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Master's Thesis

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A Rewards-Based Crowdfunding Platform for Chinese Doujin Fans and Doujin Creators

Graduate School of Media Design,
Keio University

Tong Liu

A Master's Thesis
submitted to Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER of Media Design

Tong Liu

Thesis Committee:

Professor Ichiya Nakamura	(Supervisor)
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A Rewards-Based Crowdfunding Platform for Chinese Doujin Fans and Doujin Creators

Category: Design

Summary

Doujin is stated as a general Japanese term for a group of people who share an interest, activity, hobbies, or achievement. In the field of doujin, amateur self-published works are called doujin works, including but not limited to fan fiction, illustration, comic, music, and game. Doujin work is a part of a wider category of doujin.

From the perspective of doujin's history, everyone who likes doujin has needs for creativity. But most of them enjoy doujin works only as consumers. Though everyone can become a doujin creator by writing, drawing, creating music or even making game soft freely, only a few of them with high level skills and plenty of time (defined as "doujin creator" in this thesis) can make good doujin works to entertain themselves and others. Just as in any other creative activity, there is a hurdle for people without enough skills and spare time (defined as "doujin fan" in this thesis) to become creators.

In this thesis, we design a reward-based crowdfunding platform for Chinese doujin fans and creators. We aim to decompose the process of creating doujin works into a typical crowdfunding flow and enable doujin fans to buy customized doujin works from doujin creators.

Keywords:

Doujin, Crowdfunding Platform, Rewards-Based, Creation, Otaku, Subculture

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Doujin is stated as a general Japanese term for a group of people who share an interest, activity, hobbies, or achievement. In Japan, it is also called doujin circle. The first doujin appeared in Meiji period. Groups of writers who shared similar literary opinions wrote poems and novels. Many famous modern writers had born from this kind of little doujin circles. One of them was Ozaki Koyo, the leader of the well-known society of literary writers Kenyusha. He published the first collected works in magazine in 1885, which was called Garakuta-Bunko.[1] It is considered to be the prototype of doujinshi, which in Japanese means books that made by doujin circles.

As the twin concept of doujin, doujinshi refers to the Japanese term for self-published works, usually magazines, manga or novels. This word is derived from both "Doujin" and "Shi" (meaning periodical publication) in Japanese. And the relationship between doujin and doujinshi is: doujinshi is a part of a wider category of doujin. Today, it is not limited to books, but also animation, games, music and so on. In this thesis, we name all kinds of doujinshi as doujin work in order to avoid confusion.

There are two kinds of doujin works. One is original. The creators make original works and publish them, just as what Ozaki Koyo did nearly 130 years ago. Though Doujin works generally are the works of amateurs, some professionals participate as a way to publish work outside the regular industry. Conversely, when an amateur and his doujin works become famous, some of them will choose the way of commercialization. It means creators do not stop at the level of doujin works, but go further to cooperate with commercial organizations or even set up their own company, to continue creative activities. For example, one of the most famous original doujin game in Japan is Tsuki Hime, made by the doujin circle Type-Moon in 2000. The great success of the game brought up an opportunity, and the members set up the company "Notes" in 2003 to run Type-Moon as a business brand. Now, there is a variety of multi-media contents including games,

animation, novels and comics.

Another sort of doujin work is fan labor, which means fan-based derivative work. In Japanese it is called Niji-sousaku, accounting for the main part of all doujin works. The sources of fan labor come from the original works to which they are related. Usually, fan labor will take some settings and factors from the original works, but make them differently. For instance, the one on the left is Asuka, a character from a famous animation, Neon Genesis Evangelion.[2] And the one on the right is the doujin work of Asuka. They are the same character, but in different style[3] (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Original work and doujin work

The reason that doujin and doujin works emerge is that people have the needs to tell their own stories (original works) or explore new possibilities in the existed original story (fan labor). Doujin works have higher potentials when the original work is not perfect and possibilities are left open to explore. If some aspects are not explained, or some stories or ideas are not developed, the characters can be used in new and creative ways to explore and expand on the original story that inspired the doujin work.[4]

As the civilization developed, the needs of doujin and doujin works lead to an important output in Japan. It is Comiket (an abbreviation for Comic Market in this thesis). It was once an alternative gathering for people that broke from the manga taikai (manga convention). In 1975, it was first held with 700 people

attending and had since grown to be massively popular as the biggest amateur Doujin work sales market in Japan. Also, it is the largest indoor public gathering[5] in Japan that has been operated by a single private non-governmental group. In 2008, as many as 550,000 people and 35,000 doujinshi circles attended.[6] Now, Comiket is firmly based in Tokyo Big Sight complex in Odaiba, for three days and twice a year. A registered circle at Comiket pays 7500 for half a desk and two chairs. Though admission is free, purchasing the 2000 catalog is encouraged.

Comiket is of large importance to the whole history of doujin. In old days, doujin events were not held for monetary profit, but for communication. But after the appearance of Comiket, doujin and doujin works finally begin to grow up to a big business, broadening its influence to the world and beginning to take a place in the field of Japanese subculture. The estimating sales of Comiket is about 1 billion[7] at each event.

Still, an important view about comiket is that it is considered to be noncommercial and not-for-profit. Because from the history of doujin, we know that the starting point of doujin activities was personal interests. Doujin works were created and spread in specific circles, upon which the comiket has been held as an event that sells doujin works. From an economic perspective, the comiket is completely commercial, but at the same time it maintains a socialist structure which allows everyone to be an equal participant and "there are no customers or authority figures".[8]

Thanks to Comiket, doujin has finally become a part of Otaku culture. Also, the developing of Comiket greatly boosted doujin business and doujin market from Japan to the world. The change is huge and it has brought doujin into everyone's lives. Nowadays we can get doujin works from doujin goods shops and secondhand shops. Furthermore, with the development of digital age, more and more people begin to enjoy doujin works through online platform services. Online community sites like Pixiv[9] provide a place for doujin creators to exhibit their illustrations and get feedback via rating systems and user comments. Crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter give creators a way to bring creative projects to life, such as doujin music, comics and video games. Video sharing websites allow people to upload and show their doujin videos. Specific doujin works searching sites provide information to help people find out their favorite doujin works. Online doujin shops and auction platforms allow everyone to buy doujin works easily through internet. All these online platforms provide people with a lot of convenience: it is easier to create and exhibit doujin works, easier to collect different kinds of doujin

works and easier to communicate with others.

But the situation is: although people can create doujin works freely, only a few of them can make really good ones. With the development of doujin markets, anyone who likes doujin can become a doujin creator by writing, drawing, creating music or even making game software, but only those with high-level skills and enough spare time (defined as "doujin creator" in this thesis) can make good doujin works to entertain themselves and others. Just as every normal creative activity, there is a hurdle for people without enough skills and spare time (defined as "doujin fan" in this thesis) to have more fun with doujin. Most people enjoy doujin works only as consumers.

However, from the perspective of doujin's history, everyone who likes doujin has needs for creativity. They have passion to create something new, and they have initiatives to explore possibilities for original stories. As a result, they set up doujin circles and begin doujin activities. And one important fact is that the boundary between doujin fans and doujin creators is quite ambiguous. Actually, most people in doujin circles wear two hats, one as a fan and one as a creator. They enjoy doujin works as fans, and then make doujin of doujin as creators. For example, there are many doujin novels and illustrations based on the famous doujin game Tsuki hime. They are a typical example for "doujin of doujin".

In a word, doujin fans always have needs for creating doujin works. But they do not have enough skills and spare time to make it.

Another problem is money. Data shows that the annual budget of 70% Comiket circles continues to run a deficit every year.[10] Though very few of doujin circles make lives exclusively by selling doujin works, they still need continuous encouragements, praises and rewards to keep moving forward.

In order to solve these problems, we try to design a new platform to explore a way that leads to win-win collaboration between doujin fans and doujin creators.

Project Kita aims to design an online platform that allows doujin fans to order doujin works from doujin creators. It is a crowdfunding website. Firstly, doujin fans can give topics and descriptions to order doujin works from doujin creators. Then creators set up the ordered projects and rewards, and fans purchase to back up the projects. Finally, fans get the works and rewards, creators get money.

Its design helps doujin fans to request creators with high level skills and enough spare time to create customized doujin works for them. At the same time, creators can get money, free *neta* (in Japanese means topic and inspiration) and quick feedbacks.

Kita will satisfy creative needs and consumer needs of doujin fans. They attend in creative process by giving order, descriptions and consuming, and do not have to learn skills or spend more time to make good doujin on their own. Just make the order, and creators will create the doujin works for them.

Kita will bring money and creativity experiences to doujin creators. It expands the profit-making process in doujin activities. Also, creators can make progress from working on projects and communicating with their sponsors.

Kita fills the gap between fans and creators. A user plays the roles of fan and creator at the same time. Kita provides users with the experience to communicate by creating doujin works.

Notes

1   :   ,P14

2

3   `http://www.pixiv.net/member_illust.php?mode=medium&illust_id=40099644`

4   Galbraith (2009, 48)

5   Excluding private industry showcase like Tokyo Motor Show.

6   `http://www.comiket.co.jp/index_e.html`

7   Galbraith (2009, 49)

8   Galbraith (2009, 48)

9   `www.pixiv.net`

10   `http://plaza.rakuten.co.jp/fantag/diary/200811230000/`

Chapter 2
Related Works

2.1 Crowdfunding Platform for Proposing Doujin Works

2.1.1 Kickstarter

Kickstarter[1] (Figure 2.1) is a crowdfunding platform based in the United States. It allows users to raise financing from people on the Internet willing to donate to the cause. The users need to sign up an account, and then fill out their project details. They are encouraged to describe everything in detail, as there will be crews reviewing forms and determining whether to accept the project or not. A special feature of Kickstarter is backer reward. The project founders will create rewards with different kinds of price point, and if the backers pledge the price and claim the reward, they will get the reward but only if the funding is successful. Kickstarter charges 5% fee for successful projects. For Amazon Payment is used to in the transaction, Amazon will apply credit card processing fees, which are 3–5% of raised project fund.

Kickstarter is designed for creative projects. It focuses on music, film, technology, art, design, food and publishing. People from musicians to filmmakers has found success on it, which focuses solely on startup financing for creative projects.

The site also brings in backers through the promise of rewards. Individuals will set up a proposal to create a product, and in exchange for funding, backers may receive a free item upon completion, regular updates, personal communications with designers, etc. That creates a loyal base of financiers who will spread the word about a project to increase the likelihood that they'll receive their payoff.

Kickstarter has succeeded to bring in backers through the promise of rewards. Creators will set up a proposal to create a product and in exchange for funding. Instead, backers may receive free items upon completion, personal communications
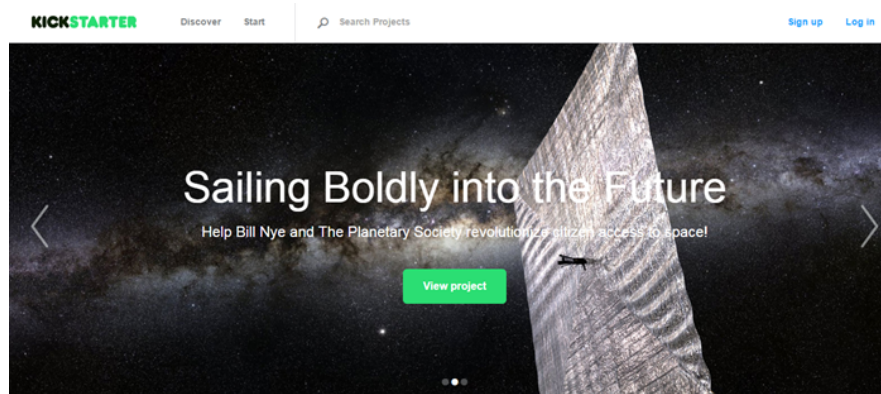
Figure 2.1: The Screenshot of Kickstarter

with creators. It shows a practical way for crowdfunding platform: To encourage creators to create value for the people who support them.

However, from the global point of view, the biggest downside of Kickstarter is that the project creators have to be a permanent U.S. resident with a Social Security number. And it only reserves for US, UK and Canadian companies. Also, Kickstarter sends project creators through an approval process. The proposals must be forward-thinking and artistic enough to qualify. As a result, it sets a high hurdle for people to share their creative values. By now, there is only one doujin project called" 2013 Moe Headphones Design Doujin by Lunatic Joker " [2] in Kickstarter.

2.1.2   Modian

Modian[3] (Figure 2.2) is a crowdfunding platform based in China. According to its official introduction, it is the first crowdfunding platform for creators to propose creative projects. The same with Kickstarter, Modian allows users to raise financing from people on the Internet willing to donate. There are five genres on the homepage: game, animation and comics, publishing, fan support, others. A report[4]from game agency says 80% are game projects in Modian currently. And the company is ready to make new classifications inside the" game " genre. Comparing to game, there are only 3 doujin projects in the animation and comics genre.

But in the fan supporting genre, project "AKB48 41st single selection general election: vote for Shimazaki Haruka" has already funded 462,601 Yuan. In the
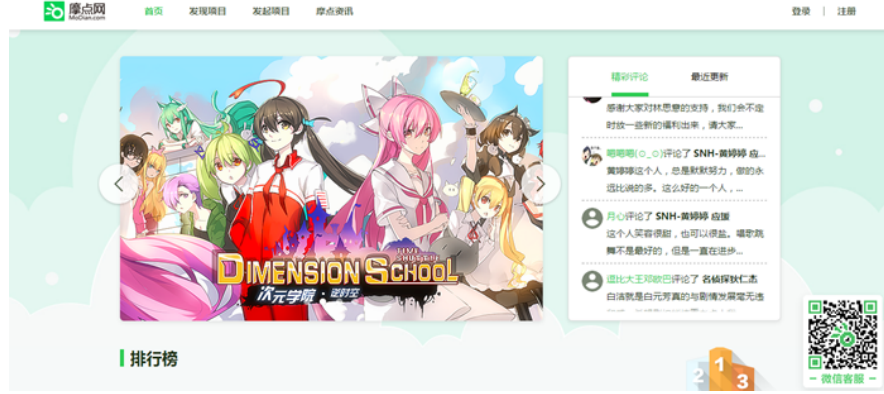
Figure 2.2: The Screenshot of Modian

Japanese idol group AKB48, to obtain a ballot, voters must purchase the group's latest "election single". Members who receive the most votes will participate in the recording of AKB48's next single and be heavily promoted, with the top vote-getter the centerpiece of the group's live performances.[5] It means that Modian is trying to expand the network to more areas.

