

## COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENT FOR A COMMUNITY-BASED COLLECTING AND ARCHIVING PROJECT FOR CONTEMPORARY KOMIKS

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### **Abstract**

*This study assessed the willingness and readiness of the local komiks community in the National Capital Region to collaborate in a community-based archiving initiative. The author also identified concerns of this community regarding the preservation of their works, namely: the protection of their rights as content creators, the protection of their works from piracy, and the sustainability of the preservation effort. A project plan based on the findings was developed to help komiks community members and archive practitioners collaborate on a collecting and archiving project, which can be used as a starting point for a komiks preservation practice.*

**Keywords:** archiving, collecting project, comic books, community-based, komiks, Library and Information Studies, Philippine comics, preservation, National Capital Region

### **Introduction**

Philippine comics books (*komiks*) have been produced and published as early as the 1940s when the old *komiks* industry first started. Many *komiks* magazine artists and publishers have flourished with various levels of success, with some of their works becoming prominent mainstays in popular culture. But there were no efforts to preserve these classic *komiks* over the course of the industry's run. None of the *komiks* that had been published from the 1920s to the 1990s had ever been reprinted or archived, as many *komiks* publishers of that time resorted to destroying the original copies to apparently protect their ownership of the material (Spurgeon, 2006). This lack of such effort has resulted in the loss of over 60 years' worth of comic book materials, with the only remaining copies left in the care of private collectors (Alanguilan, 2010).

This same negligence can happen to today's contemporary *komiks* titles. The 2000s has seen both the end of local comic book circulation when the last of the old *komiks* publishers closed down and the start of a grassroots effort to independently promote and publish a new generation of *komiks*. And, much like their predecessors, these new batch of *komiks* creators have no immediate plans to preserve their works in the long run.

Fortunately, the 2000s also saw a newfound interest in preserving what little vintage copies were left. This latter activity was taken up by a few collectors who started digitizing their private collections and blogging them online to make these out-of-print titles available. Examples include: Simon Santos' *Video 48* blog, which showcases vintage *komiks* titles that had been adapted into film; Aris Panganiban's *Pinoy Superhero Universe*, that features a compendium of lesser-known *komiks* superhero characters; and Arman Francisco's *KOMIXPAGE*, which lists and analyzes many *komiks* character types. These efforts marked the first decade of preserving and archiving Filipino *komiks* in the country, albeit being done selectively to classic titles and by non-professionals.

The term “preserving” and “archiving” in this context, however, does not necessarily mean the whole set of activities that library and archive professionals normally associate these terms with. The digital reformatting of private individuals’ personal collections and making the contents accessible online does not immediately equate to digital preservation, and there doesn’t seem to be any long-term preservation plan for these blogs and their articles. But this was the closest to preserving old *komiks* culture that these non-professionals could achieve at the time with their more limited means.

Their form of archiving was just as limited to the personal level. But when they made their collections accessible through blogging, their practice veered into that of the “citizen archivist,” which will be discussed later in this paper.

Therefore, “preserving” and “archiving” in this context are used as umbrella terms to indicate the practice of documenting and ensuring surviving copies of Filipino *komiks* heritage were done by private, non-professionals with limited means and scope.

The existence of these efforts opens up the possibility of a community-based archiving initiative to be developed with more *komiks* creators and their contemporary titles, as well as the possible involvement of professional archivists. The term "community-based" in the context of this study is based on the research approach where both community members and academic researchers share the results, resources, and responsibilities in a given research agenda (Centre for Community Based Research, n.d.). This is to differentiate this approach from Andrew Flinn’s definition of community archiving, which will be discussed later in this paper, where it states that the initiative and responsibility of documenting one’s cultural heritage is solely the community’s and with no ties with a formal institution.

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This study assessed the following factors regarding this community of artists, writers, and enthusiasts: their level of readiness, their level of willingness, and their various concerns regarding preserving *komiks*. A project plan based on the findings was also developed to help *komiks* community members and archive practitioners collaborate on a collecting and archiving project, which can be used as a starting point for a community-based *komiks* preservation practice.

### **The State of *Komiks* Preservation in the Philippines**

Comic books had been first introduced to the country by American G.I.s at the end of World War 2, and were a popular form of entertainment for Filipinos before radios and television became widespread in the country (Alanguilan, 2010). The medium was popular enough to start its own industry starting from the 1940s, which went through various ups and downs until the early 2000s when the last of the old *komiks* publishers closed down for good.

None of the many comic book titles that had been published in that 60-year timeframe were ever reprinted or archived (Spurgeon, 2006). Whatever little physical copies from the old industry that could still be found today had either been stashed away or were luckily found by comic book collectors. And the medium itself, especially locally-made *komiks*, are still generally looked down upon by the general public as "cheap entertainment", which makes them unlikely to be preserved, much less archived for posterity.

