that's a bonus.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

Too much. My simpler ones, maybe \$100-\$200? My Dark Souls armor, being actual steel, set me back about \$1300.

9. How much time do you spend on each costume on average?

Few months, on-and-off.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

I'll learn almost everything I can about a character before moving forward on an outfit.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I usually buy parts.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Laziness.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

If I'm doing a military cosplay and a single part is either very rare or very expensive.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

I've gotten really good reactions from the public. When I'm in my Big Boss outfit, a bunch of people quoted Metal Gear to me, a couple old people thanked me for my service, and I politely corrected them, and one woman accused me of stealing valor. And as for public perception, as a whole, I think it's not really overall good or bad. Just kinda something that happens.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

Can't think of any, at the moment.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I really love prop weapons, because weapon design and history are in my wheelhouse. I can usually score cheap ones of Amazon or Evike.com.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

Joann's is a decent store for fabric, because the prices are pretty fair, and they usually have good sales. For paint and other stuff, Michael's is good, because there's always good coupons.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I really dig Anime Boston, because the cosplay scene is great, and most of my cosplay friends, all over the country, come down to attend. I love the Metal Gear photoshoots, even got my girlfriend in on one.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I went to Boston Comic-Con last year, and was kinda underwhelmed. I'm not big on comics, and the cosplay scene was kinda meh. However, the Northeast Comic-Con And Collectibles Extravaganza in Hanover was fun, because I'm really into collectibles.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?
Northeast Comic-Con.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

That I don't die painfully.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Well, I need to pay rent, and cosplay costs money, so that's a pretty major one right there.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

Not really. I try to avoid hobby communities, in general.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

- a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information? b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?**

4Chan's cosplay board, Tumblr, and Facebook.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I'm either doing photography, making/painting model kits, spending time with my girlfriend/friends, or playing videogames.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I work part-time at the Newbury Comics in Braintree, as a Sales Associate

3. What is your average income level?

Not enough.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Dating

5. What gender do you identify with?

Male, unless I'm in drag at a club or something

6. What is your ethnicity?

White; Half-Greek, equal parts Irish, Polish, and Cuban.

Interviewee 2:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I'm not sure what you mean when you say "cosplay genre." If you mean characters from movies, tv shows, comics, and books, then yes to all of the above. If you mean cross-play dressing as a character that's the opposite gender as you or taking an existing character and putting your own spin on it, then also yes.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

I think my favourite might be Darth Maul from "Star Wars" because he's not done very often and almost no one realizes I'm a girl until they talk to me. Unfortunately, he also takes the longest to put on, especially the makeup, which I do myself. As a secondary favourite I'd have to say Giselle from "Enchanted" because I made the whole thing myself from scratch, so there's pride there.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

You know, I'm not sure. I know I dressed as the Blue Fairy from "Pinocchio" and a Ravenclaw version of Hermione when I was younger, but I didn't know what cosplay was until 2005. My first cosplay knowing what I was doing was Kitty Pryde from the "X-Men Evolution" tv-show.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I cosplay to show my appreciation for the character; usually some combination of their personality and design.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

I think it's really fun. I get a thrill anytime someone recognizes the character because that means I did well.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Often tired. Some costumes can be heavy, the footwear can be uncomfortable for long periods, and wigs can get itchy. Also if you're wearing makeup you have to be really careful not to touch your face. Also sometimes I have to squint because my contacts are the wrong prescription and I don't always want to be constantly taking my glasses off for pictures.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

It has a lot to do with the personality of the character. I also look to see how feasible it would be to recreate them. I try not to pick anyone who wears something I don't think I can pull off. And if they happen to look kinda vaguely like me or wear glasses, all the better.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

There's a variance. Jessica Jones I spent a dollar on getting fingerless gloves since I already owned everything else. Giselle, however, I built completely from scratch and she ended up costing me about \$300.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

This really varies. For example Jessica Jones I realized I owned all the pieces and literally pulled her out of my closet, so like all of 20 min? However, Giselle I had to hunt for the right fabrics and learn as I went, so she took me a couple months to put together. It really depends on the specific character.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

A bit. Sometimes this is only a few minutes just searching the internet until I find what I need. Other times I'm having to snap screenshots myself and then scouring the web to see if someone saw the costume in a museum and managed to snap a pic of it from the back.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I do it two ways. The first is what I call “closet cosplay” where you get as close as you can using pieces you find in Goodwill or something, and then modifying from there (as needed). The other is making it from scratch myself. I’ve never commissioned something from someone, if that’s what you’re asking.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

I am limited by my own skills, the space I have to work in, and mostly by money. At the moment I am having a hard enough time paying for my share of the rent, so making more cosplays is a low priority.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

The only thing is when people tell me I’m not cosplaying to their standards, which usually means I haven’t practiced acting, moving, or talking like the character. I am not trying to be the character when I cosplay them, I’m just dressing like them as a means of showing my appreciation for that character or that show/movie/book/etc.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

I know a lot of people think it’s stupid or at the very least a huge waste of money. It doesn’t have to be if you choose wisely, and most people have cosplayed when it comes to Halloween. I just choose to do it other days of the year as well.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

The only one I can think of is some people think that you should only dress as your own gender or body-type. I don’t agree.

Part 2:

1. What’s your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I like capes. I’ve yet to make my own, though.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

When I lived in California, the LA Fashion District was the place to go, though I also frequented M&L Fabrics. Here in Boston the places that sell fabric are few and far between, so I generally end up buying online and hoping I get what I want.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I like going to conventions. Arisia and Anime Boston are the two I've been to out here, but I've been going to cons since I was 2 months old.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I've been to Boston Comic Con and it completely pales in comparison to San Diego Comic Con. Boston is more focused on the dealers and artists, while San Diego is mostly about the panels you can't get into and the industry booths.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

I'd prefer San Diego between the two, but it's way more expensive and stifling.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I hope to be a successful costume designer and have others cosplay my designs.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Working in theatre means working on weekends, which is when conventions are. I've been lucky if I can spend a day at a con these last few years. Also paying rent means less money to spend making costumes.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

I belong to some cosplay boards on Facebook, but that's about it.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?

Mainly Facebook

b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?

Facebook

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I read or watch Hulu or Netflix

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

30

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I wouldn't call my job full-time, but I'm a freelance theater artist

3. What is your average income level?

Maybe like 7-12K per year.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Living with my significant other

5. What gender do you identify with?

Female

6. What is your ethnicity?

White or Other depending on the way you want to categorize.

Interviewee 3:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

Television.....Dr Who, NCIS movies Han Solo

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

The original Dr Who, it seems to draw the best response.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

62

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I love the response from con goers and the creative side.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

Energized, happy

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Really good

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

I usually try to do characters that are somewhat physically similar to myself more from the viewpoint of age than stature though. I like characters who have personalities that I can grab and use to help with the play part if cosPlay. Like Han Solo's swagger.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

NA

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

On average I can spend months on a costume not because I am a craftsman but because I find pieces at Goodwill and thrift shops. As an example it took 2 months to find the boots for my Han Solo cosplay.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

Usually I download a picture from the Internet and use that as a guide. I do not go for screen accuracy. Many cosplayers do and that's great for them but what I want to do is walk into a con and have people say OMG it's the First Doctor or its Gibbs. The fabric doesn't have to be exact plus I embellish my cosplays. My first doctor wears a locket with the seal of Rasselon on. It an a picture of his granddaughter Susan on the inside.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I often find pieces and modify them.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Budget and distance. Some cons involve traveling far enough so a hotel is required. While I love cosplay it is a hobby and does involve some costs. If the car needs tires that comes first.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

Budget short falls but once I am at a con I have the best time.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

I have never had a negative response to my cosplaying. I work with a crew of men who hunt like football and stock car racing none of which I have ever had any interest in. Like a lot of folks I had to explain it to them and then show them pictures of myself and other con goers. Now they ask when the next con is. The popularity of The Star Wars, Marvel and DC films is something most people can relate to and while they may not go to a con or get into cosplay themselves they appreciate the creativity.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

I'm not sure about this but I think one misconception is that. Cosplayers are all young nerdy types. I'm 65 this month my wife is 68 there are older cosplayers out there and very young ones also. They come from all walks of life and all shapes and sizes so there is no one generic cosplayer.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I would have to say my favorite part is the little add ins that most folks don't even notice. For instance my NCIS id badges made by cobbling images off the net. My Dr Who psychic paper which has my picture with the information of the Doctor on it from the episode called Silence in the Library it is the Doctor's library card. The holster for my Han Solo was something I made. I found a video on YouTube and put one together.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

My favorite store for any cosplay parts is Goodwill. I live within a range of about six stores and you can't beat the prices.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I really enjoy the cosplay masquerade. Sometimes this is a contest and sometimes it's just a parade of cosplayers I love to get on stage in character and use a line from a show and here people's reaction to it.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I get to as many cons as I can from the small library cons to the bigger ones and the middle ones. I have cosplayed at kids events put on by groups like Catholic Charities and Kidabaloo here in Maine. Con icons are amazing I love seeing the creativity and the sharing that goes on. I go for a day or when the budget allows the whole weekend.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

LIWho it is a Doctor Who convention on Long Island. It is a 3 day event totally devoted to Dr Who. There are actors, script writers and props from the series. Lots of panels from the people who have worked on Dr Who and it is just my absolutely favorite con.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

Stay healthy

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Paying the bills

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

I belong to several groups. The Boston Whovians, the New Hampshire Whovians , the Maine Association of Cosplay Enthusiasts or MACE, Burning Skies Cosplay, LIWho Cosplayers, Over 30 Cosplayers and several more. I belong to these groups to see what other Cosplayers are doing with their cosplays.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?