Modian has reached its original goal as a crowdfunding platform to support creators. The interface is designed simple so as to easily find what to do next. Foreign users can also create a project freely by it, the same as Chinese users. In E-Sports area, it has been funded over 500, 0000 Yuan, and managed to satisfy the target users.

As is claimed that Modian is designed for creators to propose creative projects, it is still hard for doujin fans to participate. The reason is that crowdfunding project begins from creators. When there is value to provide, then project is born. It is one-dimensional and no space for backers to reveal their needs and orders.

2.2   Doujin Matome Sites

2.2.1   Denbun 2Channel SS Matome

Denbun 2Channel SS Matome[6] (Figure 2.3) is a simple curation platform that helps doujin fans to check updates of doujin matome sites. In Japanese, the word "matome" means round-up, collect, mass, or summary. This site is a round-up of

different kinds of doujin matome blogs and links related to doujin works. On the left side it has a long list to show the update time of each blogs and the abstracts of doujin works. Also, users can check the pick-up on the right side of page to choose from titles. Finally, there are top hits for users to explore good doujin works. In the Android application[7] (Figure 2.4), users can distinguish from the same doujin works displayed in different sites.

Figure 2.3: The Screenshot of Denbun 2Channel SS Matome

Denbun 2Channel SS Matome is designed to help users overcome doujin information overflow. This is especially necessary for doujin beginners, which is doujin matome sites' biggest user segment. It tries to offer a new perspective on offering doujin works and searching doujin works in an easy way.

Denbun 2Channel SS Matome does a very good job in doujin content aggregation. In the early version, the website looked as a set of links, but then it changed to the current style. Also, the application is easy to operate. For doujin lovers, it is comfortable to stick to the site; they do not have to check blogs around.

But from the information gathered, doujin matome sites like Denbun 2Channel SS need to switch to content curation in order to combat against information overload. Anyway, it shows a good way to display doujin works and do help doujin fans to find out doujin works they like.

2.2.2 Bangumi

Bangumi[8] (Figure 2.5) is a Chinese doujin matome site, which allows doujin fans to search doujin event information, to write notes, to edit entries of doujin works.

Figure 2.4: The Android Application of Denbun 2Channel SS Matome

It is designed and developed by the programmer Sai in 2008. According to its official introduction, the purpose of Bangumi is to create a fine doujin database of animation, comics and games, and let every doujin fans communicate freely with each other. All the data of Bangumi is entirely provided by users. User can collect entries, give comments or evaluation, and all this behaviors will affect the entries' ranking. Bangumi is known as the most comprehensive doujin database in China. Now it has 180,000 entries, almost covered every genre of doujin works. Also, it provides services to help users take records of doujin works.

From the description above, it seems that Bangumi is more like a Chinese doujin wiki site, but not a typical doujin matome site in Japanese style. Different from the Denbun 2Channel SS Matome, as an extension, Bangumi also purpose to set up a big community for doujin fans.

Bangumi is a very successful product for doujin lovers. They can find information of doujin works and doujin events easily from the database. Any user, no matter experienced doujin users or not, can easily understand its system and start to use entries immediately. Many Chinese doujin lovers believed that " if one wants to know the situation of Chinese doujin, one just need to come to this site ".

Figure 2.5: The Screenshot of Bangumi

But still, it only works as an exhibition doujin site, and there are already several similar doujin communities existing in China. How to provide original doujin contents to users? To deal with this issue, we have researched some user-generated content platforms.

2.3   User-Generated Content Platforms

2.3.1   Pixiv

Pixiv[9] (Figure 2.6) is an online community for artists launched by Takahiro Kamitani on September 10, 2007. As of February 2014, the site consists of over 10 million members.[10] Pixiv aims to provide a platform for artists to exhibit their illustrations and get feedback via comments and rating system. The main feature of Pixiv is tagging. Keywords describe artworks and help users quickly find out illustrations that may interest them. Each work can have up to 10 tags and it makes searching for specific works easier. Users can upload their works to the server and share with friends. They can also bookmark artworks or view other users' bookmarks. Another convenient function is that users can add favorite artists to a favorites list, in order to get a personalized feed of new artworks from all their favorite artists. In the rating system, Pixiv allows people to rate artwork using a 1-10 scale. Higher rated works are published on daily (weekly, monthly) ranking boards. This rating system enables you to determine how popular your works are, and presents your best works to a larger audience via ranking boards. For doujin

fans, Pixiv is a good community, and thousands of doujin works (illustrations and doujin novels) are uploaded by doujin creators every day.

Figure 2.6: The Screenshot of Pixiv

Pixiv is a typical user-generated content platform. User-generated content is defined as "any form of content such as blogs, wikis, discussion forums, posts, chats, tweets, podcasting, pins, digital images, video, audio files, and other forms of media that is created by users of an online system or service, often made available via social media websites".[11] Many user-generated content events (related to a common specific subject) are held on Pixiv by the operators. For example, the new event " Phantom of Kill " [12] is to design new characters for a game. The winner can get 100,000 JPY, and his or her work will be used in the game. At the same time, users' choices and opinions become more transparent under this new paradigm.

Pixiv's English slogan is "A place where drawing becomes more enjoyable." It enables a social experience of doujin works creation and collaboration. Its design successfully makes users create doujin works on the platform. Pixiv also utilizes a community to provide many benefits for the site above and beyond the content itself. It creates a feeling of belonging in their contributors and a sense of connection between the users.

2.3.2 Nico Nico Douga

Nico Nico Douga[13] is a video sharing platform managed by Niwango, a subsidiary of Dwango. It was originally created as a mash up of Youtube and 2-channel the latter is Japan's most popular BBS (bulletin board system).[14] It is a user-generated content platform where users can upload, view and share video clips.

For example, "MAD videos" is a popular genre in Nico Nico. It refers to doujin music videos, which often combine with original songs and hand-made pictures. Also, sounds and animation from commercial animation are used in these videos. And, the most remarkable innovation of Nico Nico Douga is the way comments are placed. Users can write down comment lines directly on the moving image. For example, they can give comments while watching videos. At the same time, they can see the comments passing through the screen, as part of the video. It is called Danmaku (Figure 2.7) in Japanese, to describe the flying comment lines as barrage of bullets.
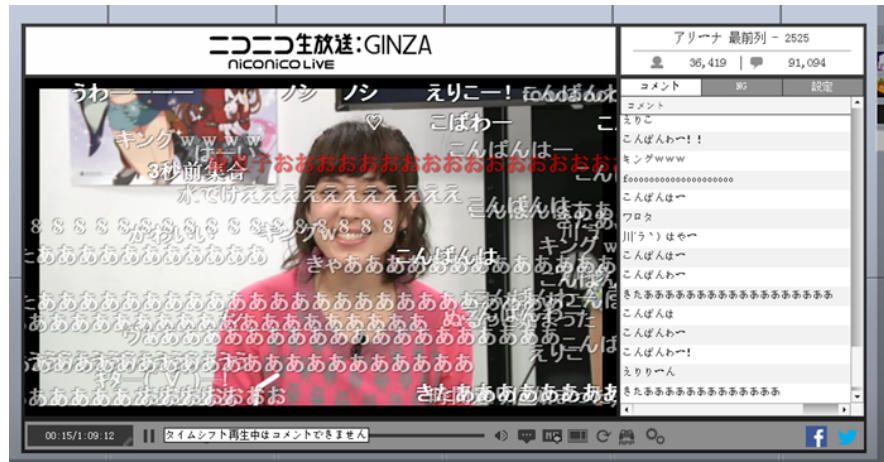
Figure 2.7: Danmaku in Nico Nico Douga

Nico Nico Douga provides the experience of real-time communication by sending Danmaku. Compare with other video sites, it gives users more freedom to get the feeling of commitment, so that they will not get bored easily. And because its interface is designed in the style of TV channel, it let users feel more of watching live TV shows rather than watching online videos.

2.3.3 YouYaoQi

YouYaoQi[15] (Figure 2.8) is China's largest online web comic site. It allows users to upload their works and share with friends on Chinese SNS. Also, users can bookmark works they like. YouYaoQi contains various different kinds of Chinese original web comics. By now, there are more than 5 million registered users and 20,000 creators, over 40,000 comics. Different from Pixiv, it is more like a combine

of Nico Nico Douga and online comic website. Users can write down notes and comments directly on the comics, like immobile Danmaku. For some outstanding creators, they may sign up a contract with the operate company and become a professional manga artist. Users can vote for them. The higher evaluation they give, the more rewards the creators receive.

Figure 2.8: The Screenshot of YouYaoQi

YouYaoQi manages to boost Chinese original comics by this reward system. Moreover, they are trying to expand the business to, for example, publishing books of web comics. On the other hand, its weak point is obvious. As most web comics are created by amateurs, the quality is still not good enough to be published. As a result, it is very hard for YouYaoQi to get profit.

2.4   Doujin Online Shops

2.4.1   Comic Toranoana

Comic Toranoana[16]is a doujin shop operated by the Toranoana Inc. It specializes in selling doujin works and manga related items. Customers in Japan can purchase goods from local stores, or its online shop (Figure 2.9). For doujin fans, they can pick up goods to cart and pay on credit card or delivery. Different from common e-commerce shops, it censored for sex and violence contents by a ratings system. User who wants to purchase adults doujin works must provide age information. Another function of Comic Toranoana is to work as a doujin work sales agent.

For doujin creators, they request the store (both online shop) to sell doujin works for them. It may cost less if they sell doujin works directly on doujin events, but it is worth paying for the good promotions from Toranoana.

Figure 2.9: Toranoana's Online Shop

Comic Toranoana provides thousands of doujin works and convenient experience for many doujin lovers. But the same with its kin, Melon Books[17] and Comic Zin[18], they do not accept orders from overseas because they do not provide international shipping service.

2.4.2   Pixiv Booth

Pixiv Booth[19] (Figure 2.10) is a web service launched by Pixiv on December 19, 2013. User can open an online shop without any costs, and sell his or her own doujin works. The contents include illustrations, photos, music and videos. Also, doujin works in digital forms are accepted. And users do not have to know much about web design. The interface can be customized easily by the default system. However, Pixiv will charge 3.6% service fee for every success transaction. But comparing to other similar services, like BASE[20] and STORES.jp[21], it is quite cheap.

The most important feature of Pixiv Booth is the connection to Pixiv. Users can search goods through tags on Pixiv, and get alarm messages from booths.

Pixiv is trying to combine e-commerce, doujin community and user-generated content platform. Furthermore, doujin works in digital forms will become more and more important in future doujin business. Because doujin works are usually

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Figure 2.10: Pixiv Booth

sold on events, and all online shops do not accept the selling of digital doujin works.

2.5   Summary

This related work includes creation, display, distribution and purchase of doujin works. Doujin lovers use crowdfunding platforms and user-generated content platforms to create doujin works, and share them through matome sites and doujin communities. Finally, doujin works are sold on events or online doujin shops.

By now, there is still no such a product or service that focuses on providing the customized doujin works and fun experience of doujin community. Kita will be the one to fill the gap.

Notes

1   www.kickstarter.com

2   https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/sekaiproject/2013-moe-headphones-design-by-lunatic-joker

3   http://www.modian.com/

4   http://news.17173.com/content/2015-05-18/20150518114848539.shtml

5   http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/08/24/reference/girl-idol-group-about-mass-exposure-fans/#.VXBGdBz5-TU

6   http://ss2ch.r401.net/

7   http://ss2ch.r401.net/android

8   `http://doujin.bgm.tv/`

9   `http://www.pixiv.net/`

10   `http://www.pixiv.net/info.php?id=2250&lang=en`

11   Chua et al. (2014)

12   `http://www.pixiv.net/contest/phantom_of_kill`

13   `http://www.nicovideo.jp/`

14   `http://d.hatena.ne.jp/metagold/20080513/1210650303`

15   `http://www.u17.com/`

16   `http://www.toranoana.jp/mailorder/`

17   `https://www.melonbooks.co.jp/`

18   `http://www.comiczin.jp/`

19   `https://booth.pm/ja`

20   `https://thebase.in/`

21   `https://stores.jp/`

Chapter 3
Concept and Method

Kita offers convenient experience of delivering doujin works to doujin fans through crowdfunding method:

1. It provides customized doujin works for doujin fans.
2. It helps the doujin creators get money from creating doujin works.
3. It helps the doujin creators get topics and inspiration from doujin fans.
4. It motivates and encourages communications among users.

3.1   The Fun and Needs in Doujin Activities

The motivation of Kita project comes from my own experience. I am an otaku of games and anime and I love doujin very much. As a doujin fan, I have been enjoying doujin novels, games and music for 15 years. And I have done Chinese translation of Japanese doujin works in my spare time. There is nothing that will distract me from the mundane minutiae of my routine better than a fine original doujin works. And good fan fictions often contain a lot more information than its original work. Doujin connects me with a more interesting world. As a doujin creator, I have written fan fictions of animation and games. It is a big fun for me to imagine the possibilities of stories and express my opinions to others.

But there are some problems in my doujin life. On one hand, sometimes I have some ideas for an interesting doujin novel, and I really desire for it. But the fact is that I find myself not having enough ability or time to turn the story in my mind into reality. More ever, when I want to turn my story into pictures or manga, it is even harder for me—I cannot draw well. What I need is fine doujin works and fun experience, but there is a hurdle for people like me without enough skills and spare time to enjoy it.

On the other hand, as a doujin creator, I have been always dreaming about

becoming a writer who could make a living by writing doujin novels. But then I find that it is really difficult. I have published a book, and controlled the cost carefully in every step. After I have done it, only a few people in China who know what doujin is would like to buy my books. I haven't got any profit from making doujin works.

Another problem is the lack of topics and inspiration. In Japanese it is called " neta ". If someone have provided me with some interesting neta, it would have been better for me to keep writing.

