

2025 SUMMARY

CARTOON

INDUSTRY WHITE PAPER

Part 1 Overview of the Comic/Webtoon Reader Survey

1. Survey Purpose and Overview

This survey includes the overall comic/webtoon reading behavior and perceptions of the entire population aged 10 to 69 in 2025. In the case of webtoons, the survey examined the current status of webtoon reading, overall webtoon reading experience, paid webtoon reading, and webtoon volume purchases. For published comics, the survey investigated the current status of published comic usage, overall published comic usage experience, published comic purchases, and published comic rentals/viewings. In particular, the 2025 survey aimed to confirm user acceptance of the introduction and use of AI technology in the comic/webtoon industry by examining opinions on technology usage at each production stage, and also looked into the usage behavior of short-form content based on comics/webtoons and Instagram comics. Additionally, considering the IP expansion of comics/webtoons, the survey aimed to measure the level of use and perceptions of bidirectional IP expansion content by investigating the expansion from other content to comics/webtoons and from comics/webtoons to other content.

The purpose of this survey is to provide necessary information to comic/web content readers and producers through various activities related to comics/webtoons in the future, and to serve as a basis for policy development to promote the comic/webtoon industry.

The comic/webtoon reader survey has been conducted online since 2019. From the 2022 survey to 2024, it was conducted with a valid sample of 3,500 respondents targeting the population aged 10 to 60, and the 2025 survey was conducted with a scale of 3,000 respondents.

To accurately determine the user survey results, the composition of the sample was extracted based on the population composition ratio derived from the previous year's usage rate survey.

Table 1-1 Key Changes and Maintained Items in the Comic/Webtoon Reader Survey

Category	2023	2024	2025	Changes and Maintained Items (Compared to 2024)
Target Population	• Nationwide, 17 cities and provinces, those aged 10 to 69			Maintenance
Sample Size	• Valid sample of 3,500 people		• Valid sample of 3,000 people	Change
Survey Method	• Online Survey			Maintenance
Survey Agency	Global Research	Embrain Research	Hankook Research	Change
Sampling Method	- Population Composition Ratio - Consideration of the average content usage rate over the previous three years	- Population Composition Ratio - Post-weighting applied after identifying usage rates	Proportional allocation by gender/age/region based on usage rates in 2024	Change

2. Survey Details

In the "2025 Comic/Webtoon User Survey," comics and webtoons are classified into webtoons and published comics, while animated films (animations) and educational comics viewed on TV, in theaters, or online are not included in comics/webtoons.

3. Outcomes of the comic/webtoon reader survey

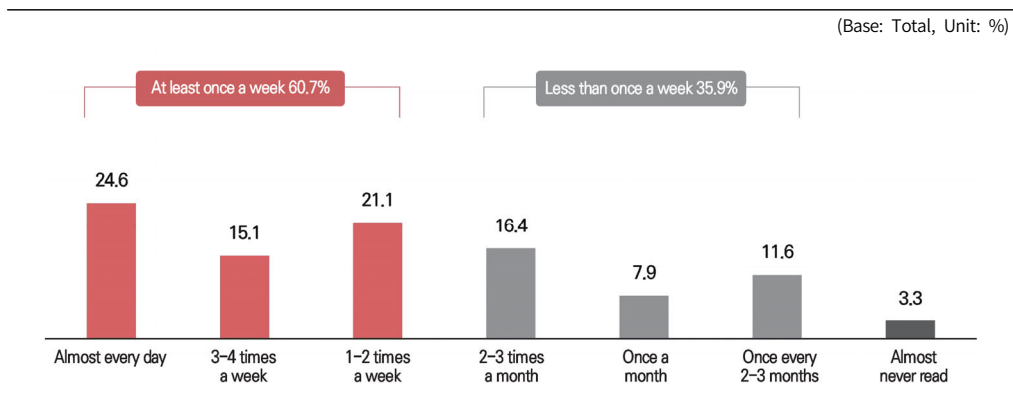
3-1. Comic and Webtoon Reading Frequency

(1) Webtoon Reading Frequency

It was found that 60.7% of all respondents read webtoons at least once a week. Specifically, "almost every day" was the highest at 24.6%, followed by "1-2 times a week" (21.1%).

By age group, the proportion of those who read "at least once a week" was higher among those in their 20s compared to other age groups.

Figure 1-1 Webtoon Reading Frequency



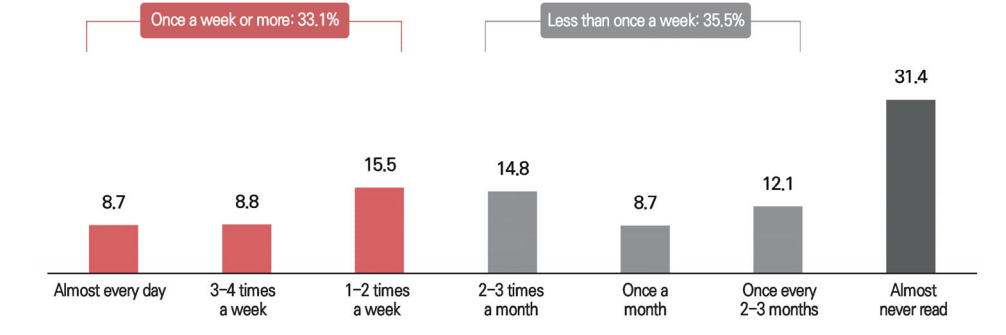
(2) Print Comic Usage Frequency

It was found that 33.1% of all respondents read print comics at least once a week, with "1-2 times a week" being the highest at 15.5%, followed by "2-3 times a month" (14.8%). Meanwhile, "almost never read" was at 31.4%, indicating a relatively high proportion of those who do not read print comics.

By gender, the ratio of males to females is relatively higher in the case of "once a week or more."

Figure 1-2 Print Comic Usage Frequency

(Base: Total, Unit: %)

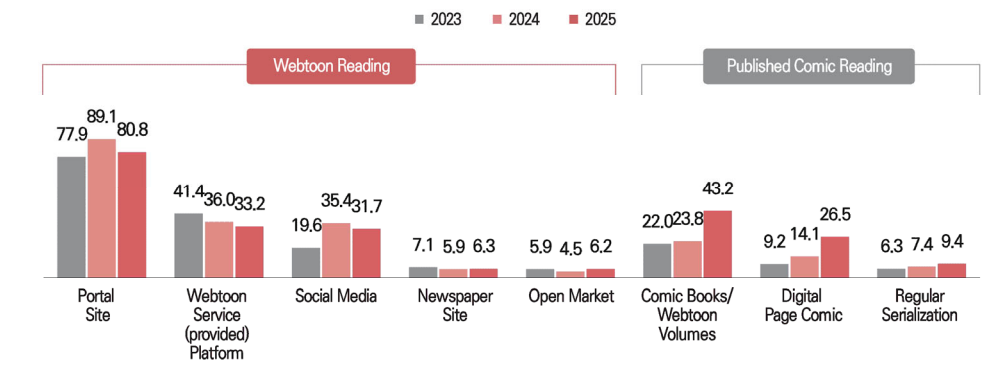


(3) Experience of reading different types of comics and webtoons

Among the types of comics and webtoons read, "portal sites" had the highest percentage at 80.8%, followed by "comic books/webtoon volumes" (43.2%) and "webtoon service platforms" (33.2%). Specifically, in webtoons, "portal sites" (80.8%) accounted for a high percentage, while in published comics, "comic books/webtoon volumes" (43.2%) accounted for a high percentage.

Figure 1-3 Experience of reading different types of comics and webtoons

(Base: Total, duplicates, unit: %)



3-2. Webtoon Usage

(1) Overall Webtoon Reading Experience

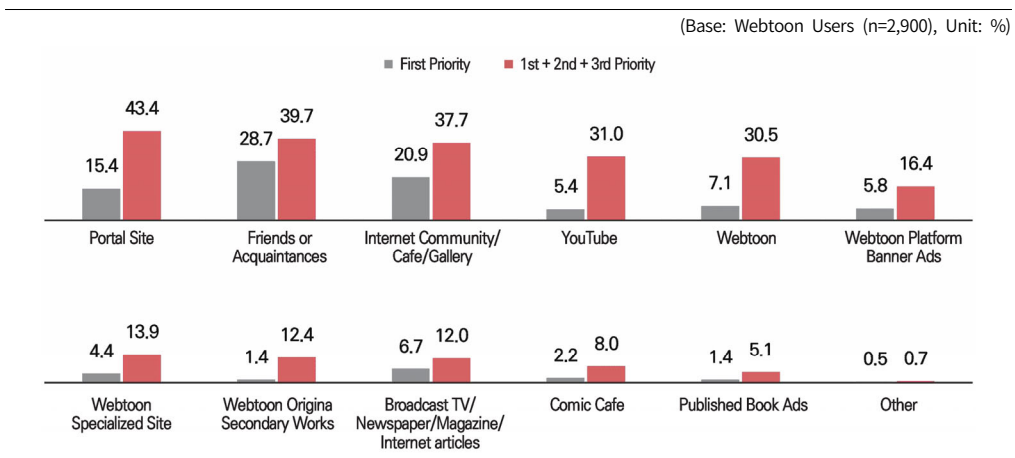
A. Webtoon Information Reading Method

Among webtoon readers (n=2,900), the most common way of acquiring webtoon information (1st, 2nd, 3rd choice) was "Portal Sites" (43.4%), followed by "Friends or Acquaintances" (39.7%), "Internet Communities/Cafes/Galleries" (37.7%), "YouTube" (31.0%), and "Social Media" (30.5%).

By age group, the proportion of "Friends or Acquaintances" tends to increase as age decreases, while the proportion of "Internet Communities/Cafes/Galleries" tends to increase as age increases." In the case of "Social Media", the proportion was relatively high among those in their teens and 20s.

Meanwhile, based on the 1st priority, most webtoon-related information was obtained from "Friends or Acquaintances" (28.7%), followed by "Internet Communities/Cafes/Galleries" (20.9%), and "Portal Sites" (15.4%).