What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?

Facebook is the format that works best for me distance limits attending meetings that these organizations may have unless they do a meet up at a Con. But thanks to Facebook I talk to Cosplayers all over the world.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I am a model railroader.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

65 this month

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I work in the engineering dept of a hospital maintaining the plant operations . I am a licensed High Pressure boiler operator.

3. What is your average income level?

Less that \$50,000

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Married 42 years and my wife cosplays with me.

5. What gender do you identify with?

I am a straight male. I don't want to sound condescending but really a person's gender identity is not important to me. I am more interested in are they a nice person. Cosplay accepts you as a cosplayer and does not discriminate because of how you identify with. I like cosplay for this reason . I went to my first con at age 62 and 90 percent of the Cosplayers were young enough to be my grandkids, they never thought twice about my age they just loved my cosplay. Cosplay is for Everyone.

6. What is your ethnicity?

Caucasian of Portuguese and Irish heritage.

Interviewee 4:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I've cosplayed a pretty wide range of characters. My favorite game/fandom in general to cosplay is League of Legends, since I love that art style. I also do a lot of Vocaloid and anime in general, and the occasional superhero.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

DJ Sona from League of Legends. I put a lot of work into it, especially into the helmet, and it actually lit up in time with the music I was playing just like her helmet does in the game. Even though I want to redo the costume since I know I could do better now, it was by far my best at the time that I made it, and frankly I looked awesome.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

18, the summer after I graduated high school.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I love to build things, and I always have. In high school I did prop making and costuming for my school's theater department, so it was only natural that I found a way to continue that hobby once I was an adult. Cosplaying is a great way to get out the creativity I don't always get to show in the normal 9-to-5 jobs, and also to then show off what I've made to an amazingly supportive community.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

It always puts me in a great mood. I tend to choose very confident and often cheerful characters to cosplay, and putting myself in their shoes literally makes me more outgoing and friendly myself.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

It really depends on the character. I'm finally getting better at designing cosplays with comfort in mind, so these days I usually feel pretty good. A lot of my early work was brittle and annoying to wear, though, so I'd often end the day feeling uncomfortable and frustrated.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

For the most part, I like to cosplay characters I identify with, but that don't require too much acting, so I like the aloof type. Usually this means characters that are flirtatious and frankly too confident for their own good.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

Probably too much. I don't like to think about that, and I'm lucky to have a career outside of cosplaying pays well enough that I don't really have to.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

It varies a LOT. Sometimes I choose something super simple that takes an hour to put together, and other times I'll spend multiple entire weekends on an outfit over the course of a few months. Most of my cosplays are probably around the 16 hours of work mark.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

Very. I like to know a character's history and personality inside and out. I also like to make sure know every single detail of their appearance. I don't always follow the exact canon appearance when making the outfits, but I do want to know it before putting my own creative vision on top.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

Except for my very first ever cosplay, I make my own. Sometimes this means I just buy all the pieces and adjust them as necessary, and sometimes I make them from scratch.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Not really, other than simply hours in the day. I'm paid well enough to support my hobby, and I'm aware that I have the privilege of being an able-bodied white woman, so I don't really face any sort of discrimination for my cosplays.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

The only thing I can think of is body paint. I refuse to do characters that involve painting my entire face or body a different color, because that stuff is so annoying to put on, maintain, and get off.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

Cosplay is getting more and more accepted these days. It used to have a reputation as something weird and maybe sexual, but when I arrived in the cosplay community in 2012 was right around when that kind of reputation was dissipating. I think some people still don't really understand it, but for the most part the reaction ranges from "oh, that's kinda cool" to full-on amazement.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

The biggest problem the cosplay community has is what started the "Cosplay is not consent" campaign. A lot of cosplays are fairly revealing and some people take it as an invitation to take photos, touch, and worse without consent. This is also just a problem in general western society (and many societies), but it seems to be exacerbated by the crazy colorful costumes. Our community is doing our best to fight back, though.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I like making swords and daggers. I have a really unique style when it comes to creating those. I also only use cardboard, tape, and paint, so it's really cheap, yet (in my opinion) comes out looking better than many weapons I see made from more expensive and "professional" material.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

Michael's, Joann's, and Harbor Freight all hold equal places in my heart. They're all useful for different parts of a cosplay, and very rarely let me down. However, if a friend informed me of a better price or quality material elsewhere, my loyalty wouldn't be strong enough to not check it out.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

Photoshoots, whether they're at conventions or other fan-held events. I've never really been one for costume contests or masquerades. I like working one-on-one with

photographers (or one-on-group, if I'm with friends) who have a vision and who can help me realize my vision, and will direct me accordingly.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

Yes! I usually don't go to all days of a convention, but I attend the entire day for the days I do. If I have a badge, I'll wander the expo halls, maybe check out a panel or two, and stop for casual photoshoots with friends or random photographers I run into. I also sometimes "ghost" cons, which is what my community calls attending a con without a badge. Ghosting basically means I hang out outside the convention center with friends and allow people to take pictures of my cosplay, without ever even trying to go inside. Both kinds of attending can be fun!

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Anime Expo holds a special place in my heart, because it was my first con back in 2012, and also the only con I went to each year up until about 2015. My current favorite is WonderCon, because it's just the right amount of attendees and craziness, and the Anaheim Convention Center is by far my favorite location.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I mainly just hope to support myself through life. I have a cute little house and I just bought a car, and I have a great support system of friends and family. I'm honestly already happy where I am, so my only goals are to continue improving in cosplay and in my career.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

The biggest constraint in my life is simply time. I don't have enough hours in the day to do everything I want! My job, which takes up most of my time, is also exactly what supports my hobbies, so it can't exactly be called a conflict. Maybe I just need to sleep even less...

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

I don't think I'm in any specific community, other than just the overarching west coast cosplay community. We're fairly tight-knit anyway, though!

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?

b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?

I use Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, as well as in person at conventions. I don't really use any other kind of media.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I play a lot of League of Legends, and sometimes other video games. I also watch a decent amount of TV (usually animated kids shows to unwind).

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

23 years old

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I'm a consulting analyst at a global consulting firm.

3. What is your average income level?

I have an 80k/year salary.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Single

5. What gender do you identify with?

Female

6. What is your ethnicity?

White

Interviewee 5:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

Disney Princesses Ariel, Belle, Moana, and TeFiti, Pirates of the Caribbean Elizabeth Swann, Carina Smyth, Marvel Black Widow,, Star Wars Rey, Leia, Padme, Jedi, Musical Theatre Cosette and Eponine Les Mis, Christine Daae Phantom of the Opera, Martha Jefferson 1776.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

Either Rey or Belle. They are both easy and comfortable for a long period of times so they are great for conventions!

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

I grew up performing in theatre so I was always dressed up in something. I did my first costumed event when I was 17 however.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I still don't really consider myself a cosplayer. I'm a costumer first and foremost, it's my profession. But the perk is I get to go to conventions and promote myself and my business while having fun! I love being able to work that way!

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

Well I'm part of the Star Wars clubs, specifically Rebel Legion and SaberGuild. There is a big difference to me when I'm doing things for the Star Wars clubs and when I'm doing it for my business. When I'm doing things for the clubs I stay pretty much in character, when I am in other costumes I'm more in my business state of mind.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Usually pretty exhausted! Getting up for conventions usually consists of getting up at

6am or

earlier to get makeup and hair done to get to the convention on time for opening. The rest of the weekend is pretty much a repeat of getting up way too early and getting back home or to the hotel way too late. It's very exhausting.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

For me it's the costume itself. The bigger, more difficult, or complex the costume is the more it catches my eye. I have a list of over 200 costumes I would like to make. When I get bored and commissions are down I attempt to make one.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

Oh gosh. Sometimes it takes years for me to actually finish a costume so it's impossible to remember over all. For instance my Scavenger Rey costume from The Force Awakens has been updated at least ten times now and if I count all of the props I've bought for it it's probably about \$600 to \$700 in now. The boots were \$200 alone but that's accuracy for you. If I wanted to make it her full Scavenger outfit seen at the beginning of the film that could be up to \$700 more on top of that. Over all I never spend that much on costumes normally. I would say the average is \$200.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

That's even harder to estimate. I go back and forth between costumes all day long. I am ADD so my mind rarely stays on one project for very long. I'd say anywhere between one day and six months. That's not counting updates like I said before.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

I would say, if it isn't for the Star Wars Clubs, it's about a day or two. The Star Wars Clubs have a standard to accuracy that you have to meet to be able to use it for the clubs. Of course Disney Princesses don't have that! Ha! So it takes a lot less time to plan for those.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I make them myself. Every once in awhile I will model for my friends. Te Fiti was done by the wonderful and extremely talented Adria Renee, and Ballgown Belle and Moana way borrowed for shoots from the lovely Joanna Bert.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Oh yes! I don't have an embroidery machine so that limits what I can do because a lot of the costumes I want to make consists of some embroidery. I'm trying to save for an embroidery machine now. Once I have one I will be able to make so much more!