For reasons above, I begin to think about the solution: How about looking for someone who has good writing and drawing skills to create my story for me? Based on this idea, I start the Kita project. I want to create and design a way for doujin fans to pay money and get doujin creators makes customized doujin works for them. At the same time, I want to help doujin creators make profit by creating doujin works on Kita, and get more topics and inspiration from doujin fans. With all these good communications, there should be fun and convenient doujin activities for all doujin fans and creators.

3.1.1   Creativity Needs in Doujin Activities

Creativity needs in doujin activities come from the identification of people who love doujin. To explain this, I use strategies based on Nicolas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst's (1998) Spectacle/Performance paradigm of media circulation.

According to this approach, it is proposed that the novel form of performativity, facilitated by mass communications, results in the virtual elimination of cultural distance between performers and audience, whereby two simultaneous processes have occurred: the world has been constructed as " spectacle " and individuals have become constructed as narcissistic performers. There are two important ideas in this theory. One is media consumption, the other one is defined/performed identities. Everyone is audience of media circulation. But they will not enjoy media products passively; they will search the products which fit their taste on their own. Then their taste can be expressed by the behavior of consumption.

Creativity needs in doujin activities can be explained by this paradigm. Fans publish different kinds of doujin works and give comments. At the same time, they get their images from comments and feedbacks from others by these performances, and doujin works has been constructed as spectacle. The re-creation of original

works is more important than ordinary media consumption of doujin fans and creators. They identify themselves in this Spectacle/Performance circle, and get the feeling of being idols.

3.1.2 Belongingness in Doujin Circles

Belongingness is a strong and inevitable feeling that exists in doujin circles. It is the human emotional need to be accepted as a member of a group. This implies a relationship that is greater than simple acquaintance or familiarity. The need to belong is the need to give and receive affection.[1]

According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs[2] (Figure 3.1), which is a theory of human motivation usually represented as a pyramid with basic needs at the bottom. As Maslow's theory suggests, the need to belong is a major source of human motivation. It is one of 5 human needs in the hierarchy of needs, along with physiological needs, safety, self-esteem, and self-actualization. One important point is that these needs are arranged on a hierarchy and must be satisfied in order. After physiological and safety needs are met, an individual can then work on meeting the need to belong and be loved.
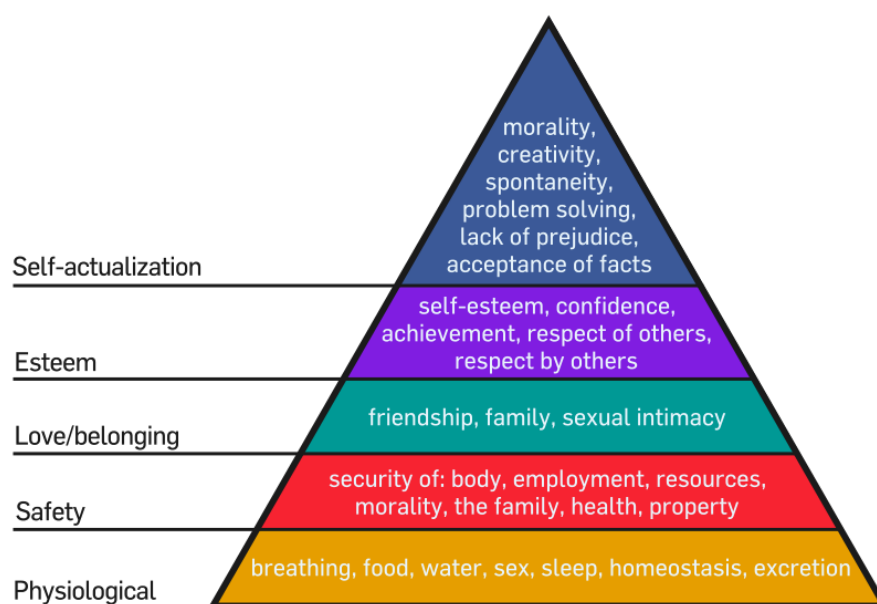

Figure 3.1: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

As doujin fans and creators, doujin circles are the communities that based on interest. People who love doujin are eager to integrate into circles. When they become members of the circles, they will get identification and more communications, which means more fun. This is the original definition and defined attribute of doujin. In the Spectacle/Performance circle, doujin fans and creators obtain the identification of themselves. Also, members in doujin circles gain identification in the process of chasing belongingness.

3.1.3 Conducting Needs Assessment Survey

In December 2014, a web based survey was held among doujin fans and creators. This survey was held to find out the thoughts and needs of doujin fans and creators when they enjoy and create doujin works. The survey was filled out by 50 people, 30 males and 20 females aged from 18 to 39, who have experience of both creating and enjoying other's doujin works.

The survey was divided into three parts. In the first part, there were two open questions and one closed question about motivation and participation in doujin activities. All of the participants were asked for their opinions. In the second session, the participants were divided into two groups according to their answers in the first session. For the group of doujin fans, they were asked about the reason why they consider themselves as doujin fans, but not doujin creators. For the group of doujin creators, they were asked about the reason that what make themselves become doujin creators. In the last session, there were several questions about needs for both the group of doujin fans and group of doujin creators.

The questions were asked in the following 3 categories:

1. Creativity needs in doujin activities
2. Self-identification of doujin fans and creators
3. The needs of doujin fans and creators

And, the outcomes of the first session are as follows:

1. To the open question " Do you like doujin? Why? " the answers fell into three types:" The story is not good enough. I want to create a better one. " " The story is really excellent. But I want to see some different possibilities of the story, to create a parallel world of it. " " Because doujin is a simple way for everyone to share and publish their works. "

2. To the open question" How can you take part in doujin activities?" the answers were" enjoy and pay for doujin works"" drawing"" writing novels" " composing music" and" creating games".

3. To the closed question" Do you consider yourself as a doujin creator or a doujin fan?" 36 people answered" doujin fan" and 14 people answered " doujin creator".

The outcomes of the second session are as follows:

1. To the open question" Why you think that you are not a doujin creator?" the answers from group of doujin fans fell into four types: " Because I am busy with my work, do not have enough time to create doujin works." " I cannot make good doujin works because I do not have enough abilities and skills." " It is not necessary for me to do it, for I am satisfied with enjoying doujin works as an bystander." " I do not like to be judged by others. Enjoying doujin as an bystander makes me feel relaxed."

2. To the open question" In your opinion, what is the reason that makes you becomes a doujin creator?" the answers from group of doujin creators fell into two types: " I think I have some skills that help me to create doujin works, such as drawing, writing and composing music." " I love to share my doujin works with others. It makes me feel happy and gives me a sense of accomplishment."

And the outcomes of the final session are as follows:

1. To the closed question" Do you feel satisfied with enjoying doujin works just as a bystander?", 16 people from the group of doujin fans chose" Yes", and other 34 people chose" No. But it is hard for me to create the doujin works I want."

2. To the closed question" If there is some ways that allows you to order your own doujin works from creators, will you like to try?", 44 doujin fans chose the answer" I would like to try if the price is reasonable." and 6 people chose" No".

3. To the closed question" What are the difficulties when you tried creating doujin works?", 30 people chose" Time is not enough", 45 people chose " Hard to get profit" and 32 people chose" Lack of inspiration".

4. To the closed question" If there is some ways that allows you to get money and free topics from other doujin fans directly, will you like to try?", all doujin creators chose the answer" Yes".

After all, the outcomes of the survey show that doujin fans have creativity needs in doujin activities. But, the restriction of time and skills is the main reason that makes doujin fans enjoy doujin creating activities simply as bystanders. On the other hand, for doujin creators, they have skills and strong motivation to create and share their works with other fans. But similar kinds of restriction do exist as well as for doujin fans, such as time, profit and lacking of inspirations.

In conclusion, doujin fans do have the needs of ordering doujin works. It is notable that the word " order " here has two meanings: To get doujin works in a proper price, and to get customized doujin works which demonstrate fans' ideas. And, doujin creators do have the needs of creative ideas and financial support. So the mission is clear: To find a solution to satisfy the needs and connect doujin fans and creators together.

3.2   Crowdfunding Approach

Crowdfunding[3] method is one of the solutions. Crowdfunding is a funding method where common people, henceforth the crowd, fund personal or public projects with their own money. We can check out this picture to get a clearer idea of the flow of crowdfunding[4](Figure 3.2).

By focusing on a specific purpose, the project creators will be able to build a unique community of likeminded individuals. It is in accordance with the concept of doujin and doujin circles. And each project is set with a goal amount of money and a fixed time limit. Project creators can create a project profile containing a picture or short video, an introduction to their project, a list of rewards per donation. Once the project is launched, each day will be counted down and the money raised will be tallied up for visitors to follow its trace.

The concept of Crowdfunding appeared in 2006 and spread wide very quickly. By now, there are numerous crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo, where users can ask for or donate money safely. Instead of traditional investment projects, crowdfunding projects in theses platforms are funded by the general public. Typically, most successful projects receive about 25-40% of their funding from their first, second and third degree of connections, which include friends, family, work acquaintances, or anyone that the owner is directly connected to.[5] Once a project has seen some traction, unrelated consumers start coming out of the woodwork to support campaigns they believe in.[6]

The Crowdfunding Centre's May 2014 report identified the existence of two pri-
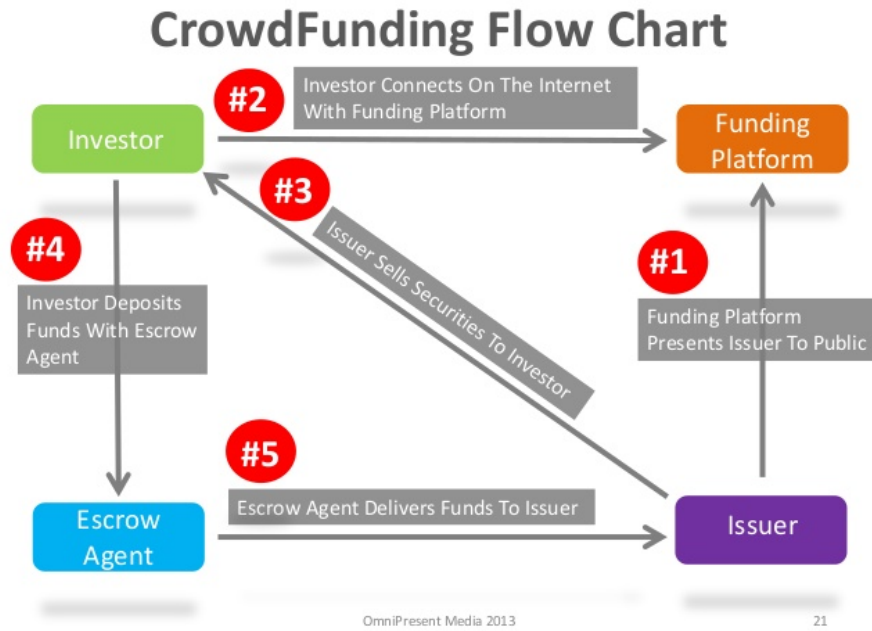
Figure 3.2: Crowdfunding Flow Chart

mary types of crowdfunding. One is rewards-based crowdfunding: entrepreneurs pre-sell a product or service to launch a business concept without incurring debt or sacrificing equity/shares. Another one is equity crowdfunding, which means the backer receives shares of a company, usually in its early stages, in exchange for the money pledged. The company's success is determined by how successfully it can demonstrate its viability.

Kita belongs to rewards-based crowdfunding platform. We strive to decompose the process of creating doujin works into a typical crowdfunding flow. In the implementation, demands of doujin fans can be satisfied. They can buy customized doujin works from doujin creators. When one doujin crowdfunding project ends successfully, both fans and creators can get knowledge and experience about creating doujin works[7] (Figure 3.3).

The reason why we choose crowdfunding method as the solution is that crowdfunding can gather capital and users to support the creation of niche products very well. Doujin works are typical niche products. Doujin works can be made and designed cost-effectively by crowdfunding. From the history of doujin, we know that it costs a lot to publish or create amateur doujin works. The cost here includes time cost, opportunity cost and cost of capital. Doujin creators can get

24

Benefits of Crowdfunding
A crowd with a vested interest is more than money

Knowledge/Experience	Funders bring relevant industry knowledge and experience to the table
Strategy	They assist the entrepreneur in crafting winning strategies
Market Opportunity	They provide introductions to entrepreneurs that provide valuable market opportunities
Product	They assist in refining a product offering so that it meets the demands of the market
Demand	They assist entrepreneurs in gauging demand for a product by attaching monetary bets on the company's future
Money	And they provide the capital entrepreneurs need to execute on vision

Figure 3.3: Benefits of Crowdfunding

money earlier and easier through crowdfunding to create those doujin works they like. And for the doujin fans, if you desire for something special, such as customized doujin works, maybe there are only a few people share the same interest as yours. This means, your needs might be overlooked by doujin creators. But in crowdfunding, creators can check customer needs previously to avoid idle work.

To satisfy niche interests and needs—this is the core value of crowdfunding.

3.2.1   Simplicity Design

Simplicity refers to the state or quality of being simple. Something which is easy to understand or explain seems simple, in contrast to being complicated. It is an important measure of the quality of website. In Kita, simplicity is the core of crowdfunding process. Every visualizable part should consistent with the core.

The key elements included in simplicity design are listed as below:

1. Remove features: remove what does not get used and what does not add anything meaningful to the essence of the platform. But too few features can make things more complex to use.

2. Hide features: some elements should not be removed, but they don't demand users' attention at all time. Move them out but allow them to be findable when needed. Kita uses drop down menus to hide what is unnecessary.

3. Group features: place elements and parts of crowdfunding flows into logical groups can make them easier to find.

4. Displace features: users can move features and options to another location. For instance, to remove buttons from a remote control in favor of a single button leading to an on screen menu.