Despite this cultural stigma, the 2000s marked a new turning point for local comic books in the country as the Philippine *Komiks* Convention (Komikon) began to provide a venue for new contemporary *komiks* titles to be published. Another comics- and art-related group, Komiket, followed suit in the mid-2010s and continues to host their own events in the National Capital Region and other regions. For the purposes of this research, this loose collection of artists, writers, and enthusiasts with a shared interest and profession in the *komiks* medium will be treated as the chosen community of study.

The 2000s also saw a newfound interest in preserving and promoting *komiks*. Comic book artist Doroteo Gerald "Gerry" Alanguilan had started an online art museum dedicated to showcasing the works of the old industry's artists in 2002. A number of other private comic book collectors seemed to have followed Alanguilan's example and also started digitizing and uploading their vintage *komiks* collections on blog sites in the same decade. Examples of such blogs had been mentioned earlier in this article.

These would-be archiving efforts in the realm of digitization and blogging by non-professional comic book collectors actually veers into a form of archiving that has more to do with volunteerism than actual professionalism: the activities of the so-called "citizen archivist."

Once used as a marketing term to engage people in participatory archiving in other parts of the world, the citizen archivist briefly became a point of discussion amongst practitioners in a blog article

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written by archivist Kate Theimer (2010), *Why we need to find a term to replace "citizen archivist."* Theimer (2010) and other practitioners have reached some consensus in defining the citizen archivist as "people working 'outside' established institutions who are doing archival-quality work (not simply collecting), typically in an area that is neglected or inadequately addressed by established collections" (para. 4).

For a while, the state of Philippine *komiks* archiving have stayed at this level of activity, but a select few of these activities have started to veer into community archiving.

Archivist Andrew Flinn (2007) described the community archiving movement as, "the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the project is essential" (para. 7, p. 153). Flinn and his colleague Anne Gilliland (2013) have continued to observe more community endeavors that were reported in other parts of the world and noted that these efforts vary considerably in different cultural settings, and that these endeavors emphasize "diversity and variety rather than being prescriptive and dogmatic" in describing themselves.

This researcher believes that community archiving, in the context of this research at least, would become a possibility if these select citizen archivists were to expand their *komiks* preservation practice and involve more members of the *komiks* community—but only if said community and its members are capable of taking full responsibility of such an initiative themselves. But even if such an initiative is instead done in collaboration with archive professionals, having community members participate, even for select tasks, is still important. Members of the community include the *komiks* creators who, not only create *komiks* art and literature but also own the rights to their work, need to be consulted so their rights as content creators and other similar concerns will not be infringed upon during the collecting and archiving process.

So far, this researcher has been able to identify two cases amongst local comic book citizen archivist activities that had exhibited some semblance of community archiving: a) the *Project Combatron* blog, which is centered around the digitized copies of its namesake comic book title and has a number of contributors who each provided parts of the collection; and b) the *Komikero Komiks Museum* based in San Pablo, Laguna which not only serves as the physical extension of Gerry Alanguilan's previously mentioned *Philippine Comics Art Museum* website, but also features various *komiks* art of other Laguna-based *komiks* artists.

Meanwhile, on the side of formal institutions, select universities have also started including local comic book titles in their libraries. The University of the Philippines Diliman Main Library, for example, had included award-winning titles such as Francisco Coching's *El Indio* and Arnold Arre's *Andong Agimat* in their Filipiniana section as early as the mid-2000s. While Ateneo de Manila's Rizal Library had acquired by donation the copies of Atlas Publishing's *komiks* serials last 2016 and, as of

this writing, they are digitizing these titles as part of their collection (J. P. Lagumen, personal communication, September 13, 2017).

### **Komiks Preservation at the Personal and Professional Level and Information Studies**

The state of Filipino *komiks* archiving in the country is as follows: the practice is mostly in the realm of personal archiving (private *komiks* collectors), while an extension of the collection hobby was found thanks to new technology and a newfound interest in preserving local history (citizen archivist activities), and then a select few of these have exhibited some characteristics of community archiving.