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

We all do. The frustrations of not knowing if you will get something done in time or when something doesn't and then you don't know what to wear. Half doing something for yourself and wearing it and then it's uncomfortable and doesn't look the way you want it to. I mean the list is endless.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

How other people perceive. Goodness. I don't know. When I was younger it was only for geeks and nerds. I feel like within the last ten years it has become far more accepted in "regular" society.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

Everything I said previously and that we are people that live in our parents basements, don't have jobs, and don't live in the real world. I'm a teacher on top of being a costumer. I'm very involved with charity organizations and my church. I do live in the real world and I have a job. But yes, ha, I do live with my parents.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

Create. I buy props but I wish I knew how to make my own.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to?

Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I go to Joanns and the LA fashion district. There are also little hole in the wall stores all over southern California that I go to. I'm not very loyal to one specifically at all!

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I got to participate as a model in the Her Universe Fashion Show this year at San Diego Comic Con. Being able to work with Adria Renee who designed and made the gown I wore was an amazing experience and I would love to do it again!! I met my boyfriend at a convention this year and we bonded over the convention season. So you could say that this culture means a lot to me!

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I do! I attended three ComicCons and five other conventions this year.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

I love WonderCon. Out of all the conventions I did this year WonderCon and Star Wars Celebration were my favorites.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

My overall I'd love to have a family and be a mom. That's my long term plan because I will still be able to do what I do now and I love what I do now.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying?

How?

I'm very fortunate that I haven't had anything really conflict with it but that mostly has to do with my occupation.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

It is a costuming / charity club but Rebel Legion and SaberGuild.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?

Photoshoots.

b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?

Instagram, Facebook, and Tumblr are my main social media outlets.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I go to Disneyland with friends. That's all I really have time for with all of the costume work I do during the week.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

21

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I'm a teacher and a costumer.

3. What is your average income level?

I don't tell people this information.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

In a relationship.

5. What gender do you identify with?

Female

6. What is your ethnicity?

Mixed race.

Interviewee 6:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I have mostly done comic book characters, but also some anime.

The comic book characters I have done are several versions of Thor, Lady Thor, a woman Magneto, Scarlet Witch, and Angela of Asgard notably. All of which come from Marvel Comics. I recently did my first cosplay from DC Comics, which was the cinematic Wonder Woman cosplay. From anime I have done less, but they make up a much simpler and casual cosplay for me. So I have done several versions of the character

Trunks from Dragonball Z, Goku from Dragonball Z, Sailor Moon, an armored Charizard -from Pokemon- and recently Gaara from Naruto Shippuden. I haven't done much of the way of Video Games yet, and I certainly want to do more, like movies such as Star Wars. I have done a Legolas from Lord of the Rings, which counts as a movie I suppose. Or a book? So many genres overlap.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

My favorite cosplay is difficult to pinpoint because every new cosplay is my favorite for a while. I guess I'm going to say my Armored Charizard is my favorite simply because she is my own original design. So while she tested my skills and was a challenge, every design element was my own fault. So I had no one to hate but myself. But seeing my own work of imagination come to life filled me with such a sense of accomplishment, to this day I really admire her. I don't wear her as often as I would like, but she looks fabulous on my mannequin in my crafting room.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

Well, funnily, I have only been cosplaying for four years. So I was *cough* twenty seven *cough* the first time I attended a convention in costume. Prior to attending conventions, however, I would wear costumes to movie midnight premieres. Star Wars. X-men. Harry Potter. I would dress up like the characters, hang out in line at the theater, and see the movie at midnight to be "the first". It's how I got into cosplay. While dressed as an Elf to see The Hobbit, I met a cosplayer who invited me to a con. I didn't know what they were really, so I agreed. Life changed.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

Why I cosplay is the same reason I was that "weirdo" at the movie theater dressed up to see the Star Wars prequels. I'm just a massive huge unrelenting unapologetic nerd who doesn't care if I look silly on the bus ride there, to emulate the characters I love -even for a moment meld into them and be them for a few short hours- is my escape. I'm powerful and strong and courageous when I'm that character. And going to the theater -and now the conventions- is a way of surrounding myself with likeminded people. People who also REALLY love Star Wars and take it as a matter of dedication to dress up like Qui Gon Jinn as a 14 year old girl. Haha.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

I'm an extremely introverted person. Right now I'm home alone, watching Naruto, looking up cosplay references for my next build, with a glass of blue raspberry vodka, with absolutely no desire to be around anyone else. But when I'm in costume I'm transformed into a social butterfly. I'm talking to strangers. I'm posing for photos. I'm having whole conversations about the extended universe of a particular fandom and debating what is or isn't "official canon". When I'm dressed as a hero I FEEL heroic.

When I'm dressed as a villain I feel nefarious. It's a way to be something larger than me for a day without completely exhausting myself.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Physically? Well, not so good to be completely honest. I have anxiety, and it is heightened by the proximity of so many people, so I'm low key having an anxiety attack for the whole weekend. But I also have a number of invisible illnesses that make day-to-day living hard, that are compounded by my anxiety of a convention weekend and not in any way helped by wearing corsets and high heels and a wig giving me a headache. I started doing more "casual" cosplays to be able to slot them in-between my larger more uncomfortable armors, to try and alleviate my physical pain. I think this is why I gravitate towards such strong characters to cosplay. They give me strength when in reality I am quite frail.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

I have a personal rule about cosplay. I only cosplay someone I love. This takes money. This takes time. I can't waste such finite things on something I don't have a deep passion for. The qualities of that character can be all over the board. Are they evil and yet misunderstood? Are they heroic but arrogant? I'm drawn to many different types of characters. It's usually their passion, resolve, and/or courage that really drives a character home for me. I don't limit myself to who I look like or what "body type" I can match, but I won't lie and say it isn't somewhat of a factor in my decisions. If I know in the finished product I will strongly resemble a character verses me making a great costume but not really fitting the role, the first will likely win out when pinching my pennies.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

I'm not sure what an average person spends on a cosplay, but I always feel like I spend too much. I would say at least \$500. But when you break it down, \$80 on worbla, \$120 on fabric, had to buy a wig for \$60, shoes for \$40, zippers, thread, interfacing, snaps Velcro, super glue, primer, sand paper, new paint brushes, sheets of foam, clear coat, LED components, elastic, hot glue sticks, make up....you reach a number you don't want to discuss really quickly. I do my best to stay on a budget. I buy things over a long period of time. I attempt to keep a stockpile of supplies bought with coupons or while on sale so I have them "for the next project" but this is why commissioning someone costs so much. They have to account for the cost of every little item they use. And when you see that number, you will be shocked.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

I'm a procrastinator master. I work so infrequently on my cosplays that it takes me half a year to do what many cosplayers do in a weekend. Partially this is due to how I stretch my budget. Bought the fabric this week but the zipper elastic and thread? Probably buy those a month from now. I also have severe depression. So sometimes I just wanna sleep and exist and just can't will myself to work. But, I have been known to start and finish a cosplay in a weekend to wear it to a con that Saturday, so miracles do happen and apparently my ass can move with the right motivation or panic inducing time constraints.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

This is what I fill my "down time" with when working on a cosplay for six months. I look for every reference I can possibly get my hands on. Is the character in a movie? Bet your tushy I'm watching that movie 15 times to see every angle. And since I only cosplay characters whom I love, I certainly know my ins and outs of that character. I currently have purple hair because of my love of Trunks from DBZ. I just live a Trunks appreciation lifestyle. So the actual measure of time is difficult to pinpoint. But "every waking moment" sounds to me to be in the ballpark.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I have yet to ever commission any cosplays from anyone. But I recently just got an amazing prop from CoreGeekCreations of his Sword of Athena from the Justice League movie. I get to paint that baby up and show her off and I'm VERY excited to credit him in every photo because it's a brilliant piece built with such dedication and skill. But outside of that, I have actually made every last cosplay of mine. I can't even think of any that have any significant store bought elements. I really do just love the act of creating my own cosplays.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Constraints. Oh man. This could be a long list. My health is a huge factor. I have Crohn's Disease, Graves Disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, and I'm bipolar. So working around how my body and mind feels is a HUGE factor when it comes to me being able to cosplay. Money is the second biggest thing. I work full time. I make just a smidgen over minimum wage. But I have bills to pay. Doctors to see. Adulting expenses. So getting the money together to make a new cosplay is what leads to me making a six month build out of a five day project. Cosplaying as in just making the costumes is only limited by those two things really. Attending conventions, that's health time and money. Travel expense. Hotel expense. Time taken off work. Food expense. Shipping costumes and props expense. I can make a hundred costumes for the cost of me visiting a single con to show off my work. That is the hardest part. I could make a new costume a month,

but still only be able to attend three conventions a year, because, well, in this economy??