It is crucial to improve the simplicity of the user interface, for it leads to usability[8] (Figure 3.4)—less need for instruction and support. Especially for a crowdfunding platform with complex flow and rules, simplicity provides better experience for users.
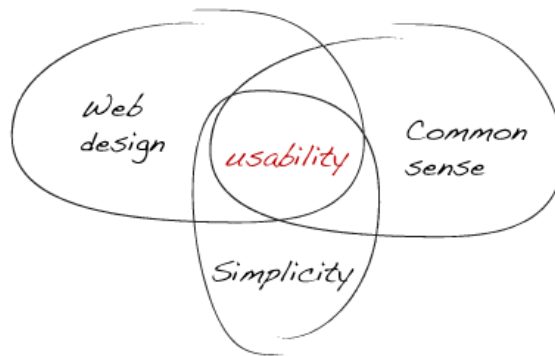

Figure 3.4: Usability of Web Design

3.2.2   Complexity Design

As the opposite side of simplicity design, complexity design[9] (Figure 3.5) is generally used to characterize something with many parts where those parts interact with each other in multiple ways. A platform can seem complicated because it has too many fuzzy rules. But we must discover the hidden existed situations, and dig deep enough into complexity before we start simplify.

The key elements included in complexity design are listed as below:
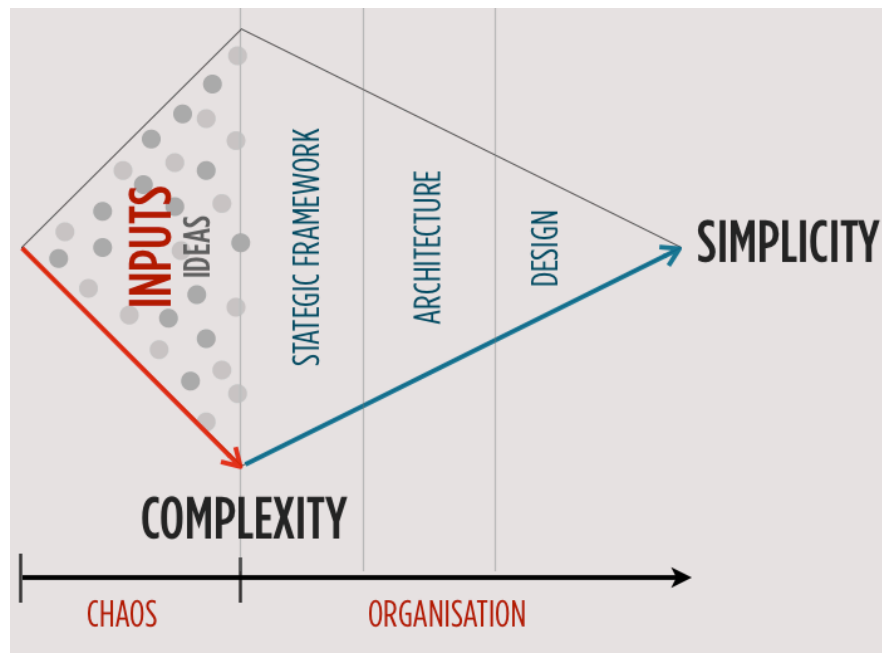
Figure 3.5: Complexity Design

1. Grouping: find similarities and differences, and then use them to make relationship between inputs.
2. Adding: fill some empty areas with regenerated ideas, in order to increase resolutions.
3. Changing: refine and modify information until it fits into structure.
4. Defining: first, each space has a function. We need to define them specifically to help understanding the whole structure.

Notes

1   Fiske (2004)

2   http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maslow's_Hierarchy_of_Needs.svg

3   http://www.forbes.com/sites/tanyaprive/2012/11/27/what-is-crowdfunding-and-how-does-it-benefit-the-economy/

4   http://www.slideshare.net/The_Cambrian_Cloud/crowdfunding-23952092

5   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_degrees_of_separation

6   http://www.forbes.com/sites/tanyaprive/2012/11/27/what-is-crowdfunding-and-how-does-it-benefit-the-economy/

7   http://venturebeat.com/2014/01/15/crowdfunding-report-signals-increased-
     revenue-jobs-and-deal-flow/

8   http://savvycomsoftware.com/simplicity-for-web-design-part-2/

9   http://design.activeside.net/why-designers-should-seek-complexity

Chapter 4

Implementation

4.1 Development History

To find out the most suitable plan, we have tried different types of crowdfunding. This is the process for the experiments and improvements of Kita.

As the first step, the goal is to create a successful crowdfunding platform for Chinese doujin fans and creators. This request comes from the sponsor of Kita project Tencent[1], a leading IT company in China. For Doujin and doujin culture born in Japan, the doujin market is well-developed. But in China, doujin is still supposed to be a kind of niche thing and Blue Ocean[2] exists. After make some progress in China, we consider spread the service more widely.

By now, Kita[3] only provides Chinese service.

4.1.1 Donation-Based Crowdfunding

Figure 4.1: Donation Based Crowdfunding

At the very start, we just had an idea to create a platform to link doujin fans and doujin creators together. The first idea developed was a donation-based

crowdfunding platform[4](Figure 4.1). It came from the original concept of doujin. There is an important view in doujin circles that doujin is considered to be noncommercial and not-for-profit. In the doujin history, the starting point of doujin activities is personal interests. Doujin works were created and spread in specific circles just for love, not for profit. From this point of view, donation-based crowdfunding is the collective effort of individual doujin fans to help doujin creators.

The original non-profit prototype allows the doujin fans to donate money to doujin creators directly. After doujin fans login, they can check out works from other registered doujin creators and sponsor them through online payment.

This prototype is for crowdfunded projects. General appeals and promotions for doujin circles are not the work of Kita. If doujin creators have got a project, or can cut their organizational costs into project, it is ok. And it is supposed to be a crowdfunding platform to offer zero-fees on all donations. Not like Kickstarter, no hidden 5% platform fees and no 3% credit card fees.

This prototype tries to encourage doujin creators to create doujin works, and provide doujin fans with doujin works regardless of the amount of donation. Meanwhile, the creators will receive 100% of what doujin fans donate. For example, if a doujin project needs $100 to get started but only raise $99, it will not be launched in case on most existed platforms. But with Kita you can still keep what you raise and help those doujin creators.

An experiment was held to test the direction of this crowdfunding platform. 20 doujin fans and 7 doujin creators (5 of which are illustrators and 2 of which are writers) were invited to test this prototype. First, the creators were asked to set up projects freely to promote themselves. Second, we gave 500 test points as 500 RMB to the fans, and encourage them use these points to donate to the creators they like. When all donations finished we gathered feedbacks from the fans. 19 of them claimed that they should have the rights to know the uses of donations. 12 of them believed donation is not the best way to help creators, because they should earn the money by improved works.

The result shows that donation based crowdfunding method failed to be a solution. When doujin fans need doujin works, what they really want is reward. On this platform, donation cannot bring doujin works directly as reward. The relationship between doujin fans and creators should not be like donate-receive. Therefore the equal communication between doujin fans and creators are not satisfying.

4.1.2   Equity Crowdfunding

What we realize from the first prototype is that to give doujin fans and creators rewards might be a better option, on which we developed, the second idea. Although doujin is considered to be noncommercial and not-for-profit, we can try to put it into a typical business frame such as equity crowdfunding.

Equity crowdfunding[5] (Figure 4.2)means investors receive a stake in the company. It is the exchange of actual shares in a private company for capital. If company goes big, investors get a percentage of the prize.

Figure 4.2: Equity Crowdfunding

In this model, the creators are asked to set up their own doujin business brand instead of starting a company and the role of doujin fans is investors. Equity crowdfunding minimizes the fundraising process as well as relevant cost of time and money. Then doujin creators can spend more time on doujin works. But, they will no longer face investors one-on-one. Creators as entrepreneurs collect less feedback from critics, maybe this early business models are not honed.

However, the second prototyping is flawed. The reason is that equity crowdfunding from non-accredited investors is not quite legal in China. To avoid the risks, we decide to change the plan.

4.2   Rewards-Based Crowdfunding Platform

After learned from all the previous researches, experiments, prototypes and survey, we have finally decided the idea for the platform. It is to design a niche rewards-based crowdfunding platform for doujin fans and creators. It is shown in the survey that doujin fans have the needs of ordering doujin works and creativity needs. But the bottlenecks of time and skills is the main reason that make doujin

fans stay away from creating doujin works. For doujin creators, they have skills and strong motivation to create and share their works with other fans. But similar kinds of restrictions do exist as well as for doujin fans, such as time, profit and lacking of inspirations. It is also shown in the donation based prototype and discussion of equity crowdfunding that the difficulty of satisfying needs above. Based on these factors, the optimum approach is the rewards-based crowdfunding platform one.

As one popular type of crowdfunding platforms, rewards-based platform has been demonstrated practical by the great success of Kickstarter. According to the site, by May of 2015, people pledged $1,691,787,824 dollars to projects on Kickstarter and 84,287 projects have been funded successfully.[6]

Comparing to the other two types of crowdfunding, rewards-based crowdfunding access to cheap money more easily. Using rewards-based crowdfunding, creators raise money for their project without selling off any equity stake. These are donations. They can get many doujin fans committed to the success of the work. Also, this type of crowdfunding takes all the risk out of the financing. And if project fails, backers' rights can be protected. Anyway, it is pre-funding.

Another important reason is to use rewards-based crowdfunding progression in doujin activities. Doujin are based on niche interests. But doujin faces the same problems as other niche circles do: few participators, few promotions and high costs (time, opportunity and capital). As a solution, doujin works can be made cost-effectively by rewards-based crowdfunding. Doujin creators can get money earlier and easier. And doujin fans can get customized doujin works even if only a few people share the same interest as they do. By now, rewards-based crowdfunding has been developed for 18 years.[7] It has a practical structure, which means the rules and patterns already exist and can be borrowed to solve the problems in doujin activities.

4.2.1   Basic Idea

The idea is to let the doujin fans post order details on Kita, and creators can pick up those in which they are interested, and then set up a customized crowdfunding project available for funding up with a set deadline. The creators can set up projects to crowdfund for their own doujin works as well. Usually, illustrations, excerpts of doujin novels or videos are displayed to help doujin fans (as backers) get to understand the project. In return for backing up a project, fans receive

different rewards depending on the amount of funding they commit, which are defined by the creators behind the project. Interested supporters donate to the project and share their activities over social networks. If funding targets are hit before the project's deadline, the fund raising deal ends and monies are exchanged, rewards committed. At last, fans receive their rewards.

In one word, Kita is expected to be a niche rewards-based crowdfunding platform. There are three core missions of the design:

1. Provide customized doujin works and rewards for the doujin fans.
2. Let doujin creators get paid.
3. Provide convenient and reliable user experience.

4.2.2   Long Tail Theory
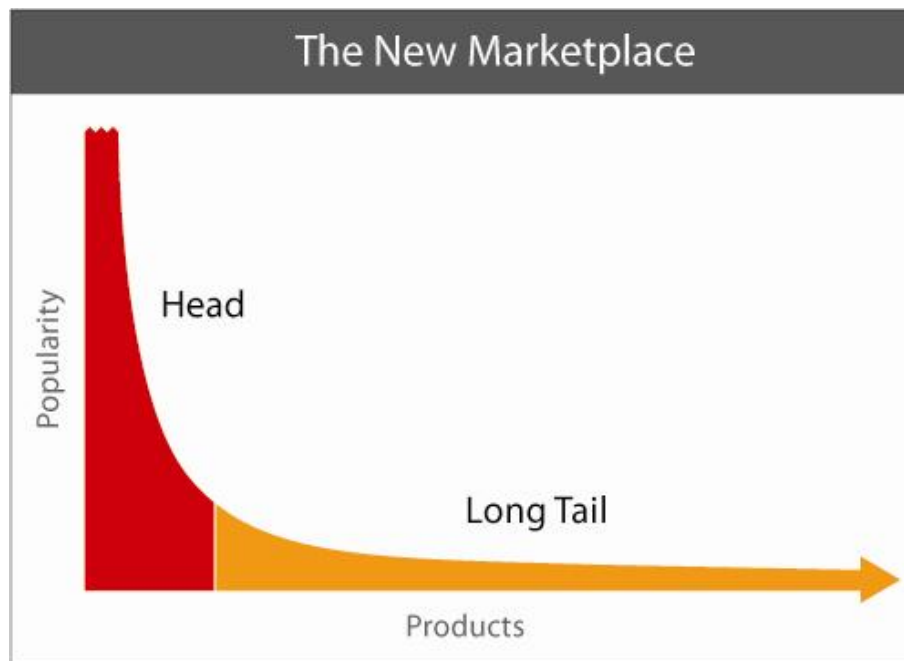
Figure 4.3: The Long Tail Theory

The long tail theory[8] (Figure 4.3) matters deeply in crowdfunding. It is a phrase coined by Chris Anderson, in 2004. Anderson argued that products that are in low demand or have low sales volume can collectively make up a market share that rivals or exceeds the relatively few current bestsellers and blockbusters,

but only if the store or distribution channel is large enough.[9] It deals with the impact created by a very large amount of very small contributions or actions, especially over an extended time period.

The long tail theory tends to work well for creative people who gather a great deal of material. Many crowdfunding projects are the work of just a few people, and no matter how talented they are, time is limited. So an important part tends to include finding ways to enable the long tail, allowing a batch of work to continue to earn money and attention over time, rather than keep bringing up more and more new work.

Although there used to be many ways to fund money, before the Internet appeared, people with similar niche interests scattered in corners and it was really difficult to find them. But now, everything is flat placed on Internet. It is very easy to find each other in a crowdfunding platform. Internet creates a long tail of people who share with niche interests.

4.2.3 Define Needs

At the beginning of a design process, we should define users' needs again from micro perspective. The reason is that the design of Kita is goal-oriented, which means all the details of design serve the needs of users. The goal of design is to satisfy users' needs, and provide more convenient and effective experience.

For the doujin fans, the needs are listed by ordering flow as following:

1. The doujin fans that link to this site will have the needs to understand the text.
2. The doujin fans need to know what the site is and how to use it.
3. The doujin fans need to post orders to describe their demands to the creators.
4. The doujin fans need to communicate with other users.
5. The doujin fans (as backers) need to decide to which projects they donate.
6. The doujin fans need to decide how much to donate and what rewards they are going to get.
7. The doujin fans need to purchase points safely to make the deal.
8. The doujin fans need to track the process of the donated project.
9. The doujin fans need to get their customized doujin works and rewards on time.

10. The doujin fans need to give feedbacks and evaluations to the doujin works and the creators.
11. The doujin fans need supports from web administrator when trouble occurs.
12. If project fail to get funded, the doujin fans need to get back their money.

