Plenary Panel

From Manga to MANGA:
The Global Expansion of Japanese Comics
and the Transformation of the Content Ecosystem

Date and time: 11:00-12:00, June 29, 2026

Venue: International Conference Center, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract:

Why do Japanese manga and anime continue to dominate the global content ecosystem in the digital era?

The global expansion of Japanese manga and anime has been profoundly shaped by the widespread adoption of broadband networks, the rapid diffusion of smartphones, and the rise of international streaming platforms. These technological shifts have enabled content with strong local cultural identities to circulate globally and be consumed simultaneously across borders. As OTT services continue to grow, Japanese manga and anime—once niche cultural products—now occupy a central position in the international content ecosystem. This symposium examines how Japan’s content industries have adapted to these transformations and what challenges lie ahead.

The presentation by Professor Yuji Mori explores the economic structure of the manga and anime industries. With the manga market valued at roughly 700 billion JPY and the broader anime ecosystem reaching 1.7 trillion JPY, anime increasingly functions as a global gateway that drives demand for manga. The talk also examines the underdeveloped potential of international ancillary markets and the rise of transnational fan communities.

Following the presentation, a panel discussion will be held. This perspective illuminates the cultural and economic forces transforming Japan's content ecosystem. As digital network technologies continue to evolve toward next-generation infrastructures such as IWON, this symposium explores how Japanese manga and anime have expanded globally and sustained their leadership within the evolving content ecosystem.

Speaker:
- **Yuji Mori**, Professor, DHU Graduate School, Digital Hollywood University, Japan

Moderator:
- **Naoto Kikuchi,** Project Professor, Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University, Japan

Discussant:
- **Akihiro Nakamura,** Professor, Faculty of Economics, Chuo University, Japan

Panelists:
- **Ke Xu,** Researcher, Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University, Japan
- **Felipe Salgado de Souza,** Ph.D. candidate, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Japan

Plenary Panel: Participants

Speaker

Yuji Mori, Professor, DHU Graduate School, Digital Hollywood University, Japan

Yuji Mori is a prominent leader in the entertainment and media practice within the strategic consulting space. His expertise extends beyond the private sector to advising the Japanese government and various industrial organizations. Having received formal training in communication studies in both Japan and the United States, he remains actively engaged in academia, contributing to education and research at several business and media schools. Furthermore, as the principal author of the Anime Industry Report, the authoritative annual white paper published by the Association of Japanese Animations (AJA), he has provided longitudinal analysis and oversight of industrial trends for many years.

Title
Market Dynamics and Economic Impact of the Manga and Anime Industries

Abstract
The manga industry constitutes a primary market valued at approximately 700 billion JPY. In tandem, the anime market—where the majority of hit titles originate from manga—along with its collateral sectors, is valued at roughly 1.7 trillion JPY. In the domestic Japanese context, anime is positioned as an evolutionary extension of

manga; however, in the global marketplace, anime frequently serves as the primary catalyst that stimulates demand for the original manga source material.
Beyond the primary media content, the ancillary markets—including merchandising and related sectors—possess significant scale. In Japan, if the core anime content is indexed at a value of "1," the associated ancillary markets expand that figure by a factor of 1.6. Conversely, these secondary markets remain under-developed internationally, representing substantial latent potential for growth.
This presentation explores the formation of transnational fan communities facilitated by digital networks and the structural insights they provide. Furthermore, it will provide a detailed examination of the economic spillover effects generated by the manga and anime ecosystems.

Moderator

Naoto Kikuchi, Project Professor, Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University, Japan

Naoto Kikuchi graduated from the Faculty of Economics, Keio University and completed the program of École supérieure de commerce de Paris. From 2017 he has been Project Professor, Keio University Graduate School of Media Design.
He also serves as chef of Japanese government's committees including Digital Agency, Contents WG, etc.
His Research Areas
Humanities & Social Sciences / New fields of law
Humanities & Social Sciences / Public economics and labor economics
Informatics / Web informatics and service informatics
Informatics / Entertainment and music informatics

Discussant

Akihiro Nakamura, Professor, Faculty of Economics, Chuo University, Japan

Akihiro Nakamura is a Professor in the Faculty of Economics at Chuo University, Japan.
His research focuses on telecommunications and ICT policy, regulation and competition policy, digital platform economics, transport economics, and applied econometrics.
His work has appeared in international journals including Telecommunications Policy, Journal of Competition Law &

Economics, Information Economics and Policy, Economics Bulletin, and Socio-Economic Planning Sciences. He has studied broadband substitution, switching costs, universal service, zero-price digital markets, and platform competition. He also examines the interaction between ICT and mobility, including telework, online meetings, shared mobility, EV charging infrastructure, autonomous vehicles, traffic safety, and policy interventions in Asia.

Panelists

Ke Xu, Researcher, Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University, Japan

Ke Xu is a researcher at Keio Media Design Policy Project Lab and a recent master's graduate of Keio Media Design. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Washington, majoring in Communication and Japanese. Before returning to academia, she worked in marketing in China and participated in IP content projects. Having been a passionate fan of Japanese manga and anime since elementary school, she developed a strong interest in Japanese language, culture, and global media communication.

Felipe Salgado de Souza, Ph.D. candidate, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Japan

Felipe Salgado de Souza is a Ph.D. candidate in International Studies at Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies whose research explores the intersections of pop culture, public diplomacy, and digital transformation in Japan–Brazil relations. Alongside his academic work, he has worked for more than 10 years as a cultural producer in Brazil, organizing and presenting events focused on Japanese pop culture, including anime, manga, music, and games. He also received an Award of Honor from the Embassy of Japan in Brazil for his contributions to strengthening friendship and cultural exchange between Japan and Brazil.