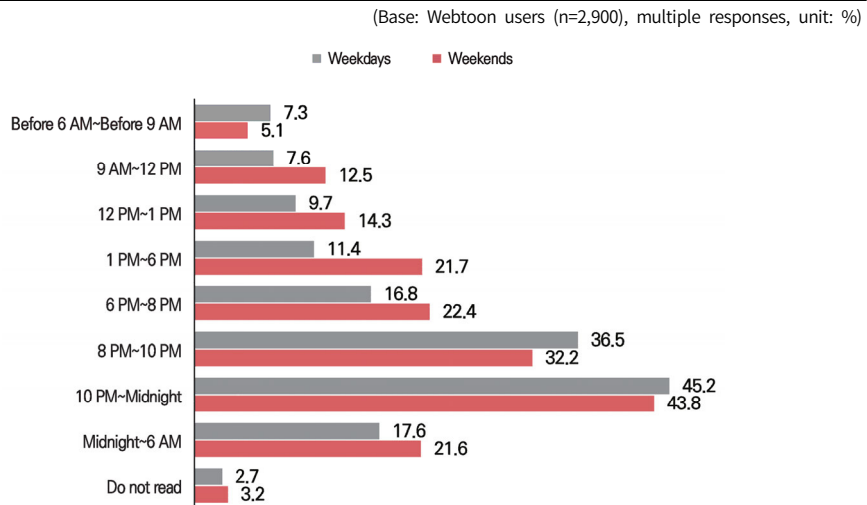
Figure 1-4 Webtoon Information Reading Method



(2) Webtoon Reading Time

Webtoon readers (n=2,900) reported that their webtoon viewing time slots are mostly "before midnight" (weekdays: 45.2%, weekends: 43.8%), which was the highest response. Specifically, on weekdays, after "before midnight," the next highest was "before 8 PM" (36.5%), "before 6 AM" (17.6%), and "before 8 PM" (16.8%). On weekends, after "before midnight," the next highest was "before 8 PM" (32.2%), "before 8 PM" (22.4%), and "before 6 PM" (21.7%).

Figure 1-5 Webtoon Reading Time



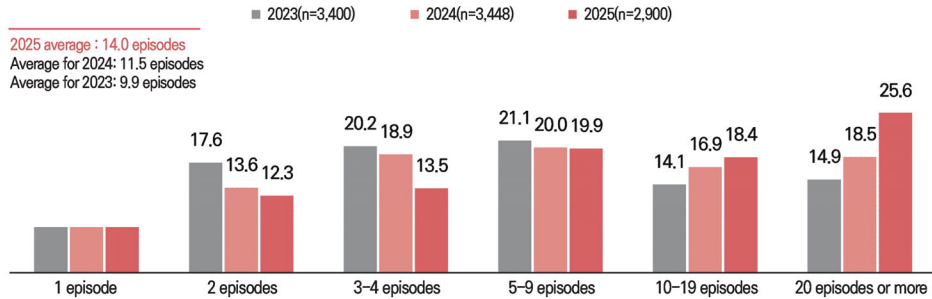
B. Number of webtoon works read per week (based on episodes)

The average number of webtoon works read by users (n=2,900) over a week was 14.0 episodes. The segment with the highest number of webtoon works read was "more than 20 episodes" at 25.6%, followed by "5–9 episodes" (19.9%) and "10–19 episodes" (18.4%).

By age group, the average number of webtoon works read tends to increase as age decreases.

Figure 1-6 Number of webtoon works read per week (based on episodes)

(Base: Webtoon readers, average (episodes), unit: %)

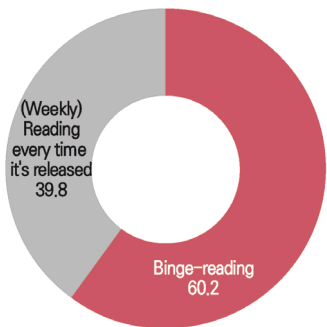


C. Preferred Method of Reading Webtoons

Among webtoon readers (n=2,900), the preferred method of webtoon reading was "binge-reading" at 60.2%, which is higher than "reading every time it is released (weekly)" (39.8%). By age group, "binge-reading" is relatively high among those in their 40s to 60s, while "reading every time it is released (weekly)" is higher among those in their teens to 30s.

Figure 1-7 Preferred Method of Reading Webtoons

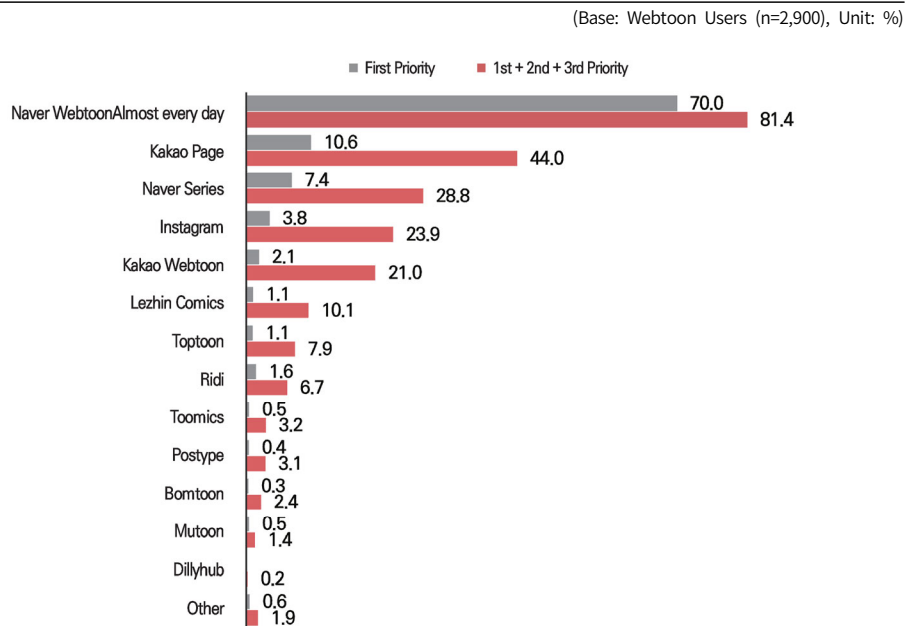
(Base: Webtoon Users (n=2,900), Unit: %)



D. Main Webtoon Service Used

The main webtoon services used by webtoon users (n=2,900) were led by "Naver Webtoon" at 81.4%, followed by "Kakao Page" (44.0%), "Naver Series" (28.8%), "Instagram" (23.9%), and "Kakao Webtoon" (21.0%).

Figure 1-8 Main Webtoon Service Used



E. Favorite webtoon genres

Webtoon readers (n=2,900) enjoy the webtoon genres (1+2+3 rankings) with "Fantasy" at 37.2% being the highest, followed by "Action" (33.9%), "Comic/Comedy" (29.9%), and "Romance Fantasy" (28.9%).

Meanwhile, based on the first ranking, "Action" (22.5%), "Fantasy" (17.7%), "Romance Fantasy" (11.9%), and "Modern Romance" (11.7%) were the most common.

Figure 1-9 Favorite webtoon genres

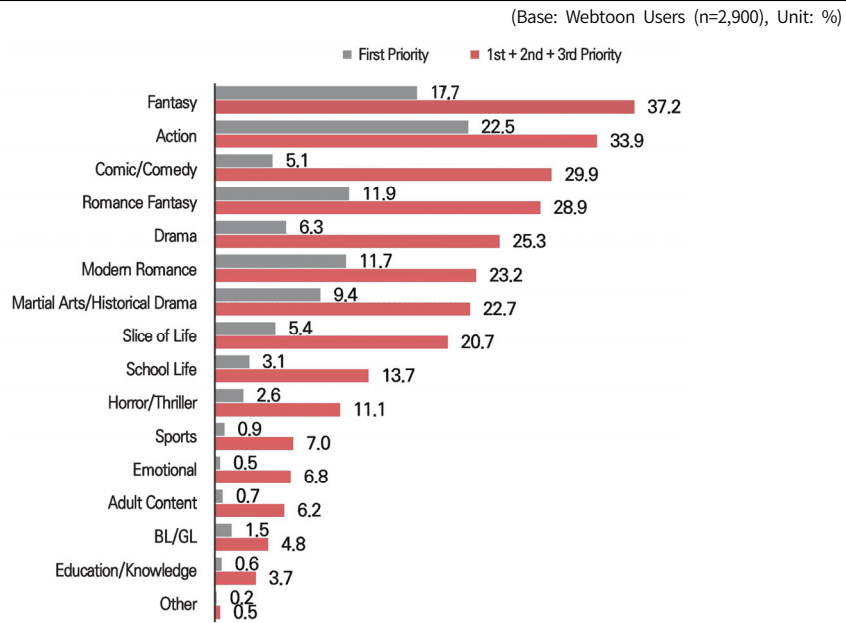


Table 1-2 Favorite Webtoon Genre (1st Choice)

(Base: Webtoon Readers, Unit: %)

Category		Number of Cases	Action	Fantasy	Romance Fantasy	Modern Romance	Martial Arts/Historical Drama	Drama	Slice of Life	Comic/Comedy
All		(2,900)	22.5	17.7	11.9	11.7	9.4	6.3	5.4	5.1
Gender	Male	(1,518)	36.2	18.0	4.3	5.7	13.7	3.6	3.6	5.6
	Female	(1,382)	7.5	17.4	20.3	18.2	4.6	9.4	7.3	4.6
Age	Teenagers	(379)	21.4	21.6	13.7	11.9	5.3	2.6	5.0	7.9
	20s	(550)	23.6	16.4	13.8	11.1	8.5	4.4	5.5	3.5
	30s	(563)	24.9	16.5	11.2	9.9	7.8	4.4	6.9	5.2
	40s	(553)	21.7	17.9	12.3	12.8	11.9	6.1	4.9	4.2
	50s	(484)	21.1	20.2	9.9	13.0	10.3	9.3	4.3	5.2
	60s	(371)	21.3	13.7	10.5	11.3	12.1	12.4	5.4	6.2