And for the doujin creators, the main needs are listed by ordering flow as following:

1. The doujin creators that link to this site will have the needs to understand the text.
2. The doujin creators need to know what the site is and how to use it.
3. The doujin creators need to check the orders from the doujin fans to decide what to create.
4. The doujin creators need to communicate with other users.
5. The creators (as funders) need to decide the details of projects, such as name, introductions, time limit, fundraising goal points and rewards.
6. The creators need to finish the project on time.
7. The creators need to upload the doujin works in digital forms.
8. The doujin fans need to response to feedbacks and evaluations.
9. The doujin fans need supports from web administrator when trouble occurs.
10. The doujin fans need to get their points and money safely and smoothly.

To be clear, the lists above are embryonic settings of prototypes. They are only rough approximations, but necessary for designing future frameworks. It is incomplete to define users' needs only by purpose. Also, we should consider about emotional elements, users' behaviors, data and feedbacks from prototypes. Continuous revising and improving is the key for goal-oriented design of Kita. So, we will analyze the data and feedbacks from users in chapter 5, and discuss details of further improvements in chapter 6.

4.2.4   Structural Navigation Design

Interface design is the core part in website designing. The output of this stage directly affects the quality and effectiveness of the whole platform. If the frameworks turn to be a mass, it will be difficult to keep improving prototypes. For instance, if the route planning of an exhibition hall is bad, the result is surely to be inefficient even there are a lot of big signs. A good interface design allows users to quickly accomplish their goals and improve operational efficiency.

Figure 4.4: Kita's Homepage 1

The first stage of interface design for Kita is structural navigation style.[10] The purpose is to help users find out the orders and projects they are interested in.

From this screenshot of homepage (Figure 4.4), we can see that Kita use two buttons (In English the left button is "My Page" and the right button is "How to Use") as a structure navigation bar lying beside the logo. This layout is inspired by Kick starter. When people open the homepage, this simple navigation bar can help them keep their attention on limited but important information. On the right side of navigation area there is a search bar. If people click the logo, they are navigated back to homepage right away. And in the upper right-hand corner there are two entries: "register" and "login". After login, these buttons will turns to "message box" and "quit" like in the screen shot (Figure 4.5).

In this design, message box, personal information page, manual page and search bar are placed at the most obvious location in Kita. It means users can always see them on the top of pages for they are designed to satisfy the needs of communication and information.

For similar reasons, we design four main entries buttons on the right side. From top to bottom the texts are, in order, "Check other's orders", "Order list", "Check projects", "Project list", "For doujin fans", "Set orders", "For doujin creators" and "Start new project". They have covered all core functions of Kita: to display orders, to display projects, to set up orders, to set up projects. Users can find them easily on home page and comprehend what they can do with these

Figure 4.5: Kita's Homepage 2

buttons.
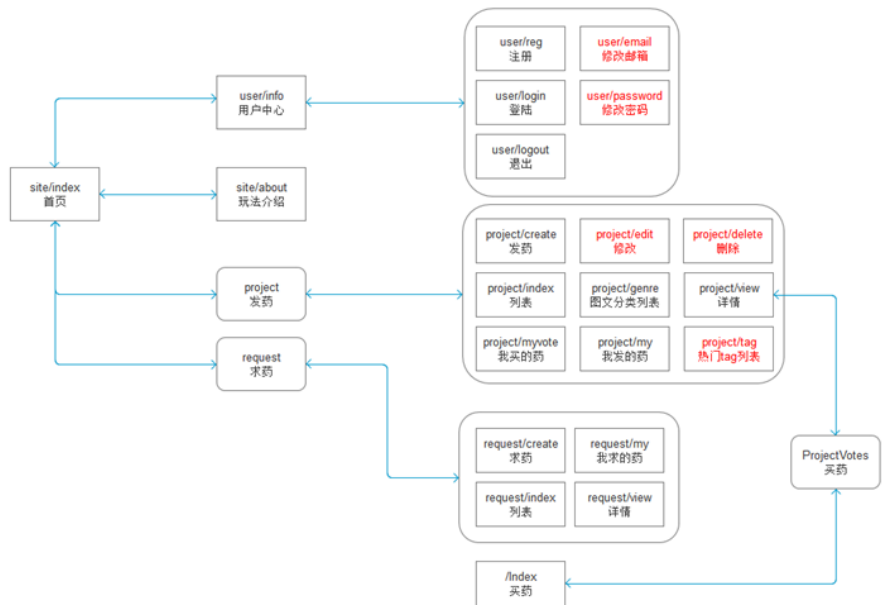
Figure 4.6: The Structure Navigation Figure of Kita

This is the final structure navigation figure of Kita (Figure 4.6).

4.2.5   Associative Navigation Design

Different from structural navigation designing (supposed to be focus on the whole classification and site architecture), associative navigation designing focus on specific information. At the second stage, the mission of interface design is to find a better way to recommend associated information to users. So we need to think about one core question: does the users really want to see this information? What can we provide next?

Actually, this question contains two sides. The first one is "the users need this information" and the other one is "the users does not need it". Different answers to these two sides will lead to different designs of association navigation. They are not in conflict, and associated navigation design is often considered to solve both at the same time.

This information is needed by users

Kita tries to provide the users with variety of associate information, to encourage consumption. That means, to spend more time and money on Kita. When the users login to the site and find the information they want, or complete a certain operation, what should they do next? If the users shut down the page because they have nothing to do, it is a loss. As one solution, first, similar information will be recommended to users. We assume that the users like current contents, and thus they are interested in others similar content. For example, after users check some projects in the order list page, the recommended tags[11] on the left (Figure 4.7) will change automatically and provide relevant information to users. If the users are indeed interested in the recommended information, it will be a successful associative navigation design.

Although this function is not yet completed by now, it is considered to be part of Kita's associative navigation designing.

This information is not needed by users

In this situation, the task of associative navigation design turns to be "how to provide necessary information". In web design, a good method to solve this problem is to recommend different types of information, which means if the users are not satisfied with current information, then they may be interested in other similar ones for they link to the current by navigation. As a precondition, relevant infor-

Figure 4.7: Kita's Project Page

mation here should be of high quality. In Kita, we use pick-up[12] to recommend more associate information (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Kita's Pick-up

It should be noted that in the associative navigation designing, ranking of all the projects in Kita have less meaning to the users. But similar sorts of information are comparable and meaningful to users. We divide two types of pick-ups: today's hot illustration and today's hot novel. In all the prototypes so far, we only have two kinds of projects as such. However, the ranking of top hits has been preserved in the index page, in order to test the effects of different associative navigation designing.

For the same reason, the headline slide is another associative design in Kita to recommend more associate information (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: The Headline Slides

4.2.6   Flow Design
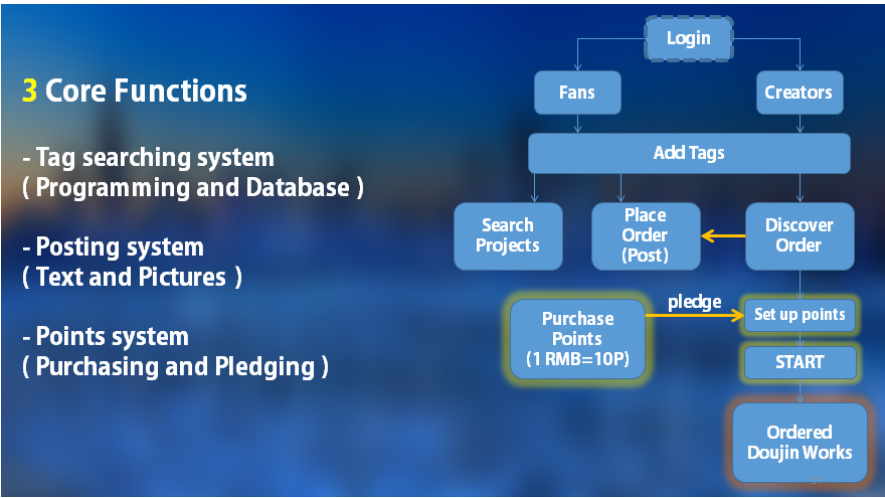
Figure 4.10: The Flow

After we finished the design works of structural navigations and associative navigations, the site modules and contents on each page are basically determined. Actually, an operable task is not completed on a single web page. We have to design the flow to clarify the tasks at the last stage of interface design. And, fault tolerant method should be used to help the users.

Figure 4.10 shows Kita's crowdfunding flow.

This design is needed to integrate the order, purchasing, rewards and online payment functions together and create reliable user experience, which should meet three core missions.

First, the length of flow should be limited. A long flow will confuse the users, especially people who are not familiar with crowdfunding. Also, too many options will be difficult for users to choose from. For example, we made two simple pages: one order page (Figure 4.11) and one check list (Figure 4.12). It looks like twitter; the users post their request, then they check it on the list and give comments.

Figure 4.11: The Order Page

Another important issue in flow designing is to give the users clear feedbacks promptly. The players feel uneasy if they do not know how the project is going. We design the SMS alerts to guide the users and keep them aware of the progress. For example, the fans can get an alert message automatically from system before deadline comes. And also a progress bar is used to visualize the crowdfunding progress, which is a must feature in most projects. By alerting and visualizing the project progress, the fans and creators can grasp and control the whole situation without losing their motivations.

On the creators' side, Figure 4.13 and Figure 4.14 show how to create a new project.

And then, Figure 4.15 shows the flow of purchasing.

Figure 4.12: The Check List

The followed page (Figure 4.16) is to help users purchase points through Alipay, which is a third-party online payment solution with no transaction fees. According to analyst research report, Alipay has the biggest market share in China with 300 million users and control of just under half of China's online payment market by February 2014.[13] The reason why we decided to use Alipay in Kita is that it provides an escrow service, in which consumers can verify whether they are satisfied with the project they have supported before releasing money to the creators. This service gives a good solution to the risk control issue of crowd funding projects.

Figure 4.13: Step1: To set up a new project

Figure 4.14: Step2: To set up a new project

Figure 4.15: Step1: To purchase

Figure 4.16: Step2: To purchase

4.2.7 Logo Design

The logo (Figure 4.17) serves as a symbol of Kita. Also, it is a big challenge to incorporate the ideologies into one single graphic.

Figure 4.17: Logo of Kita

The logo of Kita follows 3 basic principles of logo design:

1. Understand the story

This logo is the visual keystone of Kita, delivering the most concise expression of its personality. In Japanese, the word "kita" means "it is coming!" It is widely used on 2 Channel, a Japanese text board, also a symbol of doujin and otaku culture. When doujin fans discover good doujin works, they will say "kita!" loudly to express their happiness. Actually, it is from my own experience as a doujin fans and a doujin creator. I want to share this joy with everyone who loves doujin and doujin works like I do. This is my motivation to design this platform, though it takes me a long time to think about how to translate the word "kita" to Chinese, for this logo is designed for Kita's Chinese version.

Finally, it consists of two elements: A word mark which means "it is the time to take medicine" and a symbol of pills and capsule. We choose to stick to logotype entirely, for this name is unique enough. Among Chinese doujin fans and creators, the doujin works are often compared to medicine. There is an interesting explanation for this: Life is nonsense. People who love doujin are all like patients in the society. They will get sick without doujin works or just stay in the state of ecstasy. To keep calm and healthy, the patients need medicine, doujin lovers need doujin works. So, this logo implies the story, filled with meaning and context.

2. Unified colors

Every color has a different meaning and can bring nuance to messages. Here, blue and white are picked as basic colors, to depict the image of hospital. In the background story of Kita, it means the users can get medicine (doujin works) in this hospital (platform). Blue brings a sense of professional, medical, tranquil and trustworthy. And white means simple, clean, and pure.

3. Stay flexible

It is important to have a balanced combination of simple and vague. In this logo, simple images of pills and capsule are added as parts of the Chinese characters. The second character which means "medicine" is stated emphatically. Additionally, half of the capsule is red to balance the color sense.

4.3   Prototyping

The prototyping has been done with Axure 7.0 and Photoshop CS6. Under the support of Graduate School Media Design, Keio University, we have got the domain name "http://kita.kmd.keio.ac.jp/" for free and set up the virtual machine to run the prototypes. MySQL has been used in order to build the database, and the whole web system developed with PHP. However, these prototypes could not use Alipay yet. Points have been given previously by administrator in the user tests.

2 types of homepage have been designed in order to improve the structural navigation designing of Kita. In the earlier version (Figure 4.18), there were only three buttons on the right side of slides. That means the users cannot find the entry to the project list at first sight when they open the homepage of Kita. Although we design some hot spots for users to search projects, it is still necessary to display the core parts of Kita on the top of the homepage.

The logo is designed with Photoshop CS6.

The alpha version is expected to implement a full process of crowdfunding, in order to test core functions. The beta version is more expected to provide good user experience and the functions of communication. These 2 versions share the same core system and concept.

Figure 4.18: The Earlier Version of Homepage

4.3.1   Alpha Version

The alpha version is developed to provide more smooth experience. We made corrections to some bugs mainly in flow design. The bugs can be basically divided into 2 types.

In the donating part, there is no limit to each project. When the amount of points reaches the target creator set, the project starts. If the amount of points fails to reach the target, we design a timing system in order to return all the points to users and delete the data of projects when the funding deadline comes. The users who did not support the project before can still donate points even after the project ends successfully. In this situation, the process bar will remain at 100%, and users can get tips from introduction. Ideally we hope to give information by interface design directly; more feedbacks are needed to make improvement.

In the process of setting up a project, modification by the creator is restricted to protect the fans. If a project has not received any donation yet, the creator of the project can edit it freely. If fans have already started donations, the creator does not have access to edit any information. Another issue is to develop a solution for those creators who want to quit a project. For example, when one project starts and get donations from users, the creator can still choose to end this project, and fans are able to evaluate the creator. By now, the evaluate system has not been implemented in both alpha and beta version.

4.3.2   Beta Version

The beta version's most different part from the alpha version is the improvement of communications between the users.

First, a message function module is added to this prototype to enhance the operability of crowding funding. The beta version allows the users to send and receive private messages. In alpha version, when a funded project gets started, there are no reminders for backers. They can only check it from the supporting list in the users' page.