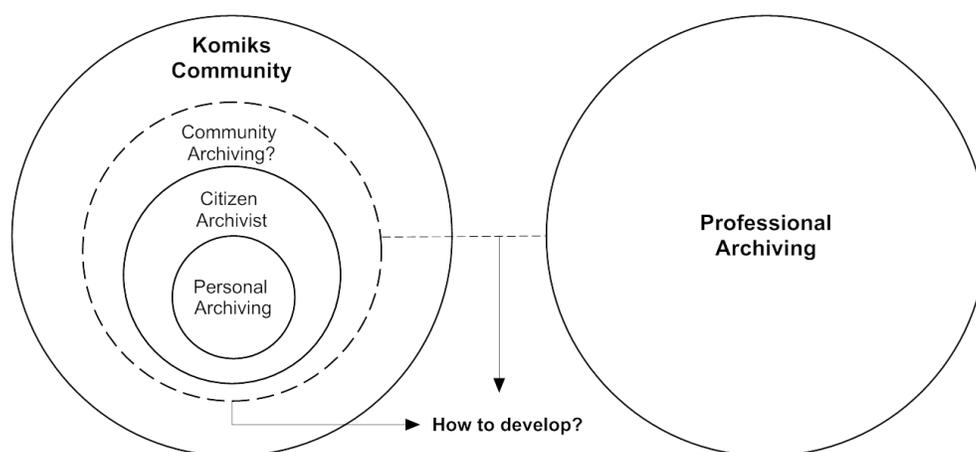


Figure 1. The practice of preserving *komiks* in the personal and professional levels.

While the previously-mentioned *Project Combatron* blog and the *Komikero Komiks Museum* are signs of progress, there is still the question if it is possible that this *komiks* preservation practice could involve a larger part of the community, or maybe form some collaboration with formal memory institutions and practitioners.

In order to answer that question and the goals of this research, the following section will detail the theories that were integrated into this research and how this research was conducted.

### **Why Use the Community-Based Archiving Method?**

This research had taken much inspiration from University of the Philippines School of Library Studies (UP SLIS) graduate, James Kevin R. De Jesus and his undergraduate thesis, "Readiness assessment for a community-based archiving initiative in Barangay Borol 1st, Balagtas Bulacan." De Jesus' (2015) earlier research provided the basis for this study's research method.

As mentioned previously, two of the goals of this research is determining the level of readiness

and willingness of the members of the selected community regarding *komiks* preservation. The Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research’s Community Readiness Model and Michelle Caswell’s Key Principles will answer these factors respectively.

The Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research (2014) defines community readiness as “the degree to which a community is willing and prepared to take action on an issue” (para. 10) and they identify five key dimensions from which it could be measured, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*The Five Key Dimensions of Community Readiness*

| 5 Key Dimensions                        | Explanation of each dimension  |
|---|--|
| <b>Community Knowledge of the Issue</b> | The degree to which the community is aware of the issue.   |
| <b>Community Knowledge of Efforts</b>   | The degree to which the community is aware of any programs or efforts being done to address the issue. |
| <b>Leadership</b>                       | The attitude of any person in any leadership role have towards addressing the issue.                   |
| <b>Community Climate</b>                | The attitude of the community’s general population towards addressing the issue.                       |
| <b>Resources</b>                        | The types of resources being used or could be used to address the issue.                               |

*Note:* Adapted from “Community Readiness for Community Change,” by the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research, 2014, retrieved from [http://tec.wolpe2.natsci.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/04/CR\\_Handbook\\_8-3-15.pdf](http://tec.wolpe2.natsci.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/04/CR_Handbook_8-3-15.pdf).

However, the key dimensions of Leadership and Resources and their respective key questions are not applicable to the circumstances during this research and are thus excluded. These two dimensions respectively involve some formal leadership and community efforts already in place, elements which the chosen community currently lacks. Members of the local comic book community either operate independently or collaborate in groups, but never seem to conform to some strict hierarchy. And while there are select archiving efforts already present, there doesn't seem to be any in the chosen region for the study.

The Community Readiness Model also features a 9-Stage Community Readiness Scale to quantifiably measure the selected community’s readiness levels, as well as anchored rating scales for scoring each key dimension according to these levels. Table 3 details how each of the relevant dimensions are scored according to their respective levels on the 9-stage scale, with key factors highlighted to differentiate one level from others.

Boquiren, A. A. S. (2018). Community readiness assessment for a community-based collecting and archiving project for contemporary komiks. *Journal of Philippine Librarianship*, 38, 1–17.

As for measuring community willingness, community archives advocate Michelle Caswell (2014) lists five key principles exhibited in the community archives discourses from which that factor can be derived, which are described in Table 2.

While Caswell (2014) proposed these principles as a theoretical framework for archival human rights work, she notes that these could still be adapted for a variety of contexts. Thus, these key principles can be integrated into this research despite the latter lacking the human rights element.