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

Well, not really? I guess the biggest thing that gets me is I hate wigs, and that's a huge part of cosplaying. I don't like styling wigs, traveling with wigs, putting on wigs, cleaning wigs, storing wigs. I just really effing hate wigs. I have very very thick hair that is down to my butt. It's a lot of work to get all this up in a wig cap and under a wig, to then just spend a day with a progressively worsening headache. I guess that would be it. Wigs. Gosh darn I hate wigs. Haha.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

Boy oh boy do my parents love my cosplay. My dad started going to small local cons and even dressed up as captain America. He is 65 years old. He also looks like Stan Lee. So he has started going to cons dressed like Stan to mess with people. He never thought I was weird, even at 13 dressed as a Jedi to go see Episode I for the 18th time. My mum is my number one fan. She has a picture of me in cosplay as her cell phone background so she can easily show people at the grocery store what her daughter does. The family bulletin board has school photos of my nieces and nephews and holiday family pictures from the relatives. And then pictures of me in cosplay. Lol. I stand out a little. But from what I have seen, what "other people" think of cosplay is just something that is impressive and something to be proud of. Even my coworkers are like "what are you doing wasting your time here?" Implying I could do better focusing on cosplay rather than working in a candy factory. What can I say, I love the discounts.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

The number one misconception I see repeated online is that we need to grow up. I take what they mean by "grow up" as "be miserable" like them. Because we are grown. And paying taxes. And raising kids. And attending office meetings. We just have fun outside of that, on the weekends. The other lesser misconception I see is directed almost exclusively towards women. Saying that we cosplay simply for "attention". Well. Yeah. I'm not cosplaying to be ignored? It's the dumbest complaint I have seen. I spend 500 dollars and five months of my free time creating a leather movie accurate Wonder Woman cosplay. Do I want people to notice it and give me attention? Yes. Yes I do.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I love building props. Things like weapons. Swords in particular. There is no sizing involved. No worrying about fit. When I sew it's taking something in, letting something out. Lengthening something. But a sword? It's 36" long. Two inches wide. I can sit on my floor with a heat gun, marathon my favorite anime on crunchyroll and make a weapon out of foam and worbla. I find it the most soothing part of the cosplay crafting experience.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I consider myself pretty loyal to places that I buy from. My leather is from Tandy. I shop their sales. Use their discounts. I link them on Instagram to my progress to which they give me glowing praise because I need attention and that keeps me pretty darn loyal. For basic fabrics I'm a Joann's girl. It's close local they can deliver to store what they don't have on hand, and I hate ordering fabric online. Waiting for fabric swatches, order minimums, matching dye lots. It's a lot of hassle and unknowns. I do buy online from time to time. But that is not where my loyalties lie.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

Every year I compete in the ReedPop cosplay championships in NYCC and C2E2. I have to enter and hope to be selected to compete, but so far I have always made it into the championships. Five time returning, three time placing. I LOVE going on stage and showing off my work in front of a crowd. It's a moment where it's just me. A light on me. My work showcased. Hopefully people are impressed and inspired. Walking a con floor is great attention and praise. But nothing beats center stage. Win or lose, I just love that one moment in my life when I'm the most important person in the room. Those 30 second make my whole year.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

Cons are super expensive because I have to travel. Living in Buffalo NY there ain't nothing around. I have to travel to conventions, sometimes internationally to Toronto. So when I go, I go for the weekend. I make sure I get up early and am in the convention as soon as I can, and damn it, I stay there until it closes and security is hassling me to leave. I paid, so I attend. My experiences are always such a blur of bright colors costumes people conversations and merchandise I can't afford but need to buy. It's a real sensory overload for sure. But I can only afford a few cons a year. So I take in as much as I can and decompress for the weeks to follow.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Katsucon is king. It's just such a fun party con. Staying in the Gaylord hotel, walking down to the atrium. Pictures. Drinks. Friends. Parties. The con itself is a pretty standard con. But the whole experience? When you meet up with friends you haven't seen in six months or more? You do those scheduled photoshoots you have been meaning to do with your friends you haven't seen in forever? When your best friend buys you chicken fingers and Pokémon themed drinks at the bar at three AM while you gossip like basic white girls. It's just a feeling that can't be replicated.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

Here's a little slice of my existential crisis, I'm not sure how long I'll live given how sick I am, or what quality of life I'm looking at. So in these years while I can cosplay, I do. My goals outside of that are to just get enough money together with my husband to buy a house. I really want a home. I had a few apartments, lost my last due to a hiked rent that I couldn't afford meant to be used as the evict me. And I have been moving around living with relatives ever since. I really just want a home. A place to decorate and set my stuff up in with my husband and dogs and cat. Then maybe talk to some doctors about maybe having a baby if at all possible. Those would be nice things. Mediocre Millennial aspirations.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Work. Can't afford to go to cons if I don't work. Can't go to cons if working to afford those cons. Getting time off and making enough money to go to cons is hard. It makes me want to try a little harder at cosplay to be an invited guest. So I could have at least part of my way paid. So missing work would only affect bills, not bills and dig into my savings.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

I'm too antisocial to belong to any other communities, tbh. This takes all my time energy and money as it is. I have no spoons left.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

- a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?**
- b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?**

I'm active on Instagram and Facebook. Those are the best resources for cosplayers because they are image focused creator content hosting sites. We can upload some photos of progress, link the shops where we got the materials, explain what we are doing, and get feedback on the comments all from our phones while at our crafting tables. Our "reach" is strangled by FaceBook and Instagram owned by Facebook algorithms. So sometimes it feels like an uphill battle to get your stuff out there. But if you are friended/following other cosplayers and offer solid content and helpful resources you will get a follow back, and they will engage with you. And you will learn from them and them from you and that increases you reach. I have some "big name" cosplayers who follow me on IG and sometimes I'm just like "why!?" And it's because they are people too. They like seeing other people's work and progress. We are a community and no matter how big or small we are in it, those two particular platforms allow us to reach out to each other when many of us live in isolation otherwise.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

Sleep. Sleeeeeeep! Sleep. I enjoy sleeping. Other than that I enjoy watching my animes. My husband is always trying to get me to play video games. I mostly sleep. Naps are second only to ramen bowls in divinity.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

I am to be 32 years old this April. C2E2 falls on my birthday. Party con!

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I work in a candy factory as a line leader, overseeing the packaging of the candies you buy at 7-11 and supermarkets in the north east USA.

3. What is your average income level?

I make just under \$400 a week.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Other I guess. I'm with my long time partner. Been dating him for eight years. Living together for seven. We call each other husband and wife. And other not nice things because we are weird jerks.

5. What gender do you identify with?

I'm cis-female and identify as female. So she/her pronouns are acceptable.

6. What is your ethnicity?

I'm white. So white. My ancestry DNA test showed I'm so WASP white. I was hoping to find out I had some variety. Nope. My family just married a bunch of white people as far back as they can detect it. German, English, and Czech.

Interviewee 7:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

Poison Ivy from Batman, Princess Jasmine from Aladdin, Enchantress from Suicide Squad

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

Princess Jasmine because I look like her and we have the same skin tone so it worked well in my favor.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

21

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

So I can be someone other than myself for a day. It's fun play-acting as someone else and just have an enjoyable time.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

Happy usually. When you're in a different outfit like that, it's usually for some sort of event. So you're surrounded by friends and people with similar interests.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Tired because getting ready is a process but generally feel so much better after everything is complete. Like a feeling of accomplishment at the end of the day

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

I usually look at the outfits the character is wearing and whether I can make it on my own or not. If I can't make it or buy it easily then I probably won't cosplay as that character.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

I think the most I've spent is about \$70. I usually try to make my own stuff

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

I like taking my time so I'll start planning at least 2-3 months in advance for whatever event I'll be attending.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

Not a lot. I'll look at how other people have done the costume for ideas. But for the most part I just look at pictures of the character when I'm making the costume.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I make my own usually. Only if I am short of time and truly desperate or if I just can't make something, then I try to get it from other places.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

I guess money would be the only constraint. If something is going to cost an arm and leg to make then I won't do it.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

Sewing is definitely my least favorite thing to have to do when making costumes.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

I think most people also enjoy looking at other people's creativity and how they made their costumes. Conventions usually create a sense of camaraderie.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are?