Second, the doujin fans can comments on the ordering page and project page to interact with others easily. For instance, users who have familiar orders can comment like "I need this too!", and the creators can check how many fans need this doujin work. Also, we plan to add "+1" button for the users who want to set familiar orders. When one clicks it, the number will be displayed in the order lists. For the creators, a button named "I will make it!" will be added to the ordering page. It means each project have its own id and corresponds to a specific order. But, one order can corresponds to multiple projects. If one creator clicks this button, as a result, his project will be displayed on the ordering page. And the users can find out relevant orders' information on the project page.

The reason for all these design is: It is predicable that many similar orders will appear. Over the long term, the operation of Kita will be more difficult when the number of users has increased. However, we are trying to strengthen the communicational functions as one of the possible solutions. And the next issue for Kita will be how to guide the users to discover more orders and projects to support.

Notes

1   http://comic.qq.com/

2   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Ocean_Strategy

3   http://kita.kmd.keio.ac.jp/index.php?r=site/index

4   http://redonationbased.ca/crowdfunding/

5   http://www.crowdsourcing.org/editorial/the-equity-crowdfunding-process-explained-infographic/24341

6   https://www.kickstarter.com/help/stats

7   http://www.fundable.com/crowdfunding101/history-of-crowdfunding

8   http://www.longtail.com/about.html

9   `http://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/long-tail.asp`

10   `http://kita.kmd.keio.ac.jp/index.php?r=site/index`

11   `http://kita.kmd.keio.ac.jp/index.php?r=project/tag`

12   `http://kita.kmd.keio.ac.jp/index.php?r=site/index`

13   `http://www.thefinancialist.com/not-just-a-paypal-clone-chinas-internet-giants-chart-their-own-course/`

Chapter 5

Evaluation

5.1 Preparation

5.1.1 Double Identities of Doujin Fans and Creators

In some subculture studies, the researchers tend to treat otaku as a homogeneous group. However, as a special group of otaku, doujin fans and creators have their unique characteristics: double identities. It means that the border of " doujin fans " and " doujin creators " is vague. For example, someone is a fan of some original work. Also, he becomes a fan of another doujin creator (or a fan of doujin work). When he begins to publish his own doujin work, he has the identity of doujin creator. For most of doujin creators, they enjoy some other doujin works. It means they also have the identity of doujin fans.

In addition, the doujin fans and creators are all fans of the original work in most cases. But, some doujin fans only prefer doujin works. They have not read original work before and have no interest at it. They are only fans of doujin work. So, it is hard to define doujin fans and creators clearly. However, this fact gives a variable view for Kita project. Because of double identity, it is easier for doujin fans to participate in doujin creative activities by crowdfunding. Though they may not have enough skills to create fine doujin works, there is no difficulty in identification.

5.1.2 Class Identification in Doujin Activities

There are classes in doujin circles. First, people who love doujin are divided into doujin fans and doujin creators. As we discussed in the first chapter, people with high level skills and enough spare time are defined as doujin creators, and people do not have enough skills are defined as doujin fans. Second, doujin creators are also divided into 2 classes. One is called " Oote " , in Japanese which means

" famous creator ". Conversely, some creators call themselves " nobody ". Oote
creators usually demonstrates higher ability of writing, painting, playing music
and making video clips.

These stratifications occur because of the large differences in textual produc-
tivity, which refers to the abilities of creating new doujin works. Different from
the classification of social classes, it does not depends on the amount of capital.
People with high level skills usually have more social power in doujin circles. For
instance, Oote creators usually have attracted much more attention when they
publish new doujin works.

5.1.3   Pre-Research on Doujin in China

The first doujin work in China is a fan fiction of Neon Genesis Evangelion named
" Backstage ", written by Naya.[1] It was posted on the BBS of Tsinghua University[2]
in 1998. Another famous symbol of Chinese doujin culture is a doujin BBS site
called Sunsunplus[3], providing free space for people to upload fan fictions and
illustrations.

From the history of doujin in China, we can find out an important fact that
doujin was born in China along with the birth of the Internet. In another word,
the whole doujin activities in China has totally based on the Internet. As a
result, doujin culture in China has been growing steadily with the rapid increasing
of Internet users. At the very beginning, it was only a small circle for a few
people to create doujin works. But soon it became bigger and bigger through the
Internet. Different from in China, doujin in Japan and western countries have
walked through the ages of paper books, mail-order service and doujin events.

Chinese doujin fans are deeply influenced by Japanese doujin culture because
of the popularity of Japanese animations. Early doujin works in China were all
based on Japanese animation, like Slam Dunk, Neon Genesis Evangelion and Saint
Seiya. Nowadays there are many original doujin works, or recreation of original
Chinese works. Also, doujin events become more and more popular in big cities.
According to the biggest doujin database site Bangumi[4], 1674 doujin events are
held in China every year, and average number of doujin circles in each event is
310. Over 20,000 people participate in each event on average.

With regard to doujin fans and creators in China, a book named " World of
Doujin " shows some useful data for Kita project. Although the history of doujin
in China is not long, it is difficult to collect reliable data. According to the book,

more than 50% doujin lovers are female and the average age is 19.8 years old. They are all students, and the reason for them to create doujin works is personal interests. The author points out that in early years of Chinese doujin history, most doujin works were Yaoi[5] novels and illustrations.

5.1.4   Profiling the Test Users

Before the user test, the test users are requested to fill out a simple survey questionnaire of some personal information. The purpose of this profiling is to understand the user segment, interest, behavior and doujin experience, as well as to determine the diversity of test users. Referred to the pre-research, the questions are set as following:

1. Age, Sex, Nationality
2. Do you like doujin? Please indicate your doujin experience (multiple-choice).
3. Have you ever created any doujin works by yourselves?
4. If you answered " yes " in question 3, what kind of doujin works did you create?
5. Do you want to order customized doujin works from other creators? If not, why?
6. Where can you usually find or buy doujin works?

5.1.5   Design the User Test

The test users will be divided into the backers ' group and creators ' group by the results of profiling test. After a brief introduction, they are asked to complete a whole procedure of a crowdfunding project in 2 prototypes one after the other. However, these prototypes could not use Alipay yet, so points are given previously by test administrator.

The user test is divided into 2 sessions. The first session is a survey. There are 2 sets of surveys. A is for the backers ' group and B is for the creators ' group. Questions 1 and 2 are different in each survey but questions 3 to 7 are identical. Both prototypes have the same questions in the surveys. The test user answers questions according to their test results by the five-grade evaluation system, grade 1 the worst and grade 5 the best.

The survey A (for backers ' group) is as following:

1. Do you think Kita has helped you get the doujin work you want?

2. Do you think Kita has helped you find the doujin works you want?
3. Do you think Kita has helped you communicate with other fans and creators?
4. How is the operability?
5. How about the interface of Kita?
6. Is the rule easy to understand?
7. Do you feel it useful?

The survey B (for creators ' group) is as following:

1. Do you think Kita has helped you get the reward you want?
2. Do you think Kita has helped you get inspired in creating doujin work?
3. Do you think Kita has helped you communicate with other fans and creators?
4. How is the operability?
5. How about the interface of Kita?
6. Is the rule easy to understand?
7. Do you feel it useful?

The second session is an interview. The interviewer will ask for more details according to the observation and the results of the surveys.

5.2   The Result

5.2.1   Test User Profiling Result

40 people have been invited to join the user test. They are all Chinese. 23 participants are male and 17 participants are female (Figure 5.1).

All participants know what doujin is and enjoy different kinds of doujin works (Figure 5.2). The most popular doujin genres among the participants are illustration, followed by novel, music and game(Figure 5.3).

5 participants have no experience in creating doujin works(Figure 5.4). The other 35 participants have some kind of creating experiences in doujin circles, mostly drawing doujin illustrations. 17 participants have experience of writing doujin novels. No participants has experienced creating doujin music or game. (Figure 5.5).

All the participants have the needs of ordering customized doujin work from other creators (Figure 5.6). It is mentioned that it seems quite difficult to do so
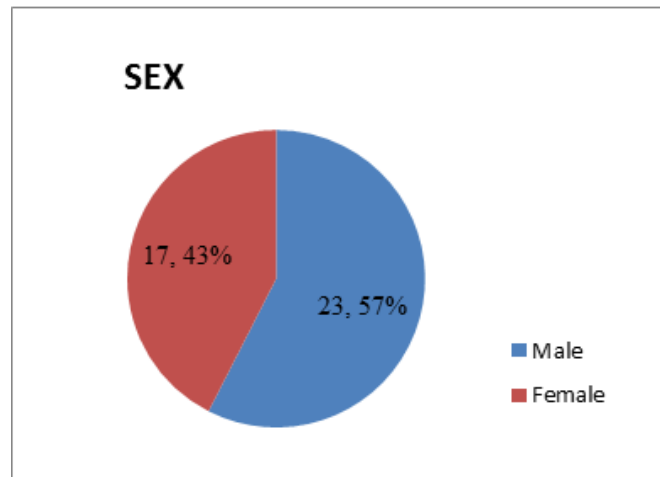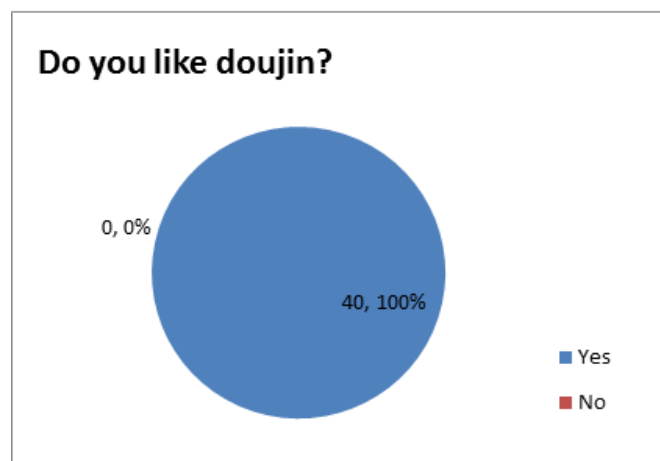
Figure 5.1: Sex

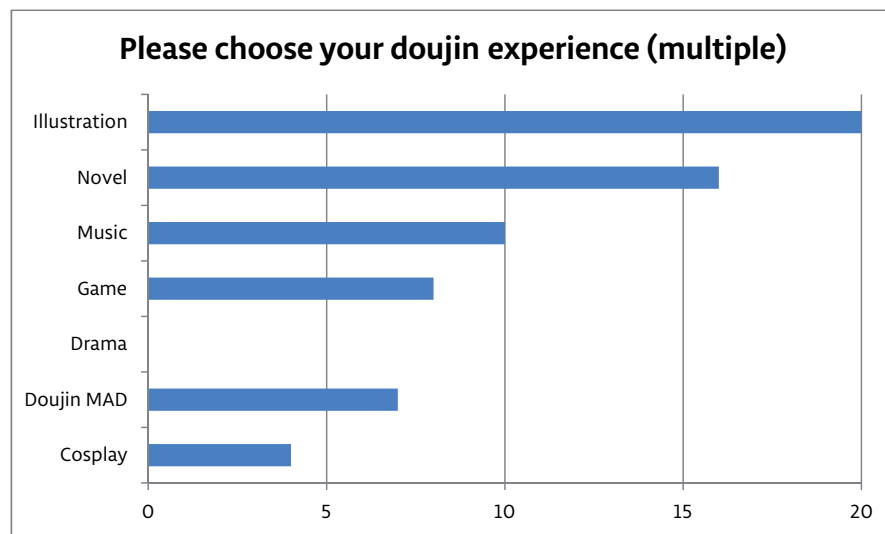Figure 5.2: Do you like doujin?

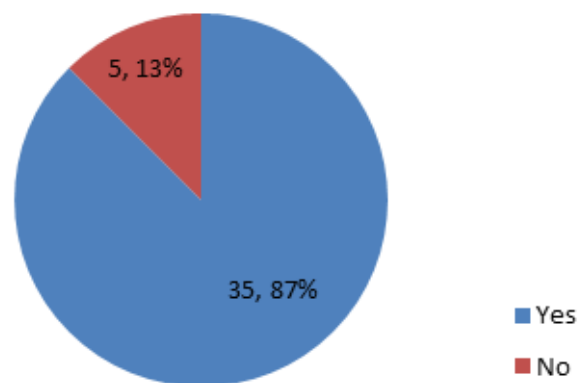Figure 5.3: Please choose your doujin experience (multiple)

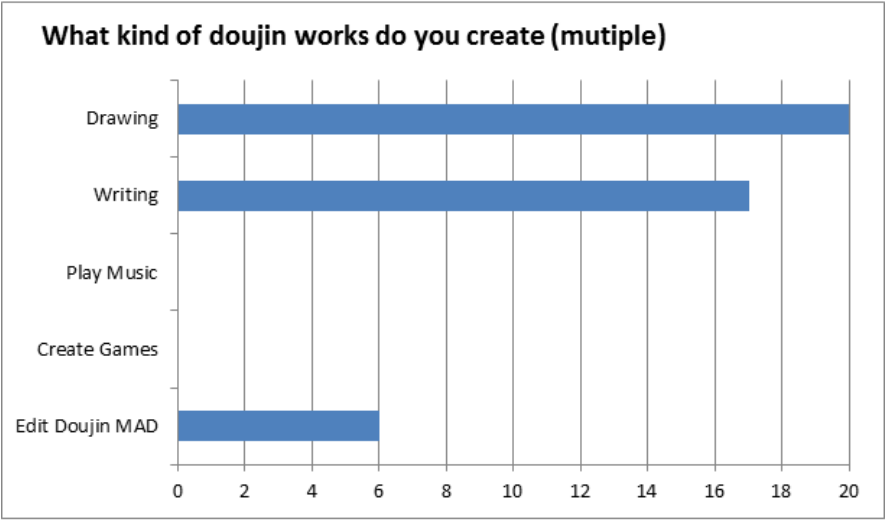Figure 5.4: Have you been creating any doujin works by yourselves?