Table 2

*Michelle Caswell's Five Key Principles*

| <b>Five Key Principles</b> | <b>Description of Each Principle</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Participation</b>       | Community members themselves decide what type of materials are to be collected, how they are to be described, and with whom these materials can be accessed by. Community involvement and the notion of self-representation are key to these endeavors. |
| <b>Shared Stewardship</b>  | The community that provides the materials and records for the archive still maintains some level of control and autonomy over them.   |
| <b>Multiplicity</b>        | Community archives collect a variety of materials and records, as well as allow spaces for differing perspectives concerning community history.   |
| <b>Activism</b>            | There is some element of activism in the act of archiving records of a community.   |
| <b>Reflexivity</b>         | Community archive practitioners engage in some critical self-reflection concerning their role and the impact of grassroots memory work.   |

*Note:* Adapted from “Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives,” by M. Caswell, 2014, *Archival Science*, 14(3-4), p. 307. doi:10.1007/s10502-014-9220-6.

Table 3

*Anchored Rating Scales for Scoring Along the Community Readiness Scale*

| Levels                | Level Description for Scoring<br>Community Knowledge of Issue  | Level Description for Scoring<br>Community Knowledge of Efforts   | Level Description for Scoring<br>Community Climate  |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| No Awareness          | Community members have <b>no</b> knowledge about the issue.  | Community members <b>have no knowledge</b> about local efforts addressing the issue.  | Community members believe that the issue is <b>not</b> a concern.   |
| Denial/<br>Resistance | <b>Only a few</b> community members have <b>any knowledge</b> about the issue. Among <b>many</b> community members, there are <b>misconceptions</b> about the issue.   | <b>Only a few</b> community members have <b>any knowledge</b> about local efforts addressing the issue, and those who do may <b>have misconceptions or incorrect knowledge</b> about local efforts. | Community members believe that this issue may be a concern in this community, but <b>don't think it can or should be addressed</b> .  |
| Vague Awareness       | <b>At least some</b> community members <b>have heard of the issue, but little else</b> . Among <b>some</b> community members, there <b>may be</b> misconceptions about the issue. Community members <b>may be somewhat aware that the issue occurs locally</b> . | At least <b>some</b> community members <b>have heard of local efforts, but little else</b> .  | Some community members <b>believe that this issue may be a concern in the community, but it is not seen as a priority</b> . They show no motivation to act.   |
| Pre-Planning          | At least some community <b>members know a little about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms</b> . At least some community members <b>are aware</b> that the issue occurs locally.  | At least <b>some</b> community members <b>have heard of local efforts and are familiar with the purpose of the efforts</b> .  | Some community members believe that this issue is a concern in the community and that <b>some type of effort is needed to address it</b> . Although some may be at least passively supportive of efforts, <b>only a few may be participating in developing, improving or implementing efforts</b> . |
| Preparation           | At least some community members know <b>some</b> about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. At least some community members are aware that the issue occurs locally.  | At least <b>some</b> community members have heard of local efforts, <b>are familiar with the purpose of the efforts, who the efforts are for, and how the efforts work</b> .                        | At least some community members <b>are participating in developing, improving, or implementing efforts</b> , possibly attending group meetings that are working toward these efforts.   |
| Initiation            | At least some community members know some about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. At least some community members have some knowledge about <b>how much it occurs locally and its effect on the community</b> .  | <b>Many</b> community members have heard of local efforts and are familiar with the purpose of the effort. At least some community members know who the efforts are for and how the efforts work.   | At least <b>some</b> community members <b>play a key role</b> in developing, improving, and/or implementing efforts, possibly being members of groups or speaking out publicly in favor of efforts, and/or as other types of <b>driving forces</b> .  |

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Table 3 (cont.)

| Levels   | Level Description for Scoring<br>Community Knowledge of Issue   | Level Description for Scoring<br>Community Knowledge of Efforts   | Level Description for Scoring<br>Community Climate  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Stabilization</b>                             | At least some community members <b>know a lot</b> about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. At least some community members have some knowledge about how much it occurs locally and its effect on the community.   | <b>Many</b> community members have heard of local efforts, are familiar with the purpose of the effort, <b>who the efforts are for, and how the efforts work. At least a few community members know the effectiveness of local efforts.</b>                     | At least some community members play a key role in <b>ensuring or improving the long-term viability</b> of efforts. The attitude in the community is that they have taken responsibility. |
| <b>Confirmation/<br/>Expansion</b>               | <b>Most</b> community members know a lot about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. At least some community members have <b>a lot</b> of knowledge about how much it occurs locally, its effect on the community, and how to address it locally.   | Most community members have heard of local efforts and are familiar with the purpose of the effort. <b>Many</b> community members know who the efforts are for and how the efforts work. <b>Some</b> community members know the effectiveness of local efforts. | The <b>majority</b> of the community <b>strongly</b> supports efforts or the need for efforts. <b>Participation level is high.</b>  |
| <b>High Level of<br/>Community<br/>Ownership</b> | Most community members have <b>detailed</b> knowledge about the issue, knowing <b>detailed information</b> about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. <b>Most</b> community members have <b>detailed</b> knowledge about how much it occurs locally, its effect on the community, and how to address it locally. | Most community members have extensive knowledge about local efforts, <b>knowing the purpose, who the efforts are for and how the efforts work. Many</b> community members know the effectiveness of the local efforts.  | The majority of the community are <b>highly supportive</b> of efforts to address the issue. <b>Community members demand accountability.</b>   |