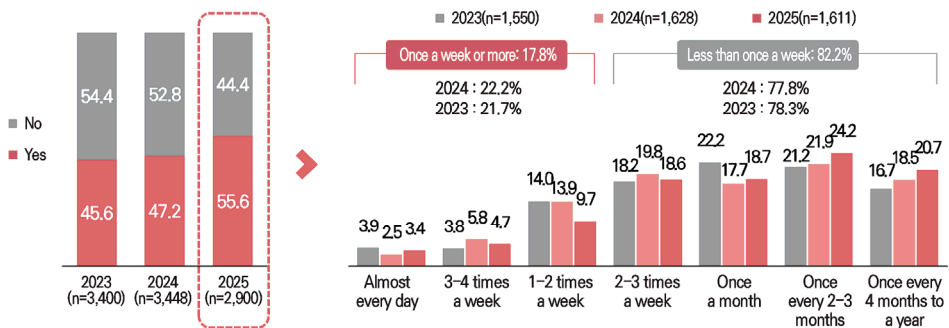
3-3. Paid Webtoon Reading

(1) Experience of Paid Webtoon Purchase and Purchase Frequency

55.6% of webtoon readers (n=2,900) have experienced paid webtoon purchases. The purchase frequency of those who have experienced paid webtoon purchases (n=1,611) was 17.8% for "once a week or more" and 82.2% for "less than once a week", with the details showing "once every 2-3 months" (24.2%), "once every 4 months to a year" (20.7%), and "once a month" (18.7%) being the most common.

Figure 1-10 Experience and frequency of paid webtoon purchases

(Base: Webtoon readers, paid webtoon payment experiencers, unit: %)

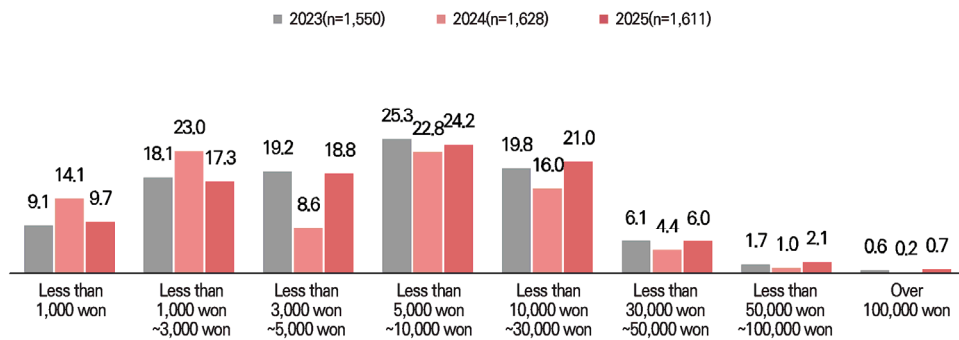


(2) Average monthly expenditure on webtoons

The average monthly expenditure on webtoons for paid webtoon users (n=1,611) was highest at "less than 5,000 won~10,000 won" (24.2%), followed by "less than 10,000 won~30,000 won" (21.0%), "less than 3,000 won~5,000 won" (18.8%), and "less than 1,000 won~3,000 won" (17.3%), respectively.

Figure 1-11 Average monthly expenditure on webtoons

(Base: Paid webtoon experiencers, unit: %)



3-4. Overall experience of using published comics and purchasing published comics

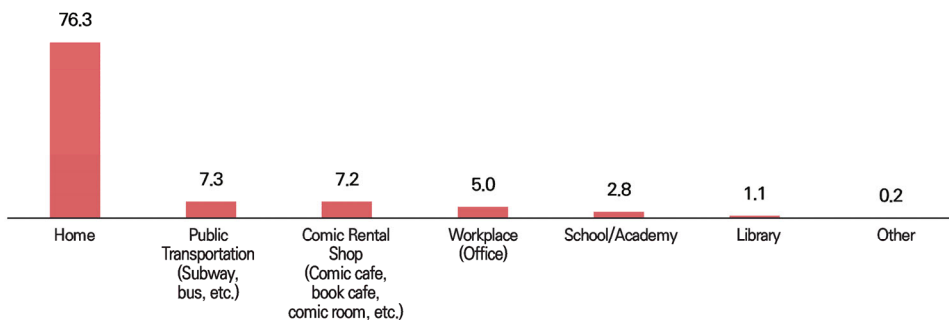
(1) Primary Locations for Reading Published Comics

The primary location where published comic readers read (n=2,059) was "home" at 76.3%, the highest percentage.

In the case of comic rental shops, responses from those in their teens and 20s showed a relatively high proportion.

Figure 1-12 Primary Locations for Reading Published Comics

(Base: Published comic readers (n=2,059), unit: %)

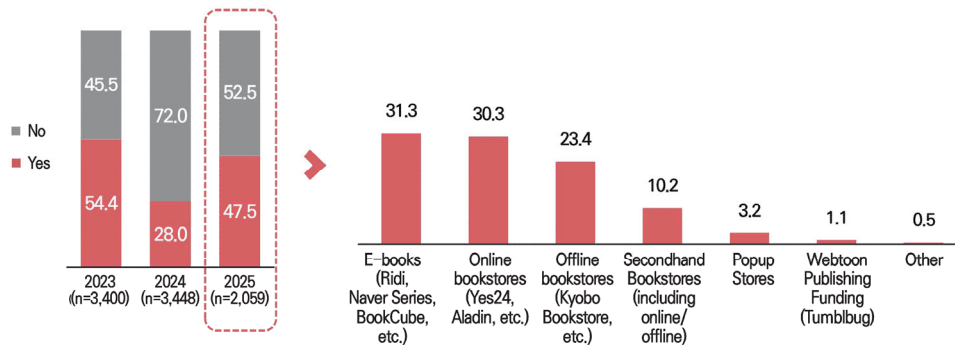


(2) Published Comic Purchasing Experience and Main Purchase Locations

47.5% of published comic readers (n=2,059) reported having experience purchasing published comics, with a particularly high percentage among males. The main purchasing place for published comic buyers (n=979) was "e-books (Ridi, Naver Series, Book Cube, etc.)" at 31.3%, followed by "online bookstores (Yes24, Aladin, etc.)" (30.3%), "offline bookstores (Kyobo Bookstore, etc.)" (23.4%), and "used bookstores (including online/offline)" (10.2%) in that order.

Figure 1-13 Published Comic Purchasing Experience and Main Purchase Locations

(Base: Readers of published comics, purchasers of published comics, unit: %)

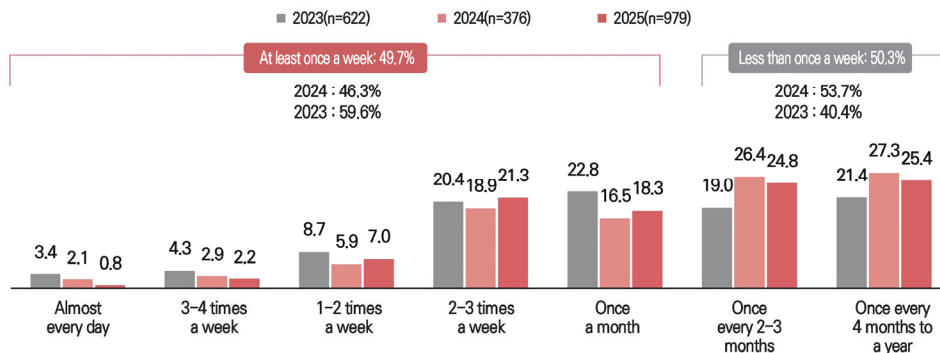


(3) Published Comic Purchasing Cycle

The purchasing cycle of published comic purchasers (n=979) shows that 49.7% purchase "at least once a month" and 50.3% purchase "less than once a month," with "at least once a month" being relatively higher among males and those in their 40s.

Figure 1-14 Published Comic Purchasing Cycle

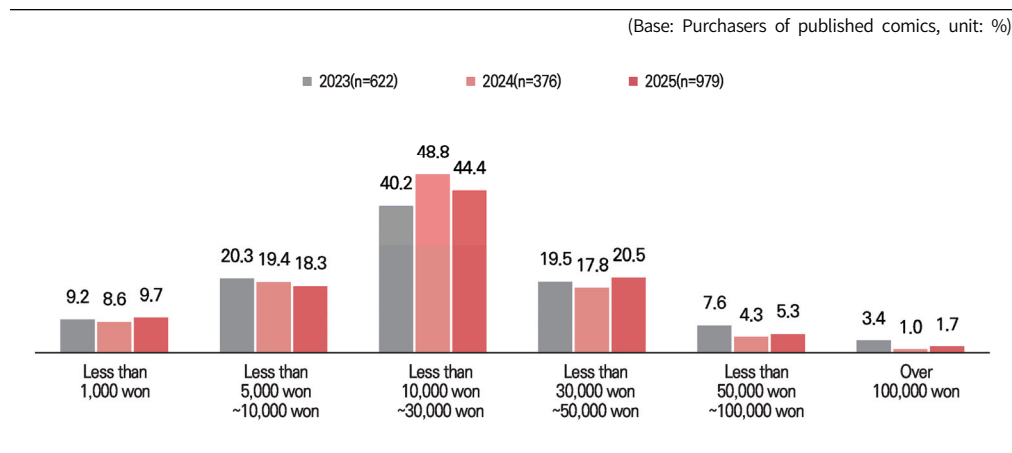
(Base: Purchasers of published comics, unit: %)



(4) Average monthly expenditure when purchasing published comics

The average monthly expenditure of comic book buyers (n=979) was highest at "less than 10,000 – 30,000 won" at 44.4%, followed by "less than 30,000 – 50,000 won" (20.5%), and "less than 5,000 – 10,000 won" (18.3%), in that order.

