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Not Your Papa's Comic Convention

Comic-Con 2006: A showcase for technology

By Kat Avila | Web Published 7.24.2006

Comic-Con International, North America's largest popular culture and comics convention, is a little bit of everything, like some huge sticky monster that rolled across the world and picked up rainbow fragments, dragon bones, light sabers, and human dreams on its yearly pilgrimage to the San Diego Convention Center. The 2006 convention was held July 20-23. Comic-Con is a chance to check out comics, collectibles, toy trends, and to get a peek at movies and video games to be released in the coming year.

One thing is certain, the Apple iPod/iTunes and Nintendo Game Boy generation is changing the way we view animation, read comics, and interact with each other. At a convention I attended just before Comic-Con, i.e., Anime Expo 2006, a fan demonstrated for me the power of his Nintendo DS Lite video game player. Using a stylus, he scrawled short messages and did a drawing on his touch screen to send to other DS players in the large hall where we were. Then, he hosted a series of mini-games; we waited while others downloaded the games so they could join in.

Many changes will become apparent within the next five years. For artists, writers, and broadcasters, this means other mediums to work in. I spent much of Comic-Con 2006 at video game booths (not your papa's games) and at panels such as "PlayStation: PSP (PlayStation Portable console) University," "Clickwheel: Comics for Your iPod," and "Comics Podcasting."

A provocative adaptation of technology is its employment as an artistic medium. I bought a ROBO designer toy USB flash drive for my computer. I plan on feeding my cute ROBO mimobot some of my art or story files. The mimobots are available in sizes of 256MB up to 2GB of storage.

I spoke with Evan Blaustein, CEO of Mimoco, who talked about the monster mimobot exterior. (If you lose the drive cap, you lose half your character.) The core mimobots were created by Mexican urban artist Yahid "Serial Killer" Rodriguez, with additional mimobot designs by other select artists and artist studios.

Mimoco debuted at Comic-Con 2005 with only one design. A year later they have 25 designs, and two exclusives were available at Comic-Con 2006. To see their flashy flash drive designs, surf over to www.mimoco.com. As Blaustein pointed out, when the technology becomes obsolete, you still have an art collectible.

As I mentioned earlier, the video games are not your papa's games, and definitely the comic conventions are not your papa's (or mama's) conventions.



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