Note: Adapted from “Community Readiness for Community Change,” by the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research, 2014, retrieved from [http://tec.wolpe2.natsci.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/04/CR\\_Handbook\\_8-3-15.pdf](http://tec.wolpe2.natsci.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/04/CR_Handbook_8-3-15.pdf)

## From Theorizing to Strategic Planning

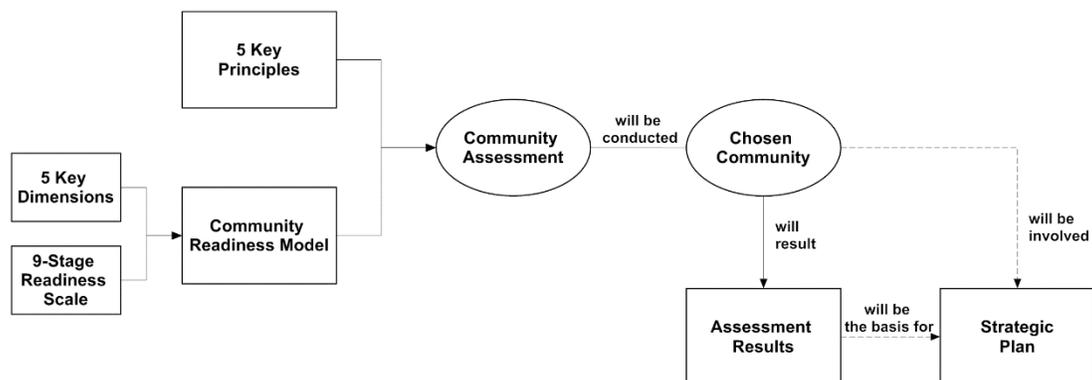


Figure 2. Strategic plan for assessing *komiks* community and developing preservation project.

Figure 2 summarizes the theoretical framework of the study. This researcher determines how the chosen community will willingly respond to archiving as a practice based on the presence of the key principles, and also assess at what level of readiness each of the community's key dimensions according to its respective scale.

By examining the community's existing conditions based on these two factors, this researcher can properly identify the opportunity and challenges to developing an effective collecting and archiving plan. The concerns of the community members, ranging from *komiks* creators to enthusiasts, can be derived from that same analysis.

## Methodology

This researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with respondents of the chosen community, as well as e-mail interviews when the former types of inquiry were not possible.

The population chosen for this research are known members of the *komiks* community who generally operate in the National Capital Region and are sorted into the following sub-community groups: 1) the event organizers for *komiks* events; 2) the *komiks* creators who participate and self-publish in *komiks* events; and 3) comic book fans and collectors.

This researcher had interviewed a total of 19 individuals over the course of his research. Sixteen (16) of these respondents were interviewed directly, and all consented to having their respective interview recorded. Meanwhile, three of these respondents were contacted and interviewed by email. Out of the 19 respondents, eight of them preferred to remain anonymous.

Community readiness is measured by how far along the community readiness scale the respondent are, while community willingness is determined by how prevalent the key community archiving principles are and other select factors from analyzing community readiness.

This researcher searched each transcription for key phrases and appropriated scores to how they reflected each of the relevant dimensions and key principles. This scoring system is based on the rating scale provided by the Community Readiness handbook. This researcher averaged the community readiness scores and sorted them into the following: a) according to their respective community readiness dimensions and respective respondent groups; b) according to their respective sub-community groups; and c) the overall community readiness score for the general community based on the previous scores. These scores determine on which stage of the community readiness scale they are on. This stage of the analysis helped determine which sub-community group is more supportive and more likely to participate in future archival endeavors.

This researcher then determined how the key principles of community archives are prevalent in the community by analyzing the interview results, current practices, and materials available to willingly be archived.

This researcher further fulfills the third research goal of identifying community concerns regarding *komiks* preservation by deriving them from previous analyses.

## Findings

After analyzing and quantifying how each of the three relevant dimensions scored, findings show that their scores are generally on the lower third of the community readiness scale.

Figure 3 shows each respondent group's averaged scores according to their respective readiness dimensions.

The community's knowledge of the issue of preserving *komiks* scored the lowest overall. This is due to most community members admittedly being too busy "doing their own thing" and assume that someone else would do such a task for them. One respondent even added that archiving *komiks* is a privilege that not many in the community could afford. *Komiks* creators noticeable score a little higher than the other respondents, but that was mostly because they are more aware of other factors that affect them as content creators in their chosen medium. If they have any concept of archiving or preserving *komiks*, it has more to do with commercial reasons.