Why do you think people have these misconceptions? Maybe people think we have no life and are nerds living in our parents basements. People just need a reason to talk. I think cosplay creates a sense of community. And we actually leave the basement for it. (laughs)

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

Probably the wigs. A wig can really make or break the costume, I usually get mine online from amazon.com

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I don't have a particular store I like. I don't think there is a store in boston that has enough things on cosplay. It depends on what I need really. My first go to is Amazon because it's cheap and fast shipping.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

My favourite so far has been the PAX East festival that happened in march of this year. It was in Boston. I went as Enchantress. I had such great time walking around, all dressed up and chatting with people. It was especially fun when I ran into someone from the Suicide Squad. (laughs). We'd repeat some lines from the movies and act out some parts. It was so much fun.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I usually just go for a day. It's fun to see all the costumes and how much effort people put into them. And a good way to meet new people.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

No I don't have a preference. But after PAX East this year, I'd like to go there again

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I am currently pursuing my graduate studies in business administration. I'm not really sure, but I'd like a career in something that I'm studying.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life that conflict with cosplaying? How?

I have two jobs and school. Umm it doesn't really conflict with my other duties as I don't go to every cosplay event. I plan them in advance and usually work on my costumes during my free time.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

Not particularly. I just stay in touch with people I meet at con events or follow things online on blogs.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers-

a) What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?

I usually share pictures of myself in the costume or with all cosplayers.

b) What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?

Usually Instagram is a good place. Or facebook, since there are groups there for cosplayers.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

Hang out with friends, draw, watch netflix.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

25

2. What do you do as a full time job?

Office manager for a real estate company

3. What is your average income level?

40K

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Single

5. What gender do you identify with?

I'm a girl.

6. What is your ethnicity?

Asian (Indian)

Interviewee 8:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I have cosplayed from cartoons, I have done Goku from Dragonball z. I have always been into Dragonball Z ever since I was a child. I mostly stick to asian anime and cartoons and being Goku was pretty easy, except maybe the hair. I had to get a wig for my hair.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

Like I said. Goku has been my favorite. And I liked him cause we have similar features and his costume isn't too hard to make.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

Hmm, let's see...I think I was 20.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

umm...I guess for people like me who are really into certain cartoon shows, it gives me a chance to be the character I idolized when I was growing up. Besides this, its always fun to dress up at these events and meet other people who are into cosplay.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

I feel good. Like cheerful and upbeat I guess. Like, you know, when going to a music festival or something like that.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Its kinda tiring. Usually these events happen in huge spaces and so travelling from one spot to another, especially when you're carrying heavy gear, it can be tiring.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

Well, firstly it should be someone I like and someone I know well, then I'd see if I'll be able to pull off the Costume or not.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

hmm it depends, if the character's costume needs a lot of work, I can end spending up to \$80 or \$90. I try to keep it under \$100

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

I start preparing the costumer well beforehand. But to put it all on, like on the day of the event, it takes me about an hour and a half.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

Quite extensive, but I usually pick characters that I already know well enough. After that it's just to look up the finer details of the costume.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I usually try to make my own stuff, but if there's something I can't create, then I try to buy them online.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Well, money is a big factor. (laughs). Other than that, because of work and other duties, I need to make time during the day to work on my costume.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

Hmm well, when I first started out, my friend's kinda thought I was wasting my time and money. Also that it was a 'nerdy' thing to do. But after having experienced various cosplay events, where I meet more people like me, I'm not so bothered by what other people think.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

I think it was more of a niche thing before, with only diehard fans and cosplayers enjoying it while the rest of the people didn't exactly understand why we did it. But Cosplay has grown in popularity and I think more people understand and find it 'cool' nowadays.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

One stereotype I can think of is that people might put out cosplayers to be comic book 'nerds' who are 'uncool'. And I guess, most people think so because they haven't really been to a cosplay event before and haven't really interacted with any cosplayers.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I like to design and create weapons and armors. I usually try to make it myself using materials like worbla. If I can't then, I look for specific stuff online.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I mostly like to buy my stuff from this website called cosplaysupplies.com. It's pretty neat. It's got a ton load of stuff that a cosplayer can use. I'm pretty loyal since they are only site I know where I can get so many different things.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I don't really have a favourite but I really enjoy Anime Boston and Boston Comic Con. Both events were a lot of fun, with interesting panels, shows and great costumes.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

Depends on how much free time I have. If it's a really big event, I like to make myself free for those days and attend all the days. Otherwise I usually go for a day.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Hmm. Maybe Anime Boston. It was so much fun this time, I'd like to go again.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I would like to do well in my career and become a successful man with no issues with bills. (laughs)

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Well, I have my family to look after and I'm still going to school, as well as working. So yeah, all the various responsibilities I have do conflict with my hobby.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

I am on this facebook group called 'Cosplayers of Greater Boston'. It's a good place to make friends with similar interests and as well to share stories or instructions about costume making. Its also a platform to share smaller events like picnics or bookstore signings.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?

Its mostly through tutorial videos or pictures on online blogs.

b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?

I think Instagram, along with facebook are good for exchanging information.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I like to read, travel to new places and of course watch anime (laughs)

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

26

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I worked as restaurant manager

3. What is your average income level?

Is it okay if I don't share this? I'm not too comfortable about it.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

I am divorced

5. What gender do you identify with?

Male

6. What is your ethnicity?

Hispanic

Interviewee 9:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I've done mainly sci-fi and one comic book character.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

Hmm. Probably my Doctor Who cosplay. It's the character I've felt closest to, and I've garnered a lot of recognition and love for it.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

16 I think? Maybe earlier.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

When I see myself in a fictional character, I find it fun to become that character through cosplay. Also, who doesn't love attention?

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

Depends on how much espresso I've had.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

Usually pretty sweaty.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

I look for my own qualities, whether it's physical or personality traits. They've gotta be a bit eccentric, incredibly charming, and have a fantastic head of hair.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

All of my costumes are a constant work in progress, so pieces are constantly being updated. But, they generally can range from \$500 to \$2,000.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

Some have taken days, some have taken years.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

If it's a character in plain clothes that I can piece together, I try to find the most accurate brands/articles of clothing. The Replica Prop Forum and internet image searches are always great places to reference.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

Little bit of both, it really depends on how lazy I am.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Having a full-time job and a prominent social life do prevent me from working on costumes. In terms of being able to slap the costume on, not really any constraints there.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

Other cosplayers can be quite annoying.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

It's certainly become a lot more accepted than it was maybe 5-6 years ago, likely owing to the popularity of superhero flicks being churned out like Krispy Kreme donuts. People don't look at you as funny, but I won't lead with the fact that I wear a Spidey suit to conventions when I'm flirting with a girl in a bar.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

I think the idea that cosplayers are overzealous anti-socialites that smell a bit funny is completely true. There's also a lot of issues with the community that I have, mainly centered around people's own vanity and idea of self-importance. You do end up meeting diamonds in the rough, though. I've met some of my closest friends through this silly hobby.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I don't particularly enjoy the making of the costume. It's too expensive, it takes too much time, but it's worth it in the end.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

JoAnn Fabric. The old ladies love me there.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

Comic con after-parties. You get to booze up while looking like an idiot in a costume, it's a laugh.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I'll only attend larger conventions NYCC, Fan Expo, as the smaller ones don't really hold my attention. I'll typically go for the four-day gig, and I always end up with sore feet and a headache.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Fan Expo Canada in Toronto has been my go-to for years now, but Star Wars Celebration will always have my heart.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I just hope I can survive this presidency.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

I'll never know how a lot of these kids can work on costumes all day and still have jobs.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

Not particularly...that I know of at least.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

By talking to them and asking nicely.

- a. **What kinds of media are you using to exchange information? The social kind.**
- b. **What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?**

Facebook, Instagram, smoke signals, etc.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I'm an enthusiastic drinker and a connoisseur of odd fashion.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

23

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I was a claims representative for an insurance carrier until I was fired two weeks ago.

3. What is your average income level?

\$40k per year.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Single and ready to pringle.

5. What gender do you identify with?

Cisgender fella.

6. What is your ethnicity?

White or Caucasian or whatever else.

Interviewee 10:

Part 1

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

I've cosplayed different animes like "Kagura" from "Gintama", "LL" from "KOTORI", "MOANA" etc.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

Hmm I think JX3 will be my favorite. It is basically an online video game that includes various characters. The plot of the game is well-designed and each character has his or her own settings which is convenient for Cosers to do research.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

I first tried out Cosplay when I was 19, a freshman of college.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I remembered browsing online forums and saw my favorite character was deliberately interpreted(cosplayed) by someone, and I was really amazed! The reason I start cosplay is because I want to be closer the world I admire.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

I feel so thrilled. It's like you've came a long way to arrive where you are. It doesn't matter if this is the first time you cosplayed this character or not. It's like fulfilling a dream of your own.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

More often than not I need to wear waistcoat if the costumes cover my waist. The waistcoat is so tight that sometimes I have hard time eating while cosplaying. Basically it put negative impact on the body a lot.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

I choose which character to cosplay depends on dressing style and his or her personalities. I like roles who have independent characteristics and being straightforward such as Froppy from “僕のヒーローアカデミア” and せお ゆづき from “月刊少女野崎くん.” For video games character cosplaying, I’m more into Bohemia style.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

Minimum \$50 and Maximum \$300.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

If the costumes were in stock, it may take like month from placing the order to receiving it.