Figure 5.5: What kind of doujin works do you create?

because it is hard to persuade doujin creators do it. 3 participants commented that they tried but failed.
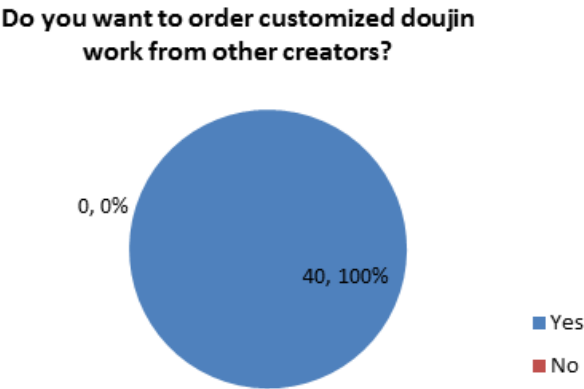

Figure 5.6: Do you want to order customized doujin work from other creators?

25 participants regularly check doujin works on Pixiv. 28 participants check doujin works on Baidu[6] and Weibo[7] (Figure 5.7). Taobao (China's biggest online shop) is the most popular way for them to buy doujin works, followed by private shopping representatives in Japan and doujin events in China (Figure 5.8).
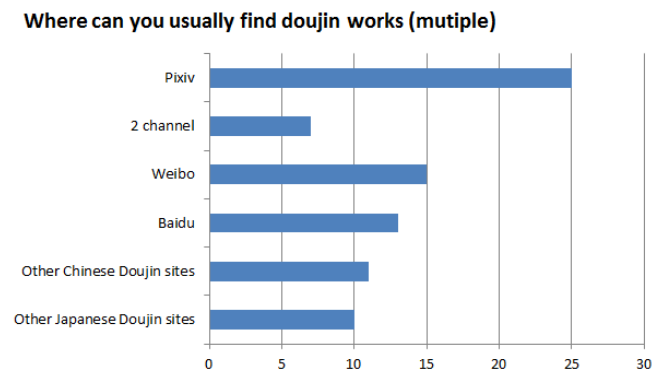
Where can you usually find doujin works (mutiple)

Figure 5.7: Where can you usually find doujin works (multiple)

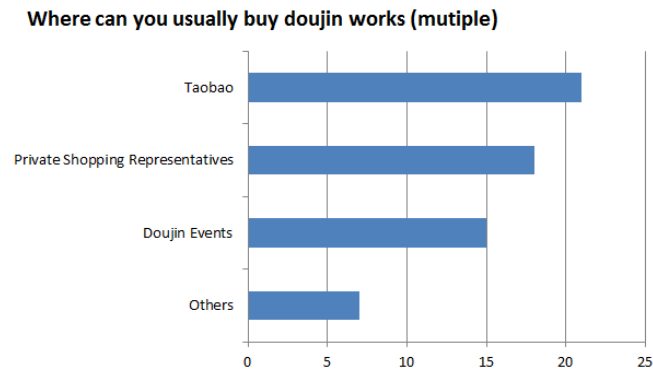**Where can you usually buy doujin works (mutiple)**

Figure 5.8: Where can you usually buy doujin works (multiple)

5.2.2   Survey Result

The survey result is divided into 3 parts. In the first part, we will show the result of question 1 and 2 from survey A. In the second part, we will show the result of question 1 and 2 from survey B. In the third part, we will show the result of question 3 to 7 of both survey A and B.

1. Result of Question 1 and Question 2 in Survey A (for the backers' group)
   Both prototypes are successful to help the backers (doujin fans) get the doujin works. The beta prototype is better than the alpha version as it gets two more grade 5 than the alpha version (Figure 5.9).
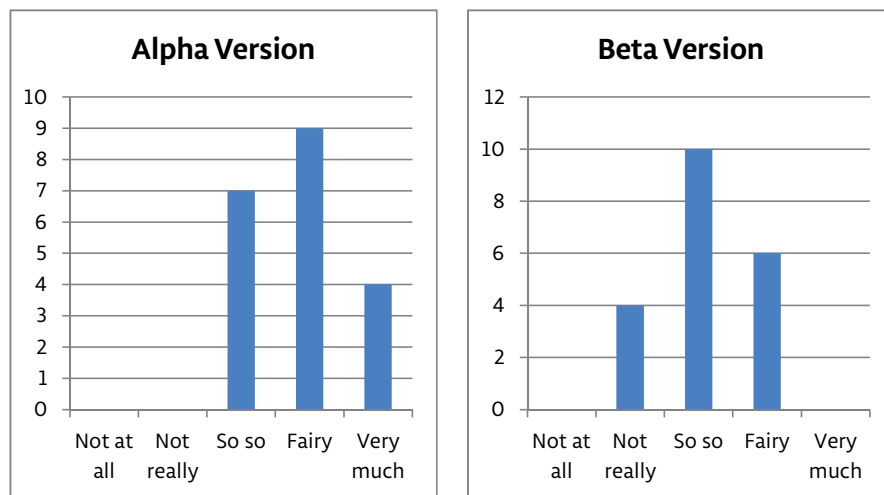

Figure 5.9: Do you think Kita has helped you get the doujin work you want?

   Both prototypes are not very successful to make the backers feel it is easy to find doujin works they want. Though the beta version is relatively better than the alpha version as it gets one more grade 3 than the alpha version (Figure 5.10).

2. Result of Question 1 and Question 2 in Survey B (for the creators' group)
   Both prototypes are successful to help the creators get their reward. The beta prototype is better than the alpha version as it gets two more grade 5 than the alpha version (Figure 5.11).
   Most of the participants believe they do get inspired by these 2 prototypes. Furthermore, 15 participants mention that it could be much better if more backers join in (Figure 5.12).
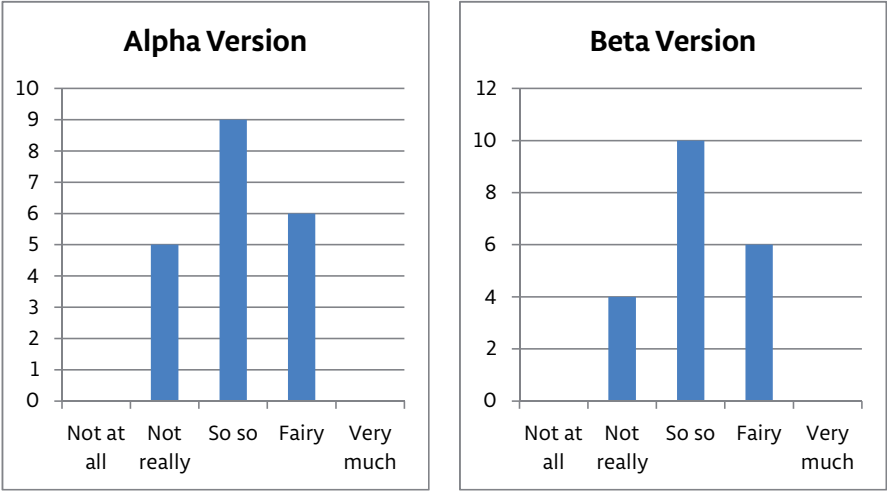
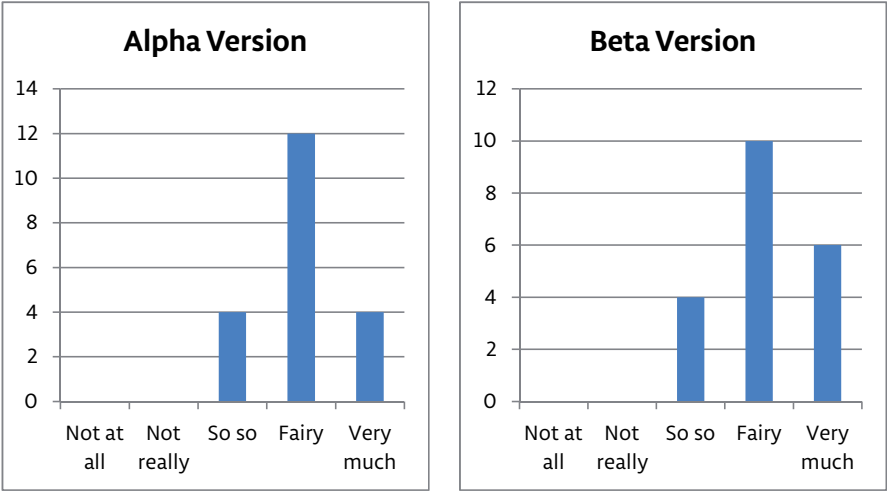Figure 5.10: Do you think Kita has helped you find the doujin works you want?

Figure 5.11: Do you think Kita has helped you get the reward you want?

62
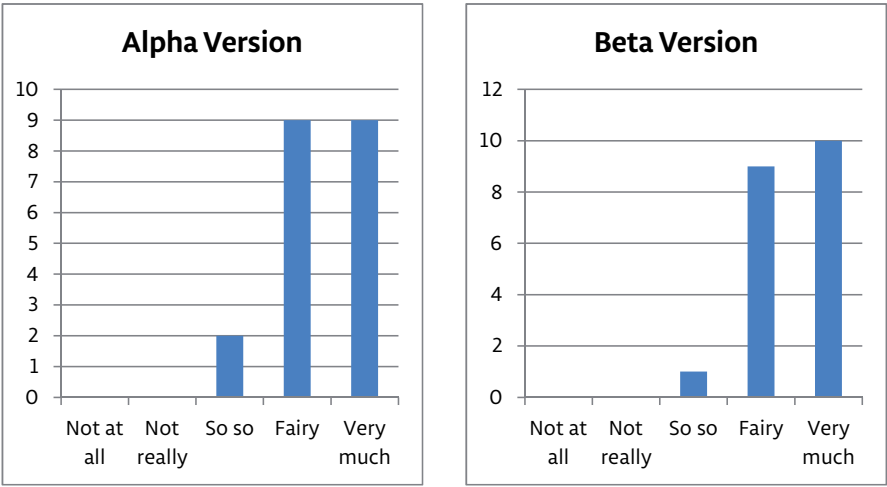
Figure 5.12: Do you think Kita has helped you get inspired in creating doujin work?

3. Result of Question 3 to 7 in Survey A and B
   The backers' group and the creators' group do not think either prototype
   has helped them communicate with others well in the alpha version. But
   the beta version is favorably accepted by the participants in average (Figure
   5.13).
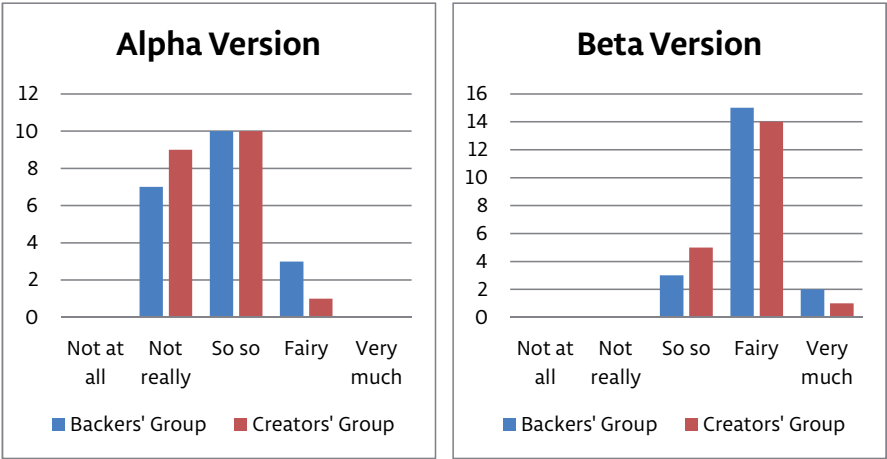
Figure 5.13: Do you think Kita has helped you communicate with other fans and creators?

The operability of Kita has got a medium evaluation, especially for the alpha
version. 8 backers mention that the searching system might have been better
if projects are searchable by key words, rather than by tags. Most of the

creators say that it could be better if the procedure of starting a new project is shortened (Figure 5.14).
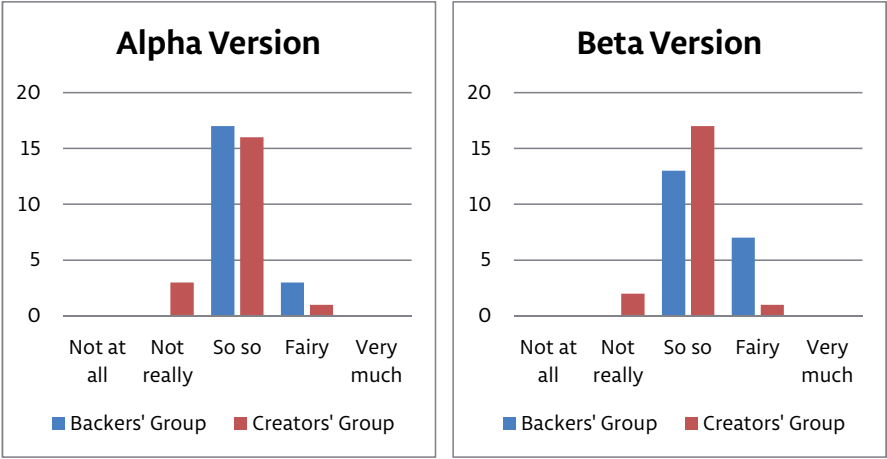
Figure 5.14: How is the operability?

Most of the participants give good evaluation on the interface design of Kita. (Figure 5.15). In each group, the beta version is considered better than the alpha version.
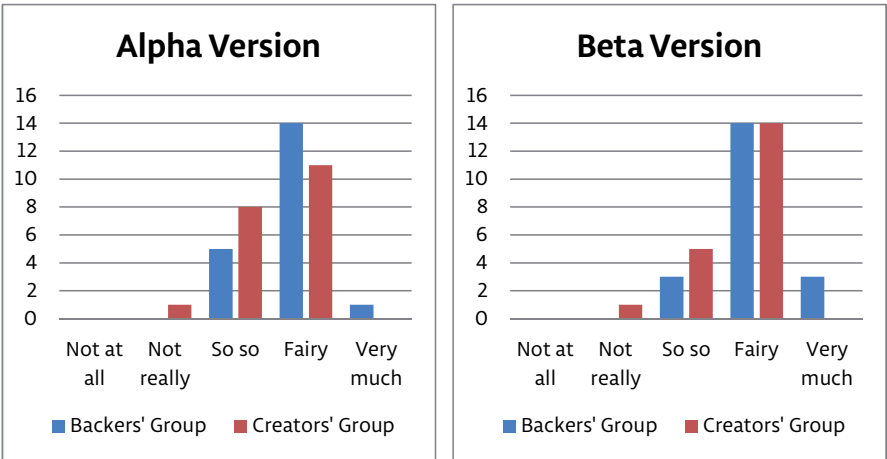
Figure 5.15: How about the interface of Kita?