The knowledge of efforts and community climate dimensions consistently scored higher amongst all groups, with the latter scoring the highest. Community members being knowledgeable of any efforts preserving *komiks* is attributed to their small size as a community. Many of those

interviewed stated that almost anyone knows everyone, either by name or by face. If there is any event or development that involves *komiks*, they would most likely have heard about it from social media or would be spreading the news more amongst themselves.

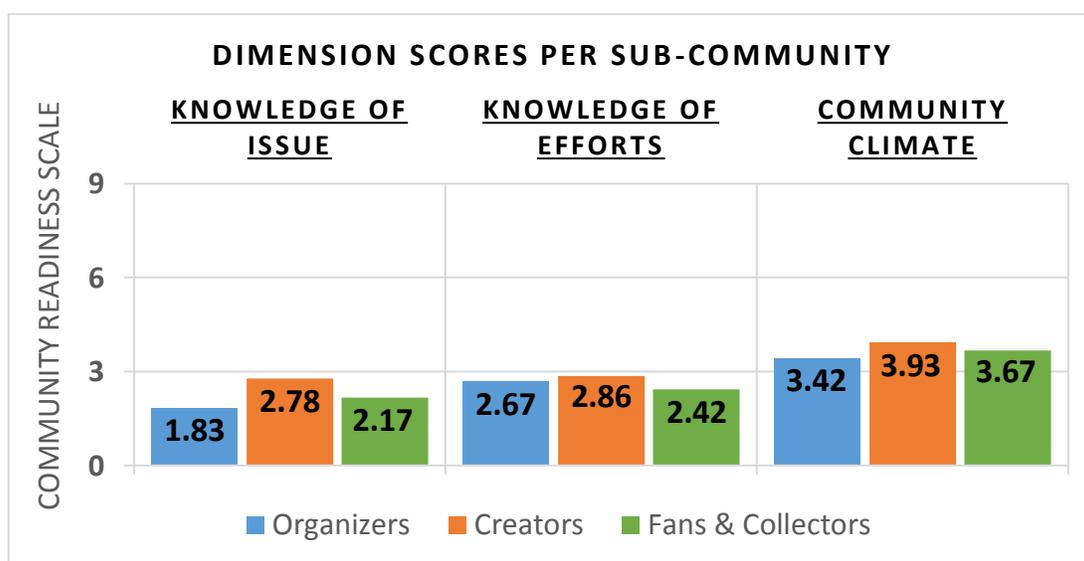


Figure 3. Averaged dimension scores per sub-community.

Meanwhile, event organizers, *komiks* creators, and enthusiasts alike stated that preserving *komiks* is a concern and most respondents are at least willing to passively support in making an effort. Despite that, many respondents also pointed out that *komiks* preservation is not an immediate priority.

Some respondents have pointed out that the community has other issues that need to be given priority. Among those issues included the spreading of awareness about *komiks* in the country. Other respondents also state that there isn't an immediate need to preserve contemporary titles if these could still be purchased. A few state that older *komiks* titles would be given more attention because of their rarity, while more recent titles are still being published and circulated so there are still plenty of copies available. One collector even pointed out that preserving contemporary *komiks* would become an issue if they become rarer, but that might not happen anytime soon.

Figure 4 shows each respondent group's averaged readiness level and their respective stage of community readiness.

All three groups' scores show that they are generally vaguely aware about the issue of *komiks* preservation efforts and what should be done about it. *Komiks* creators scored higher than the organizers and *komiks* fans, but even they are nowhere close to any sort of pre-planning for such efforts.