Figure 1-15 Average monthly expenditure when purchasing published comics



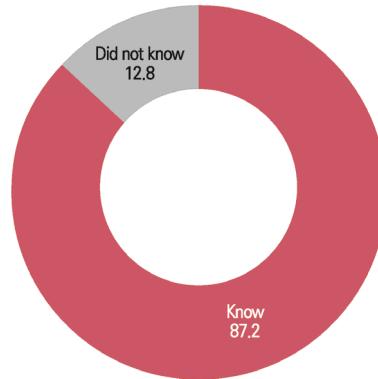
3-5. Comic and Webtoon IP Expansion

(1) Awareness of Original Content and Comics/Webtoons Availability

87.2% of all respondents were aware of the existence of original content and comics/webtoons, with a relatively higher awareness rate among women than men.

Figure 1-16 Awareness of Original Content and Comics/Webtoons Availability

(Base: Total, Unit: %)

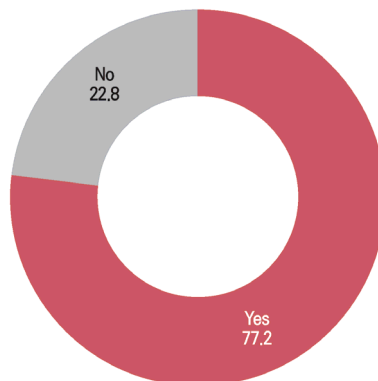


(2) Usage Experience of Original Content and Comics/Webtoons

77.2% of all respondents had experience using original content and comics/webtoons, with a particularly high proportion among those in their 40s.

Figure 1-17 Experience with other content originals, comics, and webtoons

(Base: Total, Unit: %)

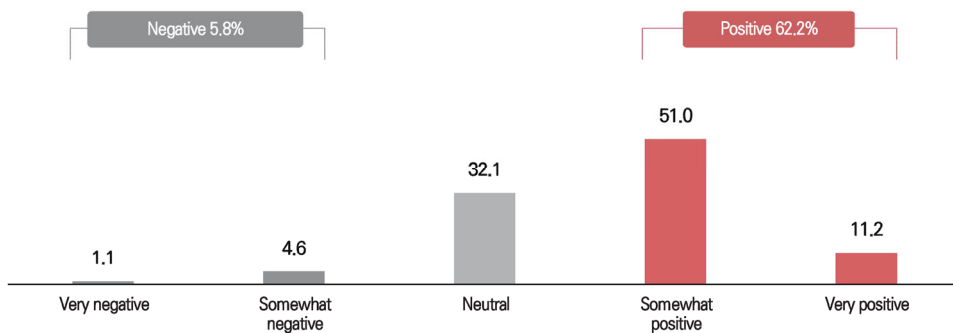


(3) Awareness of Adaptations into Comics and Webtoons

62.2% of all respondents responded positively to the production of content from original works into comics and webtoons, showing a higher positive perception among teenagers and those in their 50s than to other age groups.

Figure 1-18**Recognition of Original Content, Comic/Webtoon Production**

(Base: Total, Unit: %)

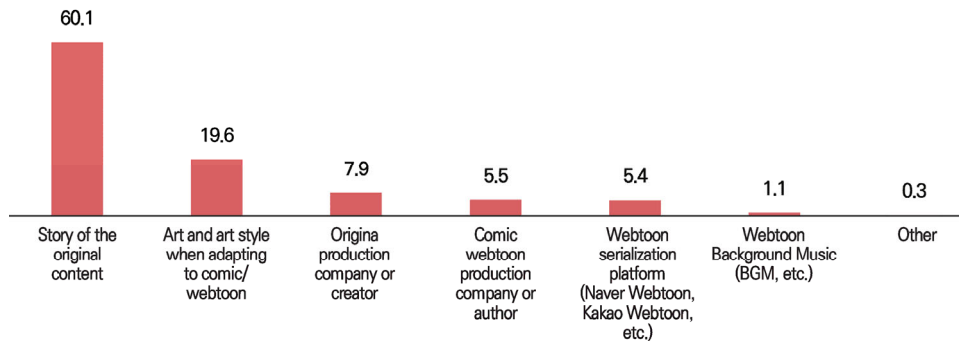


(4) Key Factors in Adapting Original Content into Comics/Webtoons

The most important factor in the production of comic/webtoons based on original content is the "story of the original content" at 60.1%, followed by "art and art style when adapting to comics/webtoon" (19.6%), and "original production company or creator" (7.9%).

Figure 1-19 Key Factors in Adapting Original Content into Comics/Webtoons

(Base: Total, Unit: %)

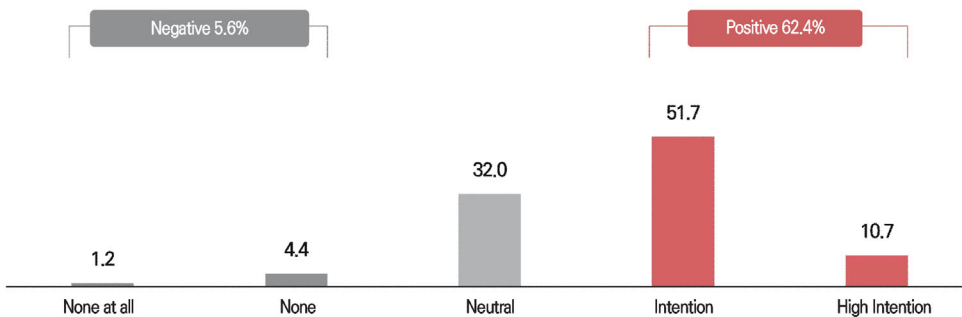


(5) Intention to Read Other Content, Comics/Webtoons

62.4% of all respondents indicated that they are willing to read other original content, comics, and webtoons for production, showing a higher positive perception among teenagers and those in their 50s than other age groups.

Figure 1-20 Intention to Read Other Content, Comics/Webtoons

(Base: Total, Unit: %)



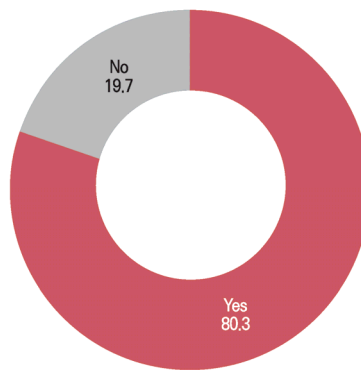
(6) Experience Reading Comics/Webtoons as Source Content for IP Expansion

80.3% of all respondents reported having read comics/webtoons as source content for IP expansion content, with particularly high experience rates among women and those in their 40s.

Figure 1-21

Experience Reading Comics/Webtoons as Source Content for IP Expansion

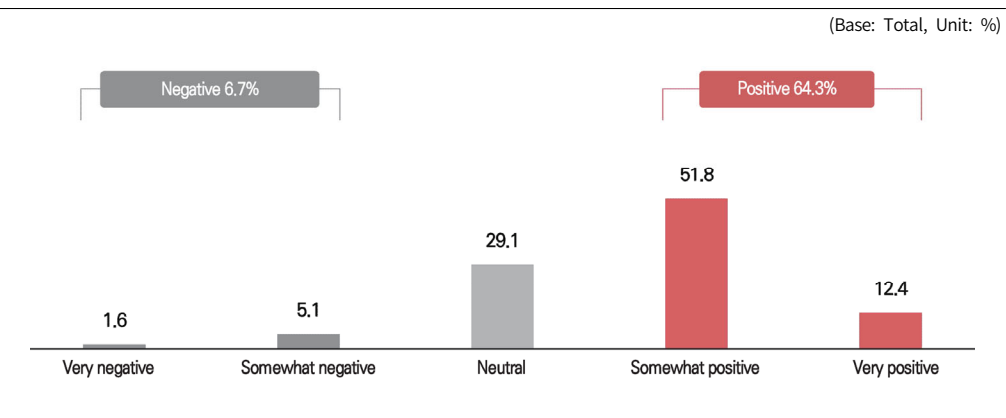
(Base: Total, Unit: %)



(7) Awareness of Comics/Webtoons as Source Content for IP Expansion

64.3% of all respondents answered that they are positive about producing content based on comics and webtoons, as well as expanding IP from other genres, which was relatively higher among those in their 50s than other age groups.

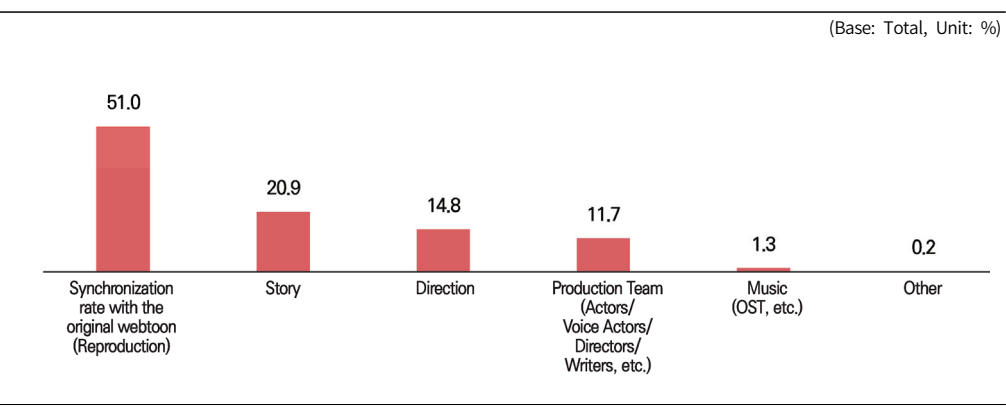
Figure 1-22 Recognition of Content Based on Comics/Webtoons and Cross-Genre IP Expansion



(8) Key Factors in Adaptation and Cross-Genre IP Expansion

The most important factor in producing content based on comics and webtoons, and expanding IP from other genres is the "consistency with the original webtoon", which was the highest at 51.0%, followed by "story" (20.9%) and "direction" (14.8%).