Nearly 60 percent of test users in the backers ' group think they can understand the rule easily, especially the beta Version. They mention that they have some kind of experience in other crowdfunding platform. 30 percent

people in the backers' group think they need more time to understand how it works. Meanwhile, the creators' group gave good evaluation to the intelligibility of the system. (Figure 5.16).
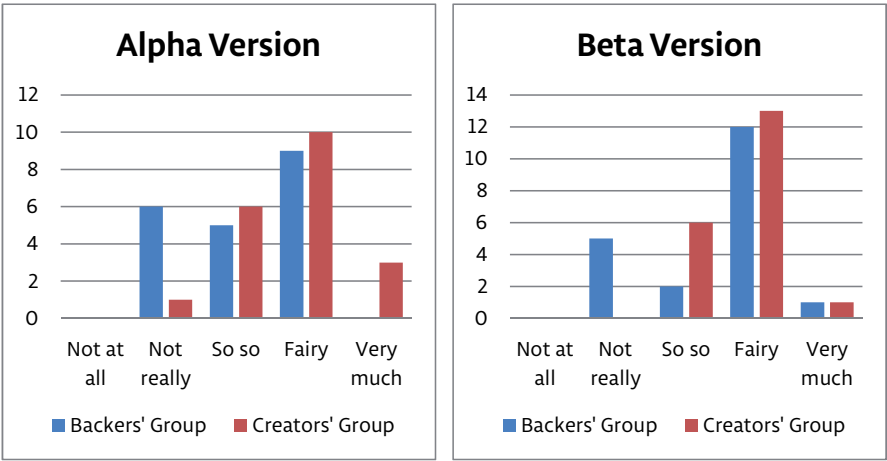
Figure 5.16: Is the rule easy to understand?

Most of the participants think the prototypes useful, especially the beta version (Figure 5.17).

Figure 5.17: Do you feel Kita useful?

5.2.3   Interview Result

The most mentioned feedbacks from the interview are listed as following:

1. It is very good that creators can get neta and inspirations from different doujin fans. With a good neta, many creators will be happier to create doujin works. If more users can join Kita, it could be more interesting.

2. For doujin fans, it is so useful since they can easily communicate with creators and order customized doujin works from them. But now there are not enough creators in Kita.

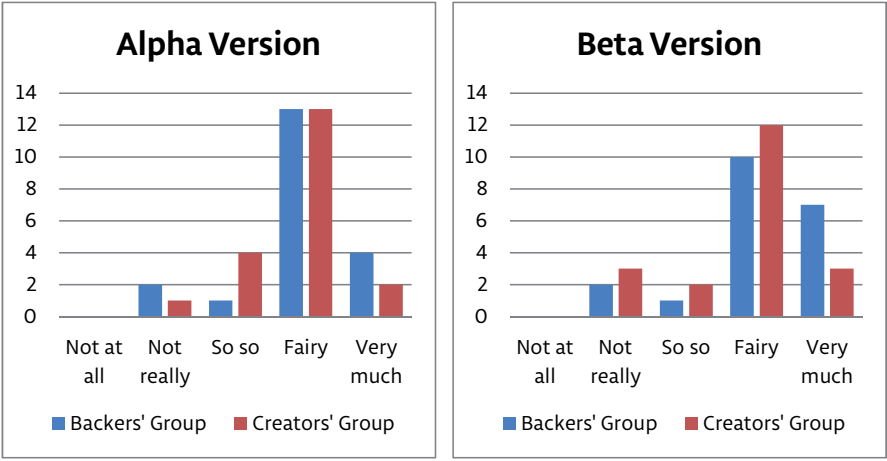3. The process to set up a new project is a little bit long. Doujin creators usually do not have a clear view about what they are exactly going to create before they start the project. So it may make creators feel confused and troublesome to fill in many blanks at the starting pages.

4. Backers want to make sure if they can get their orders and rewards on time. It will be better if there is a system to evaluate creators (like what Taobao does) so that the fans can check the credibility of creators.

5. It is easier for doujin creators to get rewards via Kita. Creators do not have to generate creative ideas, but to just follow the orders. In China, it costs a lot to publish amateur doujin works. Most creators (except those famous doujin circles) sell doujin works in doujin events or on Taobao, but usually they can only get few profit from it.

6. The design is simple and user-friendly. And it is easy for users to find the entries on the homepage.

7. Crowdfunding-experienced people know what to do in Kita. But it takes more time for people not familiar with crowdfunding to understand how it works.

8. The display of projects should be improved, for it looks a little disordered. Users do not understand the sequencing of projects. And the searching system might be better if projects can be searched by key words rather than by tags.

5.3   Summary and Analysis

The result shows that both prototypes provide customized doujin works and rewards/inspirations to the backers and creators successfully.

The doujin fans request more doujin creators and more projects. The combination of doujin and crowdfunding creates a practical system for customized experience. Backers are able to order doujin works no matter if they know the creators or not.

On the other hand, Kita works quite well on satisfying doujin creators. The rewards-based crowdfunding motivates creators to make new doujin works, and the design manages to help them release work and get points smoothly.

The result also reveals that the backers feel worried about if they can get customized doujin works and rewards on time. As one of the solutions, they want accountable feedbacks on reputation of the creators. It gives a hint to the development of Kita ' s future services. By dividing creators into different levels, Kita can fits to more segments.

However, there are also several improvements needed. First, the experience of searching doujin works (projects) is not satisfying. In the interface design part, tags are placed on the left side one by one, but in random sequence. Usually, doujin fans and creators search doujin works by genres. Though we try to arrange tags in a more free way, like puzzle, it still needs revisions. Second, doujin fans need to be reminded if they can get their orders and rewards on time. The message system is designed as one of the solutions, but our goal is to develop an online chatting system where the backers and creators communicate in real time. Third, there is not enough time for us to add Alipay to these 2 prototypes. If the third-party online payment platform can be used in Kita, the security issue can be improved.

At last, the beta version has made overall progress on communicational functions and operability according to the result of survey.

Notes

1   Cao (2013, 16)

2   `http://www.newsmth.net/`

3   `http://sunsunplus.51.net/`

4   `http://doujin.bgm.tv/event`

5   `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yaoi`

6   `http://www.baidu.com`

7   `http://weibo.com`

Chapter 6
Discussion

6.1 Conclusion

Kita succeeds to provide customized doujin works for doujin fans. It manages to satisfy creative needs of doujin fans. They attend in creative process by giving order, descriptions and consuming, and do not have to learn skills or spend more time at making good doujin on their own.

Kita also successfully provides money and creativity experiences to doujin creators. It expands the profit-making process in doujin activities. Creators can make progress through working on projects and communicating with their backers.

It proves that reward-based crowdfunding is a possible method to deliver the convenient experience of ordering doujin works to doujin fans. Also, it motivates and encourages communications between the users.

6.2 Future Works

When the results and evaluations get summarized, more details of the design are to be developed. In the future version, like button will be added to several pages, so that users can express that they enjoy or support certain projects or orders. Another reason to add like button is that users want to know the number of backers in a certain project, according to some conclusions of survey.

Another issue is to let users get doujin works easily. Now, Kita's users can only get their doujin works and rewards by e-mail or delivery. Afterwards, the creators can upload doujin works to the project page. And then, only their backers can check the works. A document module is needed to support this idea. We strive to implement the service in 2015.

Also, a scalable issue may occur, if more and more users flood in Kita in the future. The site might be shut down for a couple of days to update, for we do

not prepare to arrange enough space to hold risk managements. Because in the earlier plan of Kita, we think the doujin market in China is not big enough, and we only plan to create a prototype to collect some data first. But it is important to concern about scalable issue, for it is the lifeline of product.

From a larger perspective, the following step of doujin reward-based crowd-funding will be to get fans and creators make projects more reliable. For creators, they should try to realize the orders and make sure the project can be done in time. And the potential risks should be publicly available. For fans/backers, it is grateful that if they can be tolerant to doujin crowdfunding projects. Crowdfunding always have risks, since it is really difficult to fully satisfy all the requirements from fans/backers. In order to make doujin crowdfunding better, Kita needs to enhance the user experiences and continue improving the interface for its operability.

Finally, for further development, Kita will develop more features for social functions. For example, we can learn more from doujin events, like comic market. The reason why people love to attend this kind of events is not only because they need to sell doujin works. The organizers keep struggle to provide a space with good services, for doujin fans and creators can talk and share fun with each other. This can not be replaced by doujin activities in websites. But, we can try to refine the flow by imitate procedures of doujin events, to reproduce the atmosphere, and leap over the border between offline and online.

The final goal for Kita is to become a doujin crowdfunding platform for people to order, create, communicate, and enjoy through doujin works.

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Appendix

A Conducting Needs Assessment Survey

A.1 Creativity Needs in Doujin Activities

1. Do you like doujin? Why?

   (a) The story is not good enough. I want to create a better one.

   (b) The story is really excellent. But I want to see some different possibilities of story, to create a parallel world of it.

   (c) Because doujin is a simple way for everyone to share and publish their works.

2. How can you take part in doujin activities?

   (a) Enjoy and pay for doujin works.

   (b) Drawing.

   (c) Writing novels.

   (d) Composing music.

   (e) Creating games.

3. Do you consider yourself as a doujin creator or a doujin fan?

   (a) Doujin fan (36 people)

   (b) Doujin creator (14 people)

A.2   Self-Identification of Doujin Fans and Creators

1. Why you think that you are not a doujin creator?

  (a) Because I am busy with my work, do not have enough time to create doujin works.

  (b) I cannot make good doujin works because I do not have enough abilities and skills.

  (c) It is not necessary for me to do it, for I am satisfied with enjoying doujin works as an bystander.

  (d) I do not like to be judged by others. Enjoying doujin as an bystander makes me feel relaxed.

2. In your opinion, what is the reason that makes you becomes a doujin creator?

  (a) I think I have some skills that help me to create doujin works, such as drawing, writing and composing music.

  (b) I love to share my doujin works with others. It makes me feel happy and gives me a sense of accomplishment.

A.3   The Needs of Doujin Fans and Creators

1. Do you feel satisfied with enjoying doujin works just as a bystander?

  (a) Yes (16 people)

  (b) No. But it is hard for me to create the doujin works I want. (34 people)

2. If there is some ways that allows you to order your own doujin works from creators, will you like to try?

  (a) I would like to try if the price is reasonable. (44 people)

  (b) No (6 people)

3. What are the difficulties when you tried creating doujin works?

(a) Time is not enough. (30 people)

(b) Hard to get profit. (45 people)

(c) Lack of inspiration. (32 people)

B   Questions of Test User Profiling Survey

1. Please write down your age, sex and nationality.
2. Do you like doujin? Please indicate your doujin experience (multiple-choice).
3. Have you ever created any doujin works by yourselves?
4. If you answered " yes " in question 3, what kind of doujin works did you create?
5. Do you want to order customized doujin works from other creators? If not, why?
6. Where can you usually find or buy doujin works?

C   Interview Questions and Extracted Answers

C.1   The Survey for Backers' Group (Question 1 and 2)

1. Do you think Kita has helped you get the doujin work you want?

(a) Yes. I have been waiting for this for a long time! Sometimes I have many ideas but I cannot draw, so I need someone to do it for me.

(b) Yes. I think it is good for fans to get what they want. But we have Pixiv and other sites to get free doujin works. I am not sure that everyone will interested in Kita for it costs money.

2. Do you think Kita has helped you find the doujin works you want?

(a) Not really. It seems there are many hot recommendations. But it makes me confused and I do not know what to choose. By now there are just a few projects in Kita, so I think you do not have to do this.

(b) Not really. I do not like the tags and I do not know the relationship between them. It looks like a mass.

C.2   The Survey for Creators' Group (Question 1 and 2)

1. Do you think Kita has helped you get the reward you want?

(a) Yes. Though I cannot draw well, I can still set a low standard to start my project. I used to publish doujin works and failed. Kita does not cost anything, so it is good for the illustrators like me.

(b) I am not sure. Actually, I am worried about other doujin creators will not support this kind of platform. I mean it is good, but too complex for Chinese doujin creators.

2. Do you think Kita has helped you get inspired in creating doujin work?

(a) Yes! It is my Muse. I really need a system like this to help me get free neta.

(b) Yes. The best thing is if I do not like it, I can just neglect it (lol).

(c) Yes. I think many of the orders are quite interesting. But I am wondering if I can choose the same order, even though someone has already set the project?

C.3   The Common Parts of Survey A and B (Question 3 to 7)

3. Do you think Kita has helped you communicate with other fans and creators?

(a) For the alpha version not really. But in the beta version everyone can give comments on projects. I like it.

(b) So so. Is there any function that I can press the like button? Just like the Facebook.

4. How is the operability?

  (a) Basically I think it is easy to use. But the searching system might be better if projects can be searched by key words. There are too many tags.

  (b) It is troublesome to fill so many blanks to set up a new project.

5. How about the interface of Kita?

  (a) Simple is the best. And I like the hospital image. It is very interesting.

  (b) It can be cooler if the design of buttons gets better.

6. Is the rule easy to understand?

  (a) Yes. I use to back a project in China's crowdfunding platform. So it is quite easy for me to understand.

  (b) No. I spent much time on realizing the rules. And I am not sure I can use it well.

7. What do you think about Kita compared to other crowdfunding platforms?

  (a) It is easier and simpler, for it is just for doujin fans and creators.

8. Do you have any other feedback, comment or advice?

  (a) I feel very nervous when I start a new project.

  (b) I will feel relieved if Kita can give remind of projects to users.

  (c) Although I am not a core doujin lover, but I like to check the order lists. It is interesting and full of imaginations.

  (d) It will be good if I can share my results on SNS sites. Maybe Kita can design a medal system so that I can showoff to my friends.

  (e) I need a ranking of creators, so that I can check their levels and credit.