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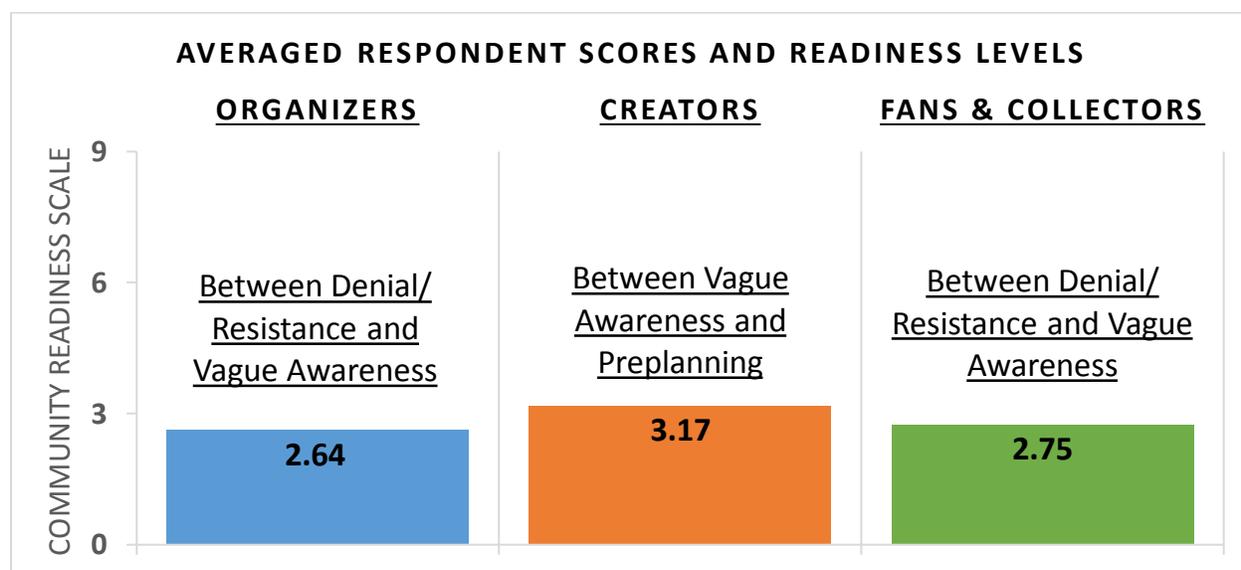


Figure 4. Averaged respondent scores and readiness levels.

All three groups' scores show that they are generally vaguely aware about the issue of *komiks* preservation efforts and what should be done about it. *Komiks* creators scored higher than the organizers and *komiks* fans, but even they are nowhere close to any sort of pre-planning for such efforts.

While all three groups do not deny or are not resisting the idea of having a *komiks* preservation effort, they still pointed out that it is not a high priority for them as a community.

Figure 5 shows the average scores for each community readiness dimension, the overall community readiness score, and the respective readiness level for the community.

As a community, their overall score places them near the level of vague awareness, while any sign of denial or resistance is more to their acknowledging that a *komiks* preservation effort is not a top priority for them. Of the relevant dimensions, community climate scored the highest. This shows that while they state that such an effort is not a priority, many community members are still willing to participate in one. Though, due to their workload and schedules, many community members stated that they would not be initiating things themselves or be doing much of the workload.

This general attitude regarding participation proves itself an fitting jumping point towards how prevalent the five key community archiving principles are in this community. When specifying how community members would participate, *komiks* creators and event organizers would likely provide samples of their work and do promotional work. Some fans and collectors would were also willing to volunteer for the effort and even provide financial support for it. The event organizers, in particular,

would like to have a project or strategic plan prepared first. They speak for most *komiks* artists and writers when they said that they want assurance that their work would not be subject to piracy and that their rights as content creators is respected. Some stated that if there is such a plan in place that they would find acceptable to their interests and could be sustainable in the long run, they would be more willing to take part.