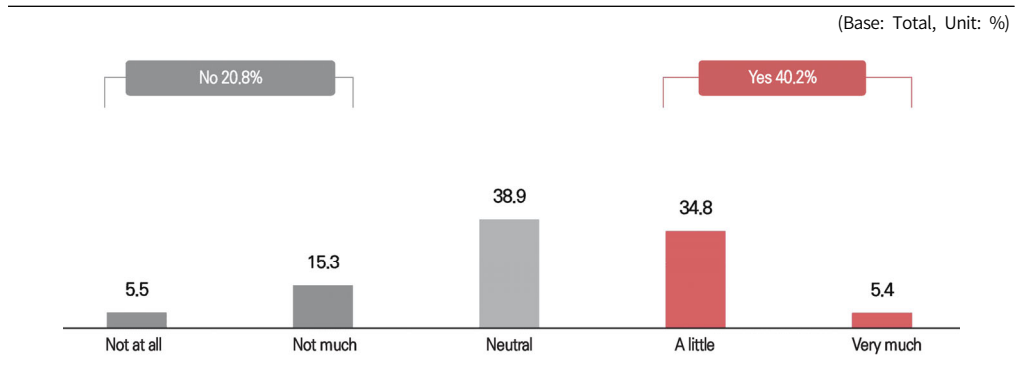
Figure 1-23 Important factors Key Factors in Adaptation and Cross-Genre IP Expansion



(9) Purchase Intent for Content Based on Comics/Webtoons and IP Expansion from Other Genres

Among all respondents, 40.2% expressed purchase intent for content based on comics and webtoons and IP expansion from other genres was 40.2%, with men showing a relatively higher level than women.

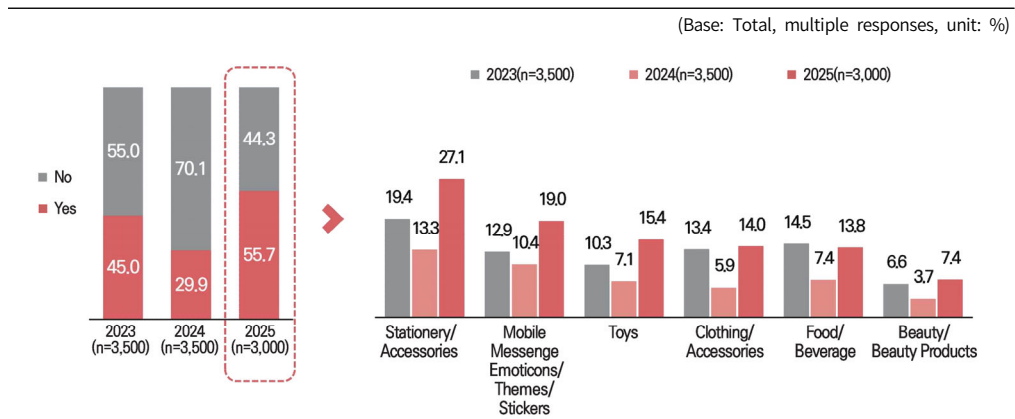
Figure 1-24 Purchase Intent for Content Based on Comics/Webtoons and IP Expansion from Other Genres



(10) Purchase Experience of Comic/Webtoon-Related Products

It was found that 55.7% of all respondents have experience purchasing comic/webtoon related products, with a relatively higher purchase experience rate among teenagers.

Figure 1-25 Purchase Experience of Comic/Webtoon-Related Products



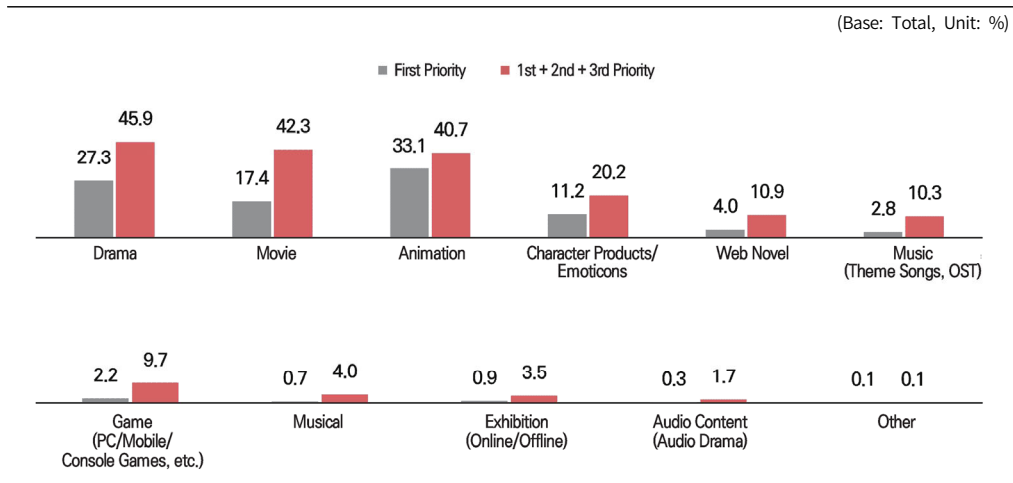
(11) Preferred Content for IP Expansion of Comics/Webtoons

When expanding comic/webtoon IP, the preferred content (1st and 2nd choice) was "Drama" at 45.9%, followed by "Movie" (42.3%) and "Animation" (40.7%).

Looking at respondent characteristics, "Drama" was relatively preferred by women and those in their 50s and 60s, while "Movie" was preferred by men in their 50s, and "Animation" was preferred by men in their teens.

Meanwhile, for the 1st choice response, "Animation" was the highest at 33.1%, followed by "Drama" (27.3%) and "Movie" (17.4%).

Figure 1-26 IP Expansion of Comics/Webtoons



3-6. User Perception of AI Utilization Across Comic/Webtoon Production Stages

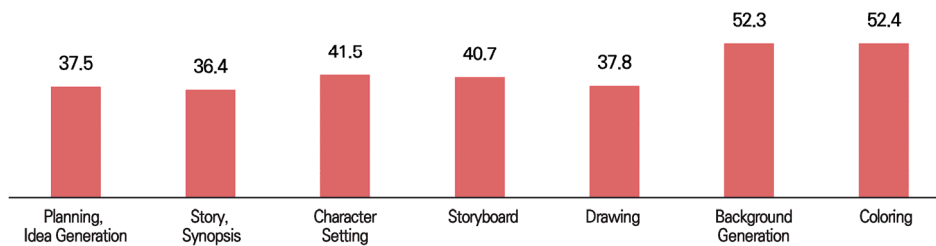
(1) User Perception of AI Utilization Across Comic/Webtoon Production Stages

In the results of the survey on AI utilization in comic/webtoon production by stage the "Coloring" stage was positively perceived by a majority at 52.4%, followed by the "Background Generation" stage at 52.3%.

Next, "Character Setting" (41.5%), "Storyboard" (40.7%), and "Drawing" (37.8%) were also relatively high.

Figure 1-27 User Perception of AI Utilization Across Comic/Webtoon Production Stages

(Base: Overall, positive rate%, unit: %)



(2) Expected Benefits of AI Application in Comics/Webtoons

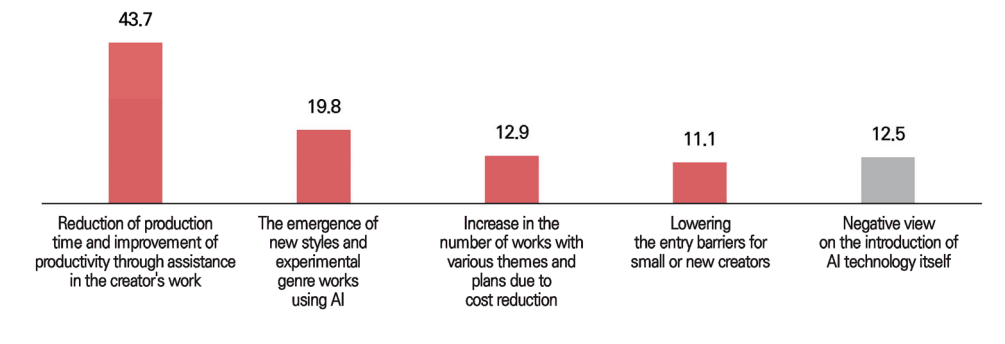
Among the positive effects expected from the application of AI technology in comics and webtoons, the highest was "reduction of production time and improvement of productivity through assistance in the creator's work" at 43.7%.

Following that, "the emergence of new styles and experimental genre works using AI" (19.8%), "an increase in the number of works with diverse themes and concepts due to cost reduction" (12.9%), and "lowering the entry barriers for small or new creators" (11.1%) were the next highest.

On the other hand, 12.5% of respondents expressed a negative view of the introduction of AI technology itself.

Figure 1-28 Expected Benefits of AI Application in Comics/Webtoons

(Base: Total, Unit: %)



Part 2. Appendix

1. Strengthening Production Capabilities

1-1. Creation and Production Support

(1) Support for Diversity Comic Production

We are promoting a support project for diversity comic production to help webtoon creators create works that reflect their own styles and values.

In 2024, we supported the production of 107 excellent new diversity comics (38 short stories and 69 medium-length stories). Project applications were solicited by distinguishing between publishing and webtoons to increase the diversity of production formats, and a total of 485 works were received. Subsequently, a fair evaluation method was applied without selection ratios for publishing and webtoons, and works were selected in order of high scores, with a particular focus on evaluating the potential for secondary commercialization.

Figure 1-29 Major Works of the Diversity Comic Production Support Project



The selected projects were promoted through various promotions to ensure that support does not end simply, and communication with authors was strengthened to enhance the project completion, preventing the projects selected through high competition from being abandoned midway.

(2) Support for Early Stages of Creation

This project supports the initial preparation process such as planning and research, so that the rich imagination of comic artists can lead to creation, discovering and providing production support for 99 newly planned works. This project, which has seen a steady increase in applications from cartoonists and aspiring cartoonists preparing new works, recorded a high competition rate, with a total of 772 works submitted in 2024.

Figure 1-30

Major Works and Achievements of the Support Project for Early Stages of Creation



The Woman Who Lost 4 Years and 6 Months By Du-ji Currently serialized on Naver Webtoon (from 2024.12.3.)