If the costumes were customized, it may take two or three months to receive it.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

I started to do the research when I find myself liking this character. The whole research may take more than a month depends on the purpose. If I were going to participate in cosplay photoshoot, the preparation time will be longer.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

I did learn a little about how to make clothes, but most of the time I just bought it anyway.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Basically, cosplaying is like acting. You want to bring that character to life so you try to keep everything such as makeup, the color of contact lenses, clothes and gestures identical to the original settings. Sometimes it’s really hard. But the point is to have fun. There are some unspoken rules for cosplaying. In general, cosplayers won’t wear costumes roaming in the streets or behave weird in public. This aims to avoid strengthening stereotypes that public hold toward cosplay.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

I remembered one time I and my friend wanted to cosplay the same character. My friend is really good-looking with perfect body shape. And when we were doing photo shooting or simply just chatting with new friends, I found out that being good-looking really mattered. Though we cosplayed the same character, people tend to like her better which really hurt my feelings.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

I think the public still hold negative thoughts toward cosplay.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

Some cosplayers are scantily clad, wearing costumes that are considered indecent. Most elders cannot accept their children wearing weird costumes. What's more, there are more and more cosplayers start to cosplay at a rather young age. Many of them fail to distinguish reality from anime world and have conflict with families and friends. Those young cosplayers somehow get lost and people will blame that on cosplay.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I like to buy wigs and makeup product the most because I can use them in daily lives. I bought wigs from Taobao (Online shopping platform based in China) and makeup products from their official website.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I usually bought the materials from Taobao. There's no particular stores I like. I just go for whichever is cheaper.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I like photoshooting the most because the appreciation is mutual for photographers and cosplayers. We can discuss a lot of thoughts with photographers and co-produce something really cool.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I attended CWT and GJ. Mostly partial time like afternoon because it's really hot at noon. I feel like comic-con is too crowded and I went there just to take pictures with friends instead of making new friends.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I'm currently an undergrad student major in Veterinary. Hopefully I will pass the test and get Veterinarian license after graduation.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Sometimes workload for school is too much that takes up most of my time, so I cannot do a part-time job to earn money. And therefore can't afford doing cosplay that often. Also, I found there is less time for me to do cosplay photoshooting because of all the homework.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

Nah.. I don't think so. The only community I join is some kind of photo shooting with my friends.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

- a. **What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?**
I would constantly post pictures on ["World Cosplay"](#).
- b. **What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?**
Mostly Plurk and facebook.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I love to go Comic Convention and singing party.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

I'm 22 years old.

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I'm a college student.

3. What is your average income level?

I don't have a full-time job right now.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

Single

5. What gender do you identify with?

Female

6. What is your ethnicity?

Asian

Interviewee 11:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

Basically I'm more into cosplaying anime. The first character I've done is a manga, a Japanese manga. I think he's a guy named Bleach. He has white hair. I cosplayed him because I like him. and later on, mostly cosplay for me it's just matching with what I like. So later on I did video games. I was Dante from Devil May Cry. It was the same thing as in he was a guy with shorter white hair.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

I think it was the second one, Dante from Devil may cry. I cosplayed with a friend. It was a fun and I think costumes came out okay. and then yeah. It was fun. My friend and I cosplayed two different characters and we kind of like acting.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

Fourteen or fifteen, something like that. Middle school.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

I don't remember whether it's my friend who wants to do it first, or it's me. but I think during that time when there's an anime convention, and there's like tons of people cosplaying, so we just wanna try that out, too. Be the characters we like and stuff. I think the motivation will be closer to that character and to show our affection for him or her. Show our love for this game. So when you dress like one, you can tell people that "Hey I really love this game/character."

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

Um emotionally..Well it was exciting to like try something I always wanted. It was fun like see people and meet people and talk to people who also cosplay. Yeah. I don't feel like "being that character" when I dress up like that. It's more like acting and for fun.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

For me, the first one I did was "Bleach". I just dressed in youkato. It's like kimano. The costumes were loose so it won't make me feel uncomfortable. It might be hard a little bit since it had so many layers. For the second one, I did wear high heel boots because the character is tall. So I tried to like match up with Dante. And I remembered that day, my feet was like so hurting because you know I've never wore high heels before.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

Basically it's just who I like. Like my favorite character or something I love. Sometimes I'll see whether it's possible to do it, but usually it will be. for who I like. For me, I like to cosplay male characters.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

I think I'm not the one making it. It was my friend who kind of collect and find all the stuff. The second one, Devil May Cry, my friend actually sewed it like she made it. I think her grandgather used to be a tailor or something and she learnt the skills. I felt bad

making her do the job, and I still feel bad even it has been ten years haha. But I was the one who found the materials and all that for her. I would say maybe 35-50 per costume. But back at that time I was young, so I literally have no clear idea about how much we spent.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

I will say a month for the preparation. But this is for my case. I believe for some people it will be like six months or so to prepare a more delicated costume. It depends on how much you are willing to do. Like sew the whole costume yourself or make the accessory stuff.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

Well usually we've already know that character as in that personality or what he or she dressed. Like for me, I draw so I usually know the details of the clothing. But then when you want to make it, sometimes you had to print a lot of references pictures and look at it when you want to make something. So if you want to make something, the research may be extensive.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

Like I said before, my friend created it. I mean some costumes are not that hard as in white kimono. You can buy it through multiple channels. I think we only make something really specific and hard to acquire from stores. It's like partially buying and partially make it.

For the wig, we bought it, and sometimes we trim and dye different color. Well for the second one, Dante, we bought the white color short hair wig. But for the first one, I think we had like a spray to change the color of the hair.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

For me, physically no. but for the costume I sometimes concern that whether I look alike with the character I'm dressing up and the quality of course. Since we're young, and we don't know how to make the costume more accurate or prettier. So that's the constraint.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

No pet peeves I guess. But I think frustration is like comparing to others, I might not look that good. I mean the quality of costume may not be that perfect and I might feel bad about it. I also don't want to look bad in front of people you know. Like if a person is very pretty the rest, and the costume is well-made, and then everything is so perfect and I kind of feel bad about it.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

Well I guess it depends on what types of people. For people who know about cosplay, it feels like to show off what you can do like the ability to make costumes or something like that. During the convention sometimes there are contests as in you vote for people who get the best costume or which person you like the most. And for people who don't know cosplay, I think they will consider us weird..I guess.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

Well the misconceptions may be that parents won't understand what we're doing. Sometimes people will think we're trying to be someone else, but we're not. It's more like we enjoy dressing up and show appreciation for certain character. It might be a fun thing like on Halloween you will dress up, just for fun. It's not like "Yeah I want to be a witch or something"

Mostly people just look at us weirdly sometimes, especially when you're on your way to the convention. And they will have the face saying "What are you?" I mean cosplay is a subculture, so people cannot understand. It's really specific and niche to know. Also people sometimes judge cosplay because they don't understand what it is. I think there's a bad connotation of liking anime or manga as in you're being really childish. Parents will associate anime/manga as what kids will do even if some of those are 18+ like people get killed.. you know.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I think maybe the props I guess. I remembered we (my friend and I) once made a sword. Well not me actually making it but like you have someone make a sword for you out of wood. It's not what people usually do. So the process of making props is much fun. Also there's another time that I had to make a suitcase. I mean I do have a suitcase. I kind of transform it into something that the character has. I taped it to make a pattern. But sometimes it's really time-consuming as in you will have to work it with a timeframe. You'll need to finish it say like weeks before convention.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I don't have much experiences in making costumes, but I know in Japan there are like brick and mortar cosplay shops that sell all kinds of cosplay costumes, wigs and stuff.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

Hmm I don't have a particular preferences for cosplay events. I will say I attend whatever when I have free time. There's one time I went to the "Anime Boston" and it was a really huge event. I didn't cosplay anything; I just went there with my friend and have fun. The event sold comics, artwork and stuff.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

I think I've attended one in my home country, Thailand. And that event was super small, like you can view everything within two or three hours at most. But I haven't been to the comic-con in the U.S. yet.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Not much experiences.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

I just want to be happy, live day by day. It's a simple hope, but it's just the thing I want.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

Well...I will say since cosplay will take a long time to prepare as in especially if you want to make it. Some people just bought the costume and that will be it. But if you want to make it unique as in you put efforts in it. It takes a lot of time and knowledge like learn how to sew or make weapons like sword, hand band or stuff. So when you want to do something else, it will conflict with your normal life like work or studying. It's about keeping the balance.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

Well...I don't think I belong to any community.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

- a. **What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?**
Sometimes we do online forums like sharing photos.
- b. **What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?**

For me, it's like a website that you can post pictures, artwork or stuff, and you can also post cosplay photos as well. It's called "Deviantart."