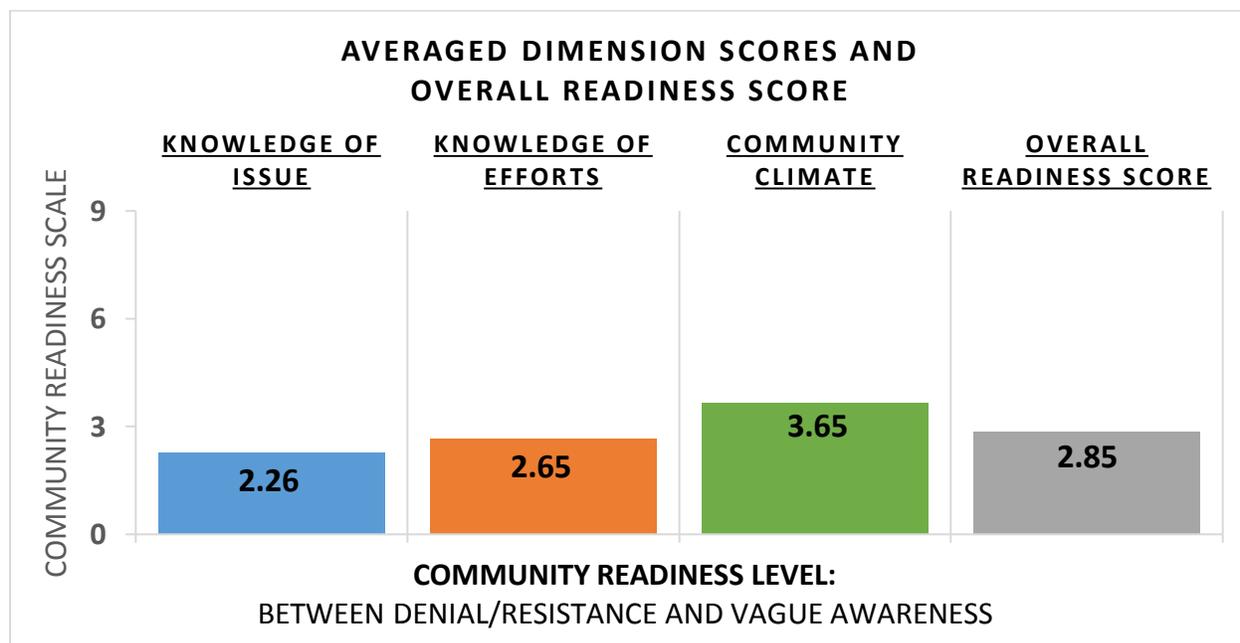


Figure 5. Averaged dimension scores and overall readiness score.

When it comes to shared stewardship, most respondents stated they are more willing to trust archive professionals to manage the effort. Though some have also stated that it is a matter of good reputation and credibility that affects who they would want to entrust their works to. A few respondents even suggested a collaboration between archive professionals and a *komiks* community representative. The latter, in particular, should be from one of the better-known events organizing groups for easier collaboration and management on a community level. One such organizer also added that whoever would be heading the effort and managing the work should be an impartial party, or at least someone who has no biases concerning the *komiks* titles that should be preserved. This respondent has pointed out that there are plenty of groups and factions within the community who have their own personal agendas and creative biases. He further reiterated that if there is anyone from the community who were to participate in the effort, they would most likely prioritize their own works and whatever style of comic books they have a bias for. Hence his insistence in having an impartial party lead the efforts.

Table 4 shows the various *komiks* materials available from the community in their respective

formats.

Table 4

*Available Physical and Digital Komiks Materials*

| Physical Copies  | Digital Copies   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single issue copies</li> <li>• Trade paperbacks</li> <li>• Graphic novels</li> <li>• Comic Zines</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Assorted promotional materials</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG)</li> <li>• Portable Document Format (PDF)</li> <li>• Comic Book Reader (CBR)</li> </ul> |

Digital copies of *komiks* are privately kept by most artists. Some of whom state that they always keep their digital files, and also in case they need to reprint new copies of their work. These kinds of files not only include the finished product, but also sketches and manuscripts. Most *komiks* creators also mentioned that they upload some of their work in various social media channels and online comic platforms so it could reach a wider audience.

Most respondents prefer to have their works preserved digitally, with many of them noting that using that format is more efficient, more sustainable, and it can be used to reach out to a wider audience. A few *komiks* collectors also pointed out that they would be more willing to contribute parts of their collection to be digitized as long as they get their physical copies back. Some others prefer having both formats given the chance to be preserved, while a few prefer physical preservation because going digital risks the threat of piracy.

As for the principle of activism, there is a mixed response amongst respondents when asked about if there is any activism in preserving *komiks*, but many generally agreed that there is indeed some hint of it there. And in terms of the principle of reflexivity, most respondent response to the issue does not seem to be further introspection but more production and promotion of the medium.

Further analysis of the findings reveals the following concerns the *komiks* community have regarding *komiks* preservation:

- a) The threat of piracy.
- b) The accessibility of their works to interested parties.
- c) The protection of their rights as content creators.
- d) Raising more awareness about *komiks* in the country.
- e) The involvement of a reputable, unbiased party to oversee a *komiks* preservation project.

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- f) The sustainability of the *komiks* preservation project.

### Conclusion

The *komiks* community's overall readiness score of 2.85, puts them close to the stage of vague awareness at the lower third of the readiness scale, making them nowhere near being ready to start an initiative, much less manage one. At least, not on their own. This is, however, offset by their willingness to assist in one given that there is an agreed-upon strategic plan that could address their various concerns such as that their rights as content creators be protected, that there are reputable professionals involved, and that the effort will be sustainable in the long term.

The community's various concerns, which had been detailed previously, and their preferred collaboration between the community members and professionals could be best mapped out by a project or strategic plan that highlights the concerns of the former and the benefits provided by the latter. It is crucial that such a plan be developed that details the organization of a community archive effort, the management of tasks and resources involved, the acknowledgement of content creators' rights, and plans for sustainability.

### Recommendations

There have been studies about *komiks* before, but they are almost always about analyzing their contents, examining their trends, and reaffirming their histories. As of this writing, this study might be the first to acknowledge the preservation of Philippine comics as a serious academic topic. The following are research possibilities that can be mined from continuing or even improving upon this research:

- a) A feasibility study using this research and its proposed collecting project as basis.
- b) Further developing a preservation plan for digital and web archiving online *komiks*.
- c) Development of a collecting and archiving plan that can apply to other independently-made literature.

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