Don't Breathe By Drawing Warehouse (Art), Linse (Writing) Currently serialized on Naver Webtoon (from 2024.5.18.)



Swimming with the Rock By Heuk-bae
14th Sunday Newspaper Comic Contest Winner (Excellence Award)

The selected works, which passed through high competition, produced three episodes of new webtoons with over 50 cuts each, expanding their outcomes through stable production activities. In addition, many high-quality and competitive works were produced, achieving outcomes such as serialization or discussions for serialization on large platforms through effective strategic promotion strategies.

1-2. Professional Training

(1) Korea Comic Webtoon Academy

The Korea Comic Webtoon Academy was established to cultivate future webtoon creators who will continue the global standing of Korean webtoons, with the best faculty, operational system, and support system in the country, advocating "a school above schools."

In 2023, when the project first started, after in-depth research, the vision, mission, and operational strategy of the Korea Comic Webtoon Academy were established, and in 2024, the second year of the project, the first cohort of capable regular course participants was recruited to implement high-level webtoon education.

Figure 1-31 Key Facilities of the Korea Comic Webtoon Academy



The Korea Comic Webtoon Academy, established at the Webtoon Convergence Center in Bucheon, features a faculty led by the popular webtoon creator Jeong Joong-hoon (HUN), who created popular webtoons such as *Secretly, Greatly and Navillera*, along with prominent domestic webtoon creators such as Shin Ui-cheol, Oh Hyun-dong (caramel), Kim Ji-min (Jimin), Kim Song, Cheon Beom-sik, and Kim Hye-jin (Zhenia).

Despite being the first year of recruitmen, 29 regular course participants were selected through a high competition rate of over 10:1, and as a result of providing 1:1 intensive education, 15 outstanding graduates capable of producing high-quality original webtoons were finally produced.

Figure 1-32

Main Promotional Materials of Korea Comic Webtoon Academy



Recruitment of Regular
Course 1st Cohort
Researchers

10 People, 10 Colors Relay
Special Lectures

Story Production Workshop

Webtoon Counseling Center
- Writer's Intervention

Participants in the regular academy program received various benefits, including free education, workspace, the latest equipment, project funding, and residency space. Some of the graduates from the Korea Comic Webtoon Academy achieved excellent results, securing serialization on major platforms.

The Korea Comic Webtoon Academy which trains leading cartoon and webtoon artists of Korea, will continue to serve as the country's top-level cartoon and webtoon educational institution by subdividing future educational programs by level and purpose based on the excellent results of the successful first cohort and preparing strategies for graduates' employment and debut.

(2) Training Professionals in the Webtoon Industry

The project for training professionals in the webtoon industry was newly launched in 2024 to cultivate field-oriented personnel who can quickly respond to the rapidly growing and changing webtoon industry and to develop local webtoon creators.

The "Webtoon Expert Program", consisting of three courses: training for prospective webtoon producers, retraining for current webtoon producers, and AI utilization training, was operated for five months, producing 52 webtoon producers with practical skills that can be immediately applied in

the field. Training for prospective webtoon producers not only provided practical training for all processes of producers duties from planning to production and commercialization, and included employment-linked training, resulting in 10 out of 22 graduates securing jobs at webtoon companies such as Redice Studio and Jaedam Media. For 16 current webtoon producers, training was provided to enhance capabilities in secondary commercialization and global business, and practical training on AI programs such as Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and ChatGPT was provided to enhance the AI utilization capabilities among 15 webtoon producers and writers.

In addition, to strengthen local webtoon creation capabilities, expert mentoring focused on works and training to enhance writers' capabilities were provided to prospective webtoon writers in six regions: Gyeongnam, Daegu, Daejeon, Ulsan, Jeonbuk, and Jeju. Through the training, a total of 70 graduates completed webtoon production of up to three episodes eligible for platform submission, and produced works that are set to be serialized on KakaoPage. A business consultation meeting was also held to support local webtoon writers' market entry. In the business consultation meeting attended by 25 major webtoon and content production companies, a total of 80 consultations were conducted, and some graduates signed contracts with webtoon companies.

Figure 1-33 Professional Training in the Webtoon Industry



1-3. Training for Writers from Vulnerable Groups

(1) Establishment and Operation of the Youth Webtoon Academy for Persons with Disabilities

This project aims at resolving educational inequalities for marginalized groups in comic culture, centered around welfare facilities for people with disabilities established under the law, and providing opportunities for social advancement, including job creation for young people with disabilities.

Support was provided for the purchase of equipment and the operation of webtoon education programs, targeting a total of 14 institutions, including 13 existing institutions capable of providing comic and webtoon education for people with disabilities and one newly established institution.

Figure 1-34 Overview of the Youth Webtoon Academy for Persons with Disabilities (14 Institutions)

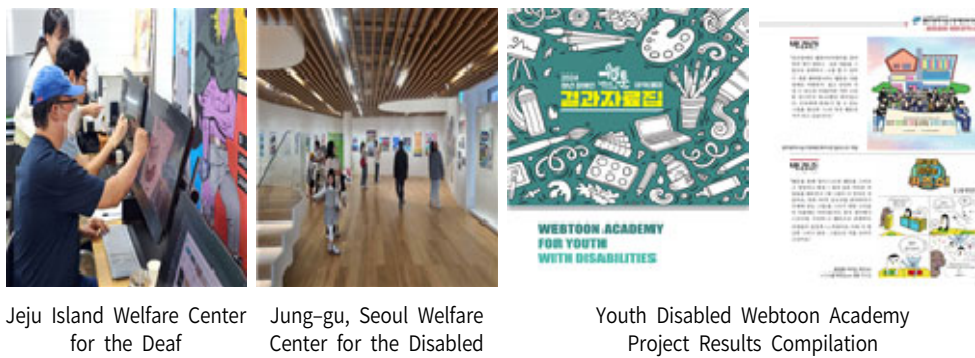
Target	Region (Metropolitan Local Government)	Start Year
Bucheon Comprehensive Welfare Center for the Disabled	Gyeonggi Province	2019
Yuseong-gu Comprehensive Welfare Center for the Disabled	Daejeon Metropolitan City	2019
Chunghyun Welfare Center	Seoul	2019
The One Development Support Center	Seoul	2019
Dream Hill	Gyeongsangnam Province	2020
Jeju Island Deaf Welfare Center	Jeju Special Self-Governing Province	2020
Gijang Welfare Center for the Disabled	Busan Metropolitan City	2020
Yangpyeong County Welfare Center for the Disabled	Gyeonggi Province	2020
Jung-gu, Seoul Welfare Center for the Disabled	Seoul	2021
Nam-gu, Gwangju Welfare Center for the Disabled	Gwangju Metropolitan City	2021
Southern Chungcheong Province Comprehensive Welfare Center for the Disabled	Chungcheongnam Province	2022
Namyangju Welfare Center for the Disabled	Gyeonggi Province	2022
Tamra Welfare Center for the Disabled	Jeju Special Self-Governing Province	2023
Iksan Welfare Center for the Disabled	Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province	2024

In 14 webtoon academies for persons with disabilities across the country, 1,225 individuals with disabilities have taken webtoon education, and some of the students have achieved results in various fields such as employment, social contributions, serialization, and winning contests, establishing a foundation for the independence of cartoon and webtoon creators who have overcome disabilities.

Additionally, among the 10 types of emoticons produced using student works, 8 types have been listed in the LINE Sticker shop, showcasing their unique artistic skills and demonstrating consistent growth.

Figure 1-35

Program Outcomes of the Youth Webtoon Academy for Persons with Disabilities



In the future, the Youth Webtoon Academy for Persons with Disabilities will strengthen social media promotion for the sale of student character products and the serialization of works, and establish a system to enhance the independence of each implementing organization, laying the groundwork for a virtuous cycle project structure that can operate with minimal support.

(2) Webtoon Mentoring for Senior Writers

This is a webtoon mentoring project aimed at senior and career-interrupted writers who wish to embark on a new path of webtoon creation through group mentoring by experts, amid the transition of the distribution market from print comics to digital formats.

The group mentoring selected a total of 28 participants, including 14

mentors with over 5 years of webtoon creation experience in digital production and storytelling, and 14 senior mentees aged 45 and older who wish to create webtoons, aiming to provide more detailed mentoring opportunities through a 2:2 mentoring structure.

Figure 1-36

Key Outcomes of the 2024 Webtoon Mentoring for Senior Writers Project



The mentors and mentees who participated in the project produced 14 original webtoon works and conducted workshops to enhance intergenerational communication and strengthen group cooperation. In addition, a business consultation meeting was held with webtoon industry stakeholders such as agencies and platforms, providing a meaningful opportunity to confirm the development potential of the new works made by the mentees.

Mentors shared their expertise and know-how to the mentees in line with the current market situation, while the mentees shared their extensive experience in creative activities outside of webtoons with the mentors, actively operating the project in a mutually beneficial manner.

1-4. Contest and Awards

(1) The Korea Content Awards – Comics Category

The Korea Content Awards – Comics Category aims to encourage the creative motivation of industry professionals and activate the industry by recognizing contributors to the development of excellent domestic content and the content industry. It is an award that selects popular Korean comics

based on story creativity, drawing quality, public popularity, and contribution to the development of the comic industry. In 2024, a total of 40 works were submitted, and 5 works were selected as award winners through two rounds of expert evaluation and public assessment. The 2024 Presidential Award was given to *Ruler of the Land* by authors Jeon Geuk-jin and Yang Jae-hyun. *Ruler of the Land* holds the record for the longest-running published comic in Korea, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

The Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Award went to *Garbage Time* by 2Sajang, *Maru is a Puppy* by Mojo, *The Great* by Gwangjin and Jimin, and the Korea Creative Content Agency Director's Award went to the published comic *Tomato, Knife, and Kiss* by the author Angram.

