

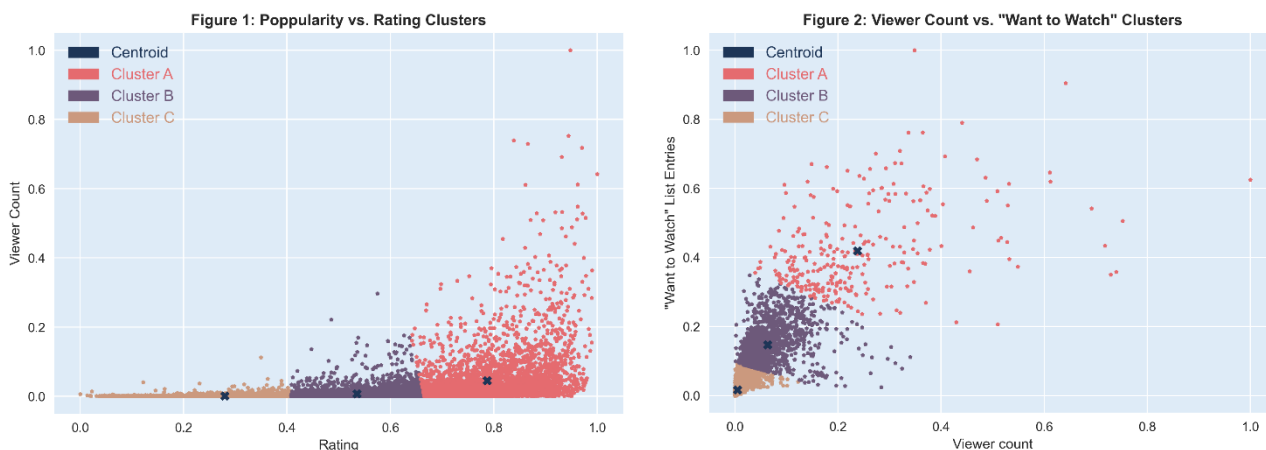
Crunchyroll vs. Netflix: Who has the Best Strategy in the Anime Streaming War?

– 8 January 2021 Ward Dib.

The Japanese animation industry is a worth \$19 billion dollars. Over the course of the 2000s, streaming services for anime have grown from a niche market to a mainstream one, successfully bringing the medium to the west. It continues to rise in popularity – especially with adults – and shows no signs of slowing down.^[3] But what qualifies an anime to be licenced for western consumption? What has more influence on distribution companies; popularity, or rating? Where does the best interest of streaming platforms lie?

To answer these questions, this report will look at data from Anime-Planet, the most popular anime database. The dataset was scraped from the website in June 2020, containing information on over 14k anime.^[1]

Figure 1 shows clusters of rating against viewer count after the data was standardised. The more popular shows have higher ratings, but popularity of a given show doesn't seem to affect its rating, as a portion of highly rated shows are not popular, as seen at the bottom of cluster A. However, popularity seems to have a strong influence on what shows people have added to their "Want to Watch" list, as seen in the scatter graph in Figure 2. Clearly, people are more inclined to watch popular shows, which makes sense.



We used code to look at what genres and content warnings dominate each cluster in Figure 2.^[4]

Table 1

Cluster	Common Genres	Common Content Warnings
A	Shounen, Action, Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Adventure, Romance	Mature themes, Violence, Physical abuse, Sexual content, Drugs, Suicide
B	Drama, Mystery, Seinen, Horror	Explicit content, Violence
C	Mecha, Conspiracy, Video-games, School	Mature themes, Abuse, Suicide, Nudity

As shown in Table 1, the most anticipated anime are ones targeting teens and young adults, with categories like "Shounen" – which is action heavy, and targets teenage boys. It is worth noting that not all the shows in these clusters have content warnings, but the ones that do mainly feature violence and mature themes.

These findings fall in line with Netflix's recent spike in interest towards anime, acquiring exclusive licenses to highly anticipated shows like "*Violet Evergarden*" and "*Beastars*". It also produced original adaptations of popular Japanese classics, such as the 2018 hit "*Devilman Crybaby*". Netflix's anime catalogue differs from other streaming platforms' – heavy on action and sci-fi, violent, and more palatable to western audiences. On the other hand, anime-exclusive streaming platforms like Crunchyroll work with distribution partners to license as many shows as possible, and offer simulcasting – which gives users access to episodes the same day they air in Japan.^[2]

According to the data examined in this report, it is better for streaming services that are not anime exclusive to use data analysis, and aim to license upcoming shows that are predicted to fall into clusters such as A, rather than aim to export shows that viewers might rate higher.

1. Mathew A. Anime Dataset [Internet]. kaggle.com. 2020 [cited 2021 Jan 18]. Available from: shorturl.at/hinxF

2. Williams M. How Netflix and Other Streaming Services Are Doubling Down on Anime [Internet]. Variety. 2019 [cited 2021 Jan 18]. Available from: shorturl.at/ntO58

3. Moore DM. Anime is one of the biggest fronts in the streaming wars [Internet]. The Verge. 2019. Available from: shorturl.at/zLT07

4. <https://github.com/wrddib/Applied-DS-1/blob/main/clustering%20assignment/anime-clustering.py>