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

I play a lot of video games. I used to read, but I don't have time right now. And I also do drawing as a hobby.

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

Twenty-four.

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I'm a full-time student.

3. What is your average income level?

Sadly, I don't have any income right now.

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

I'm single.

5. What gender do you identify with?

I'll go by female.

6. What is your ethnicity?

Asian, or Thai.

Interviewee 12:

Part 1:

1. What kinds of cosplay genre have you done? Please describe each in detail.

Well I haven't cosplay for a while since college. I started to cosplay in the age of 14 and it last for like 5 to 6 years then I kind of feel tired on school works after got into college so I don't have time for it. So I might not be listed out all the characters I had played but I try my best. I mostly played the character from animations and manga. But like Japanese like to make a project into so many different forms like LoveLive used to be a

video... or mobile game and then it became so popular that animation company made it into animation and then came manga series. I also like to cosplay real person as well. For animations I had played Hungary, England from APH, Hikaru from Ouran Highschool Host Club, Ayase Eri and Kotori from Love Live, Sheryl Nome from Macross Frontier, Blossom from powerpuff girls, Sae from AKB0048, well I can't remember all the characters I played and I think there's more but I can't remember now. And for real person I played Maeda Atsuko who was a former member of AKB48 before.

2. Which cosplay was your favorite and why?

I think I don't have a specific favorite but I do spend more effort on Sheryl Nome. I really like her like so much and was obsessed with all her costumes and I even thought to complete all her looks, which is quite impossible since she has like over hundred of costumes. But the biggest reason I think Sheryl is my favorite is because she is my favorite character and I really enjoy to be her while cosplaying.

3. How old were you when you first cosplayed?

I think I started from my sophomore year in junior high school. There was a girl handing out kind of posters.....or like flyers to seek for people who were interested in cosplaying with her. There was an animation called APH... I forgot its full name but it characterize Countries and use them to present the story happen in the world in an interesting way. And at that time if you want to make like a cosplay team you definitely have to find others. For example, there's lots of allies during world war, if you want to cosplay Japan, just saying, it's better to find a German and Italy with you to be more complete. Well like that's why the girl, who is my friend til now, was handing out those flyers and that's the time I started to cosplay.

4. Why do you cosplay? What are your primary motivations to cosplay?

Oh I think I answered this question in the last one. But that's my motivation to cosplay.

5. How do you feel emotionally when cosplaying?

To be honest I feel more confident when I'm cosplaying. I used to be really shy and could barely talk to others. But after I started to cosplay I have the courage to talk to strangers and I'm actually quite enjoy to make friends with the person playing the same character as me cause we know that we have the same preference so we can chat on that. It feels really comfortable to speak with someone who like the same thing as you did.

6. How do you feel physically when cosplaying?

It can be really challenging when cosplaying on extreme weather like summer or winter. Sometimes I have to put on suits or gowns on a really hot day during summer, or wear a

mini skirt on a cold day. And it can be really hard to walk with all the stuffs and high heels.

7. How do you choose which characters to cosplay? What qualities do you look for when choosing the character?

Well....generally it's quite simple to decide cause I played the characters because I like those characters. The clothes or budget does not matter that much when choosing it but how I like the character is what matter the most.

8. How much do you spend on each costume on average?

Umm...It really depends on what character it is and it range from 100-200 since I don't play the character with really huge props. At first I always try to purchase or rent online but it could be really expensive as a high school student so I started to do it by myself.

9. How much time do you spend on average creating each cosplay?

It also depends on what character and how much details the character have. For the basic character it usually take 4-5 hours total including makeup and stuff. But for the character who has props it will take days to do it.

10. How extensive do you research a character when cosplaying?

Well if I choose to play the character it means that I am either watching it or playing the game at the time. So I basically am very familiar with it then. I would not only see the details of the clothing and props but also how the character normally act and practice the pose at home.

11. Do you create your own cosplay or do you acquire from others?

Both. I will think how am I going to create the character and also look at how others create it on the website. Sometime I will find something really creative and try to do it the same way.

12. Are there any constraints that limit your ability to cosplay? Please provide as many details as you can.

Probably time and money. As a student I'm not a professional cosplayer who can make money from cosplay. I still have school works to do so I don't really have enough time to do the stuffs. Also I have to save money from every month's pocket money in order to get the costume and stuffs. But luckily the event comes every 3 months so I have time to do so.

13. Do you experience any frustrations or pet peeves when cosplaying or when preparing to cosplay?

Not really. My mom and my family really support me to do this and they never stop me from doing it as long as I can handle both school and cosplay. Also I have classmates who are really into cosplay so I didn't feel lonely while at high school. But to be honest the society in the place I live are not that open to cosplay so I kind of hidden myself from letting others know when I first get to know other people like college's orientation.

14. We would like to know what other people think about cosplay. Please share your thoughts on how other people perceive cosplay.

People don't try to know it. Some people are really mean to refer others as weirdo just because they cosplay.

15. People may have misconceptions or certain stereotypes about cosplay. If you agree with this, what do you think these misconceptions are? Why do you think people have these misconceptions?

I totally agree with this. I feel like some of the people connect cosplay and porn together. The first thing they think of when heard the word cosplay is the picture of Japanese porn actress wearing different kinds of uniforms which is really dump. Also I feel like some of the people will related cosplayers to otakus but that is just some of the people, not every cosplayers will act strange in normal life. Those misconceptions are mainly from media including social medias and traditional medias such like News broadcasts and TV programs. People formed their impression based only on what they see on the television but not try to understand.

Part 2:

1. What's your favorite part of the costume to buy or create? Why? Where do you get it?

I like to create makeup looks and the outfit the most. I really like to create different looks for different characters. You can look so different with different looks with just slightly different ways to contour or the use of eyeliner. I learn it mostly by myself online and practice. For the costume I usually will purchase it online and then try to fix or add something by hand after I receive it.

2. If you create your own costume, is there any particular material store you like to go to? Why? How loyal would you consider yourself to be to this store?

I don't make my costume on my own and don't really have a specific store to go for. But Taobao has really good stuffs to get and the most important of all, they're not expensive.

3. What's your favorite cosplay event to participate in? Please share your experience of participating in cosplay events.

I usually go to Comic world and some only event. Only event means the event is set for one particular topic like Marvel event it will all be Marvel series. Also there's like photography event for one theme. Everyone will pay tickets and RSVP to the event and it usually would rent a shooting studio to let everyone take pictures and make friends.

4. Do you attend comic-cons? If so do you often attend full-day or just partial time? Please tell us what your experience attending comic-con is like.

Yes I do. I used to attend full day in the first couple years but I become lazier these year so I kind of follow my heart. It's always so crowded and the place is not big enough so if I don't have something I want to buy I won't go in the morning.

5. Is there a particular comic-con you prefer to attend? Why?

Nope, but I do to attend the one hold in San Francisco someday since I never attend oversea event.

Part 3:

1. What are your hopes and aspirations in your life overall?

To live a life that I won't regret after I grow up.

2. What are your duties, obligations or responsibilities in your life conflict with cosplaying? How?

I feel like time is the biggest issue because it's hard to keep a balance between schoolwork and cosplay. I have less time for cosplay, so I eventually fade out from this group.

3. Do you belong to any other community which shares interests about cosplaying? If yes, what's the community and why do you belong to the community?

No.

4. How do you exchange opinions, interests or costume constructions with other cosplayers?

- a. What kinds of media are you using to exchange information?
 - b. What kinds of social media do you use to exchange information?
- Plurk mostly.

5. When you do have spare time, what do you do for leisure other than cosplaying?

Hang out with friends, watch film,series,drama Korean

Part 4:

1. How old are you?

I'm now 21.

2. What do you do as a full time job?

I'm a full time college student now.

3. What is your average income level?

Student

4. Are you single? Married? Divorced? Other?

I'm single

5. What gender do you identify with?

Female

6. What is your ethnicity?

Asian

Appendix E:
Power Point



“

In its purest form cosplay is akin to performance art, taking on the habitus of a particular character through costume, accessories, gesture and attitude; it is therefore not simply 'dressing up' but rather inhabiting the role of a character both physically and mentally. (Norris & Bainbridge, 2009)



ABOUT THE SUBCULTURE

- Cosplay began around the year 1940 And has grown into a global subculture with members of all ages.
- Cosplayers are very loyal to the characters they dress as. They spend time and money in building their costumes, many of which require substantial amount of material and crafting skills
- This loyalty gives cosplay a large and mostly untapped market potential.



PRECONCEPTIONS

What we thought about Cosplay...

- ❑ A way for cosplayers to show love for characters through creative means
- ❑ Individual pastime
- ❑ Cosplayers love to buy makeup and wig to pursue accuracy of cosplay
- ❑ Certain companies have specifically target cosplayers as consumers.



ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Economic Analysis

- Shows a growing opportunity for businesses
- \$11.7 billion spent on costumes
\$561.5 million spent on wigs
- Cosplayers are being hired to do character appearances

Market Analysis

- Boston's comic-con had 40,000 participants in 2015
- Event costs cosplayers \$30-\$45 a day for an entry ticket
- Cosplayers will spend on average \$75 or more to take a photo with their favorite celebrity
- VIP passes are popular they come with meet and greet opportunities and early entry for an average of \$165 a person

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Social Analysis

- An active fan participates in a "multi textual environment" in which they can discuss the film
- Shared passion for film franchises and creativity means people of all walks of life are accepted by this community
- Members create and wear cosplay as a way of self expression

Technological Analysis

- New media make it easier for the community members to engage in group activities and strengthen interpersonal relations between them
- Cosplayers can use the web to promote their own creative process
- Studios can directly connect with the fans and quickly get feedback through the social media



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Through our research, we aim to:

- learn about the cosplay and comic-con community. What drives them to be so loyal and create cosplay
- discover the potential this community has for marketers and businesses.
- create a marketing communication plan for one lifestyle brand targeting this subculture.



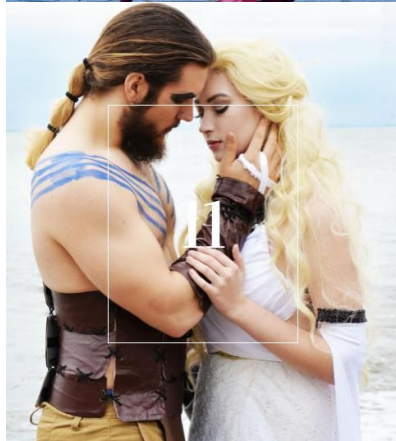
RESEARCH METHODS

In-depth interviews

We conducted 12 intensive interviews with various members of the community in person and via Skype.

Observation

One of the group members traveled to Rhode Island Comic Con to interact and observe cosplayers.



RESEARCH METHODS

Interview Questions and Procedures

Four sections with 31 questions were included in the questionnaire. Areas of focus:

- ❑ How do the cosplayers research their character's story and fabrics;
- ❑ Logistics of the cosplay build (*cost, materials and time spent on the costume creation*);
- ❑ Lifestyle and motivations;
- ❑ Demographics (*income, age, gender, marital status*).



RESEARCH METHODS

Participants' Profile

- ❑ The majority of respondents were white females 20 - 35 years old;
- ❑ With income below the national average (\$40K or less);
- ❑ But spending between \$200-\$500 for each costume.
- ❑ Most common hobbies are TV and videogames;
- ❑ Primary source of information - social media (Facebook and Instagram);
- ❑ While in cosplay, feel happy, have fun and love sharing their designs with others;
- ❑ Primary motivation - love for a character/fictional universe.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Informant	Age	Occupation	Average income	Marital status	Gender	Ethnicity
1	24	Part-time at comics store	X (not enough)	Dating	Male	White
2	30	Freelance theater artist	\$7-12K/year	Dating	Female	White
3	65	Boiler operator	<\$50k/year	Married	Male	White
4	23	Consulting agent	\$80K/year	Single	Female	White
5	21	Teacher & costumer	X	Dating	Female	Mixed
6	32	Candy factory line leader	\$400/week	Dating	Female	White
7	25	Office manager	\$40K/year	Single	Female	Asian
8	26	Restaurant manager	X	Divorced	Male	Hispanic
9	23	Claims representative	\$40K/year	Single	Male	White
10	22	Full-time student	X	Single	Female	Asian
11	24	Full-time student	X	Single	Female	Asian
12	21	Full-time student	X	Single	Female	Asian





**Primary Research Findings:
Motivations**

Our findings allow to divide cosplayers into 2 basic segments:

- | Devoted | Moderate |
|---|---|
| → Following their characters intently; | → Usually buying costumes instead of making them; |
| → Spend a lot of time and money preparing their costumes; | → Attend one or two cons per year near their place; |
| → Ready to travel extensively to attend major cons; | → Prepare for the event a week or two before. |
| → Often looking to build their career through cosplay. | |



**Primary Research Findings:
Motivations and Frustrations**

Main motivating factors:

- 1) Identity of the cosplay character
- 2) Post-cosplay feeling and personality mimicking
- 3) Costume building

Main frustrating issues:

- 1) Money
- 2) Time
- 3) Distance to cons
- 4) Lack of accessible material and garments for costumes
- 5) Feeling of being unappreciated for their performance
- 6) Some cosplayers cosplay solely for attention and judge others



**Primary Research Findings:
Stereotypes and Misconceptions**

Misconception #1: Cosplayers are not a part of regular society. ✗

Research findings: Practically all respondents do have decent jobs or currently pursuing higher education.

Misconception #2: Cosplaying is for the young. ✗

Research findings: Cosplay is practiced by people of all different ages and backgrounds. The oldest interviewee is 65 years old and cosplays with his 68 year old wife.

Misconception #3: Association between cosplay and sex or porn. ✗

Research findings: Cosplay doesn't automatically give others a free pass to take pictures or make physical contact without permission or respect. Most of female cosplayers are uncomfortable with inappropriate touchings and comments.

As the results of our research show, public attitude to cosplay becomes less biased.



Reflection on Preconceptions

- Cosplay is a way to show love for the characters through creative means ✓
- Cosplayers choose the characters for cosplay based on their ability to identify with them (i.e. female cosplay of Loki);
- The subculture is very diverse in terms of personalities and psychological makeup;
- Can be both individual and collective pastime;
- Cosplayers often have to seek out cosplay supplies rather than stores targeting them
- Cosplayers hate wigs!



Marketing Implications

All different types of companies can target cosplayers

- Film, video game and TV
- Fabric, wig, make-up and costumers
- Freelance photographers

Loyalty

- The cosplay community is extremely loyal to their franchises which is a trait that can be translated into buying habits

If a company can gain the trust of this community early on they can build a long lasting relationship



Brand Choice

Joann's Fabric Store

Why?

- Joann's is already frequented by cosplayers
- They have started a section for cosplay fabrics
- They have a reputation for friendly and helpful workers
- The Fabric buying process is one of the most important steps in the cosplaying process

How?

- First we will add to their stock
- Then we will build brand awareness



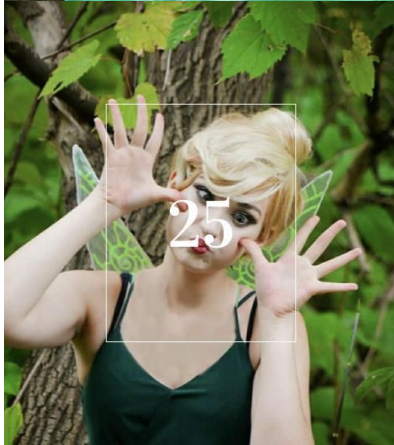
Advertising Objectives

1. Help Joann's connect with more cosplayers and become more notable in the cosplay community
2. Make Joann's known as the "Cosplay Command Center"
3. Boost brand loyalty by partnering with prominent cosplayers



Creative Ideas

1. Feedback from consumers
 - a. Panel of cosplayers
2. Add cosplay products to stock
 - a. Worbla and foam
3. Boost brand awareness with social media
 - a. Partner with prominent cosplayers
4. Sponsor cosplay community events
 - a. I.e. Comic-cons



Executional Styles

1. Persuasion
 - a. Persuade cosplayers that Joann's is the cosplay command center
2. Testimonial Ads
 - a. As sponsored and native ads from prominent cosplayers and regular folk
3. Demonstrate the value of the Joann's experience
 - a. Offer coupons to get cosplayers in store
 - b. Post real customer video feedback on social media



Media Mix Strategies

Concentrated Media Mix

Why?

- Best way to target cosplayers specifically

How?

- Use Google analytics to determine which sites cosplayers frequent and then place our ads there
- Place ads on the social media feeds of members of online cosplay fan groups
- Use website banner ads and Youtube pre-video ads to highlight the new campaign
- Coupons offered specifically to cosplayers



Social Media Strategies

Partner with prominent cosplayers

- ❑ Create tutorial videos to be featured on cosplayer's page
- ❑ Sponsor Instagram and Facebook posts
- ❑ Create mini in-store tutorials for Joann's social media

Print Ads



Social media: Pandora Ad

Sound Elements	Voice
SFX: Superhero flying in and landing his hammer. Low hero music in background	"Thor" VO (smooth and confident): Hello ladies. Sean here. You may say doesn't that sound like Thor? I'd say I wish I was that beautiful creature. Sadly instead of saving galaxies I am saving dinner reservations.
SFX: Computer typing and ding!	"Thor" VO: Now you don't get confused for Thor without looking the part. (slight pause) How do I get to look this good? Well I visit my friends at Joann's. They've got more than just fabric, worbla, foam, paints you name it they've got it. And they have a skilled crew waiting to help you with your next cosplay.
SFX: smashing hammer and epic hero music increases in volume	"Thor" VO: From beginners to experts, you can achieve greatness with your next cosplay with the help of Joann's....Your cosplay command center.

Social media: Native ads