Figure 1-37

Award-Winning Works at the 2024 Korea Comic Awards

				
Presidential Award <i>Ruler of the Land</i> Yang Jae-hyun, Jeon Geuk-jin	Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Award <i>Garbage Time</i> 2Sajang	Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Award <i>Maru is a Puppy</i> Mojo	Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Award <i>The Great</i> Kwang-jin, Ji-min	Korea Creative Content Agency Director Award <i>Tomato, Knife, and Kiss</i> Angram

(2) The Republic of Korea Creative Comics Contest

This comic contest is held to discover works with popularity and artistry aimed at all comic creators aged 18 and over, and to encourage motivation and creative engagement among aspiring comic creators.

A total of 247 high-quality works were submitted in the contest, which was divided into two categories: short comics and cartoons, featuring various themes and original storytelling. Among the submitted works, 10

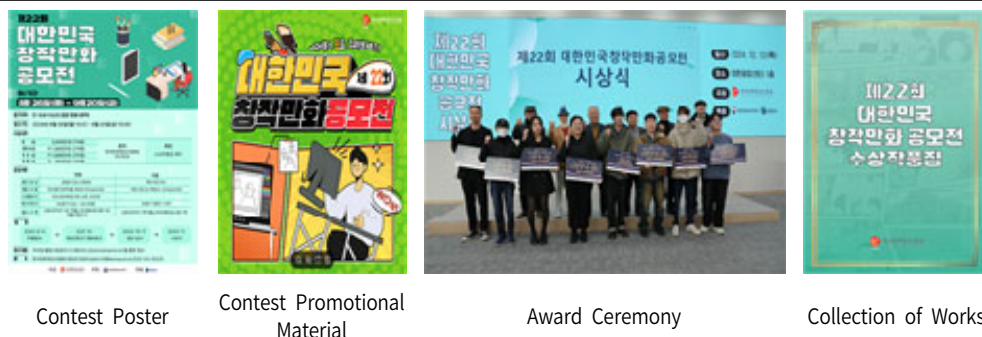
excellent comics were selected after a two-stage preliminary and final judging process with a high competition rate of 24.7:1.

Table 1-3 2024 Republic of Korea Creative Comics Contest Award Winners

Category	Title	Author
Target	<i>The Waffle Shape Bootys</i>	Kang Ma-cheol
Grand Prize	<i>Terminus</i>	Park Geon-young
	<i>Meigu-up</i>	Hee-woo
Excellence Award	<i>Your Family</i>	Do-eun
	<i>Do you know about conspiracy theories?</i>	Han Chae-won
	<i>Mom's Empty Seat</i>	Kim Hye-bin
Encouragement Award	<i>Child Facing the Wind</i>	Naboi
	<i>H</i>	Doo-han
	<i>Genuine Product</i>	Jonyuk
	<i>One Step Manhwa</i>	Yong-gun

This competition has relaxed the application criteria to allow students currently enrolled in comic-related college programs to submit their graduation works in order to increase participation rates. A total prize pool of 100 million won will be distributed across the final 10 selected works, and efforts have been made to promote and support them through various means, including distributing the works created using the award-winning pieces to stakeholders such as comic and webtoon platforms and publishers.

Figure 1-38 Outcomes of the 2024 Republic of Korea Creative Comics Contest



(3) National Digital Comics Creation Competition (Naver Webtoon Champion Contest)

This competition was established to provide serialization opportunities for cartoonists without prior serialization experience, in collaboration with Naver Webtoon, which has the highest usage rate of webtoon services in Korea, and to foster the next generation of comic talent and discover high-quality content.

Open to prospective creators aged 14 and over without restrictions on materials and themes, a total of 419 works were submitted, recording a high competition rate of 52.4:1.

Table 1-4 2024 National Digital Comics Creation Competition Award-Winning Works

Award	Title	Author
Target	<i>Hero of the Divine Sword</i>	mono
Grand Prize	<i>Worn Out Shedorov</i>	Haneel
Excellence Award	<i>Humans Are Rotten</i>	Cha In-seong
Jang Ryoo-sang	<i>Journey of Iron and Ice</i>	Ulong
	<i>Your World</i>	lenae
	<i>The Strongest Romanticist</i>	Hanbyeol
	<i>Through the Thicket</i>	Shinsky
	<i>Double Jab</i>	Sun Glass

The submitted works went through a step-by-step blind review conducted by a total of 9 experts, including active webtoon authors, and 8 works were selected.

At each stage of the review, the authors of 47 works that advanced to the first round and 25 works that advanced to the second round were provided with activity fees, and the final 8 selected works were awarded cash prizes and given the right to be officially serialized on Naver Webtoon based on their rankings.

2. Distribution Support

2-1. IP Expansion Support

(1) Establishment and Operation of Overseas Comic Platforms

The 2024 project to support the establishment and operation of overseas comic platforms was initiated to discover and nurture platform companies that will drive the global expansion of Korean comics. A maximum of 340 million won was provided per project to 5 companies operating webtoon platforms overseas.

Table 1-5 2024 Support Status for Overseas Comic Platform Establishment and Operation

Number	Company Name	Platform Name	Expansion Area
1	Dillyhub	Dillyview	France
2	Idea Concert	Vietwetoan, Vietwetoan	Vietnam, Czech Republic (Targeting Vietnamese)
3	Friday	Lucutoon	Indonesia
4	True Light Korea	PENTACOMX	Argentina, Chile, Mexico, USA, Canada
5	Toonsquare	Tooning	Japan, the United States, Canada, France

As a multi-year support project, we continued to support five platforms in 2023, helping high-quality Korean webtoons lead the global comic market.

(2) Content IP Market Operation

Now in its third year, the Content IP Market 2024 provided IP-related programs, including IP business consultations, conferences, forums, seminars, showcases, pitching, and exhibitions under the slogan "Content IP, New Opportunities for Expansion." A total of 90 companies participated, and 478 domestic and international buyers visited, resulting in a total of 1,371 consultations. In line with the trend of strengthening connections between different industries centered around content IP, not only webtoons,

stories, and characters but also consumer goods, service companies, and buyers participated to expand IP business opportunities related to content and related industries.

Table 1-6 Content IP Market 2024. Overview and Achievements

Category	Content IP Market 2024.
Date and Time	November 19, 2024 (Tuesday) to November 21 (Thursday) / 3 days
Location	Seoul COEX Grand Ballroom, ASEM Ballroom
Participants	A total of 90 companies (80 participating companies, 10 partner companies)
Format	1:1 business matching, conferences, forums, seminars, showcases, networking, pitching, exhibitions, etc.
Key Achievements	478 domestic and international buyers, 1,371 consultations with participating companies.

Figure 1-39 On-site of the Content IP Market 2024



Lobby exhibition and entrance

Inside the B2B event hall

IP Stage (side event)

(3) Webtoon Festival and World Webtoon Awards

This project was established in 2024 to enhance the global recognition of webtoons and strengthen the status of Korea as the origin of webtoons. Through this, various webtoon stakeholders such as creators, producers, and platforms participated, and a representative webtoon festival open to the public, as well as a webtoon-specific awards program to promote the value of high-quality webtoon works and enhance industry pride of industry workers, were held for the first time.

The 2024 World Webtoon Festival will be held from September 26 (Thursday) to 29 (Sunday) for four days, providing an opportunity to experience webtoons in reality at Seongsu-dong, a hub for pop-up stores, and is designed to enhance the value of webtoon IP.

Under the slogan "Scroll down & Fun up," the festival provided various programs including pop-up stores, exhibitions, stage programs (talk concerts, drawing shows, dubbing shows, author signings, OST performances), and experience programs (AI caricatures, AR photo cards, drawing, four-cut photos) through scroll-type webtoons designed to enhance engagement.

Through this event, 19 companies including webtoon companies and organizations operated sales and exhibitions of webtoon-related goods, and approximately 78,000 visitors attended the festival over four days.

On the first day of the festival, the 2024 World Webtoon Awards announced a total of 13 works, including 10 main awards and 3 special awards selected by a jury of 10 members (Chairman of the jury: writer Lee Hyun-se), from 104 works submitted and recommended from around the world, with the Grand Prize going to *Solo Leveling* and the Chairman's Award going to *The Great*.

Figure 1-40

Scenes from the 2024 World Webtoon Festival



Festival Event Hall

Popup Stores

Awards

Table 1-7

2024 World Webtoon Awards winning works

Award		Title	Author
Target		<i>Solo Leveling</i>	Hyun-gun, Jang Seong-rak (REDICE STUDIO), Chugong
Chairman's Award		<i>The Great</i>	Kwang-jin, Ji-min
Main Award		<i>Garbage Time</i>	2Sajang
		<i>To Help You Understand</i>	Ranyong, Ocean, Lee Bora
		<i>The Boxer</i>	Jung Ji-hoon
		<i>Wife Killer</i>	YOON, Gumdung
		<i>Remarried Empress</i>	Hee-ri, Sumpool, Alpha Tart
		<i>Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint</i>	UMI, Sleepy-C, Sing Song
		<i>Hell 2: The Resurrected</i>	Yeon Sang-ho, Choi Gyu-seok
Special Award		<i>Homeless</i>	Wanan
	Rookie Award	<i>Jobless Gye Baek-sun</i>	Jibal
	Overseas Award	<i>Tomahawk Angel</i>	Odysseas Theodoratos
	New Attempt Award	<i>Tastes of Horror</i>	Story Plus, TOH Crew

(4) Fostering Venture Companies in the Webtoon Sector

This project aims to expand the industrial base by discovering startup companies in the comic and webtoon sectors and supporting the successful market entry of these companies that possess creative business ideas and technologies. It supports startups in the comic and webtoon content sector within three years of establishment, categorizing them into preliminary and early stages based on their years in operation, and has supported a total of 14 companies.

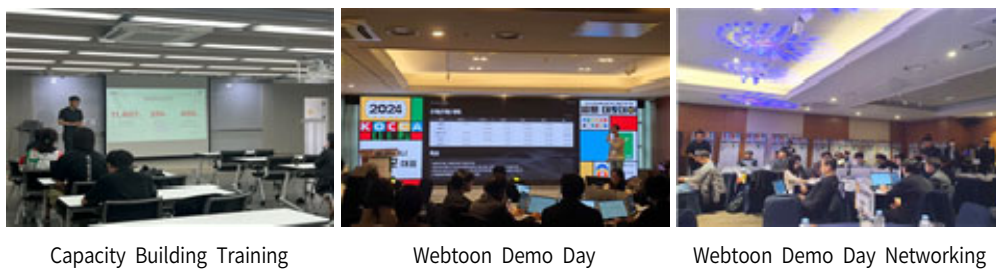
Table 1-8 2024 Support for Comic and Webtoon Startup Development

Number	Category	Company Name	Project Name
1	Preliminary	MediaBlow	Launching the webtoon work <i>Dead End</i> for KakaoPage webtoon serialization and commercialization domestically and internationally
2		Pepper and Salt	Webtoon IP Solution: Data-driven webtoon value assessment and optimized merchandise production
3		Together Life	Development of financial products specialized for OTT video adaptation
4		MK Toon	Immortal Vagabond
5		Wild Visual	Ghost Taker OSMU
6	Initial	Ludens Webtoon	Launching webtoon investment services using 3D automation programs and AI technology, etc.
7		Corporation 2D Studio	Global webtoon animation created in 3 days
8		JGB Public	AI short-form webtoon platform WeToon Service
9		Conduct	Data-driven webtoon value assessment – webtoon IP trading platform
10		Toontory	Building a noble comics business model using web novel IP and secondary commercialization
11		Kingdom Company	Diversification of owned IP business
12		Star Content	Audio webtoons, merchandise development
13		Comic store	Scaling up through the production of secondary video content
14		Nautilus	AI Active Learning Enhancement and Webtoon Development

The comic and webtoon scale-up program, aimed at overcoming the limitations of venture companies, provided support for establishing business direction and consulting through capability assessments of

participating companies. Subsequently, to strengthen the capabilities of start-up companies, promotional support and opportunities for discussion on corporate growth were provided through demo days and networking, creating connections between comic/webtoon start-ups and investors.

Figure 1-41 2024 Comic/Webtoon Scale-Up Program Operation



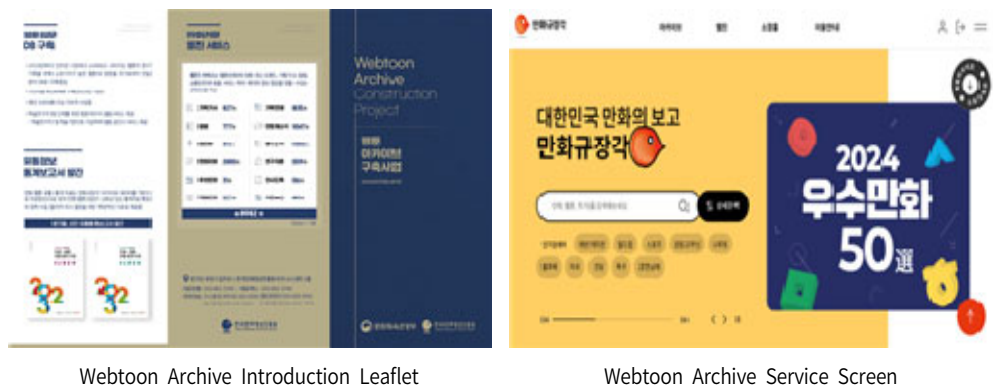
2-2. Establishing a Foundation for Comic Distribution and the Industry

(1) Building a Webtoon Archive

As the only digital repository in the country that systematically collects and safely preserves comic and webtoon materials, it aims to protect against data loss due to illegal reproduction and distribution of webtoons, and the termination of platform services by systematically collecting and preserving webtoon distribution data, original images, comic books, rare comic materials, and academic materials.

In 2024, the webtoon market's comic and webtoon database was systematically classified, collecting 17,316 webtoon distribution data entries, 4,099 books, 8,083 e-books, and 3,350 original webtoon images, while enhancing the already established data of 7,207 cases. Additionally, the original database of 1,710 works (151,449 pages) of rare comic materials, which require long-term preservation value, has been digitized, accumulating high-quality specialized materials with strong practical value from a diverse and vast comic/webtoon database.

Figure 1-42 Webtoon Archive Project Outcomes



To enhance the operational efficiency of the integrated webtoon archive system and improve system accessibility, system functions have been improved, and the quality of outputs has been enhanced through continuous verification and refinement of data.

In addition, we opened the collected webtoon archive data to provide meaningful materials to comic-related institutions and professionals who need basic data and statistics for policy development and industry research, and we made efforts to protect creators' rights by preventing copyright infringement through API integration and data sharing with external organizations.

(2) Comic Data Collection and Information Development

This is a project aimed at building a knowledge base for the comic industry by collecting comic materials with high cultural and artistic value, and the collected materials are intended to be used as a basis for academic research through research and publication. We collected and preserved 5,910 comic books published annually in the comic market and 4,360 historical comic materials (10,467 items) that are recognized for their value but are gradually being lost.

In addition, through multifaceted analysis of comics, we built a total of 773 pieces of specialized comic-related information, including knowledge and expert articles in various comic specialties, and provided them to users through a web magazine, generating discourse on comic culture and expanding relevant discussions.

Figure 1-43

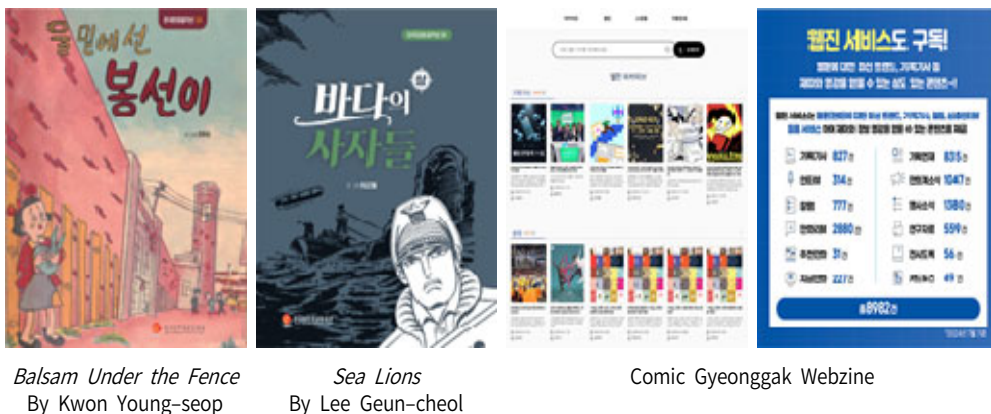
Rare Comic Materials Collection



We collected a total of 5 items, including 4 rare comic book materials from the 1940s to 1950s, which have high preservation value for preserving cultural heritage to future generations, and one handwritten manuscript from the 1970s (59 pages). Some of the collected materials were digitized to provide access to users.

Figure 1-44

Comic Material Collection and Information Development Project Outcomes



As the 33rd work of the Korean Comic Masterpiece Project, which discovers, restores, and preserves excellent classic works representing the golden age of Korean comics that are hard to find due to being out of print or lacking materials over time, we reprinted Kwon Young-seop's *Balsam Under the Fence*, and Lee Geun-cheol's *Sea Lions* as the 34th work, providing an opportunity to rediscover the depth and charm of Korean comics.

(3) Comic Exhibitions

We are holding a comic curated exhibition to lead cultural empathy among the public by presenting timely and relevant topics related to comics and webtoons, such as trends in popular culture and various issues in society, through the unique stories and compelling works of Korean comics.

First, the comic exhibition *Hip-Hop through Comics*, which brings together the dynamic and free-spirited elements of Korean hip-hop and reinterprets them through comics, art, and music, was co-planned with the National Folk Museum. This exhibition featured works such as the comic *Hip-Hop* by artist Kim Soo-yong, who dominated the 1990s, and "ONE" by artist Lee Bin, along with participation from fine artist Kim Tae-jung and graffiti artist Shim Chan-yang, providing an opportunity to experience the impact of cultural content such as comics and music on the popular culture and arts industry and the cultural atmosphere of the time through comics.

Figure 1-45 2024 Comic Exhibition Poster



In addition, the exhibition "Korea-Italy Diplomatic Relations 140th Anniversary Commemorative Italian Cartoon Exhibition: fumetto!" was held to rediscover the the cultural, historical, and artistic values of Italian comics historical, and artistic values of Italy, marking the 140th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Italy. This exhibition not only

allowed visitors to experience the depth and richness of Italian comic culture but also served as a meaningful comic exhibition reaffirming the friendship between Korea and Italy.

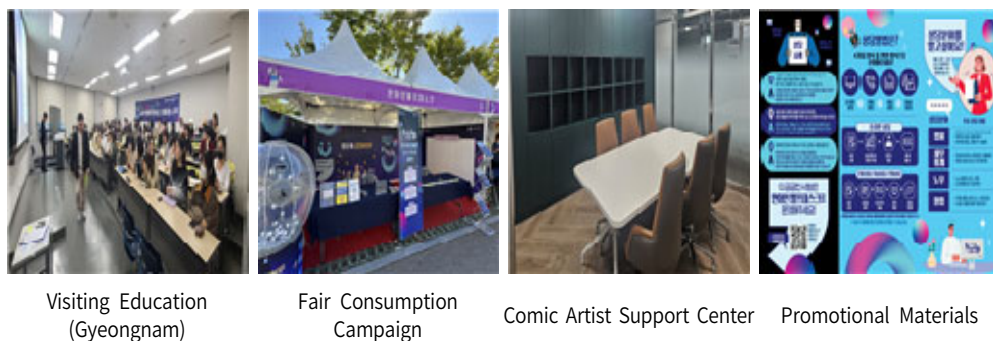
Additionally, the special exhibition *THIS IS ME*, based on the unique stories of two works recognized for their outstanding artistry and popularity, *Retirement Age* (written by Seo I-re, illustrated by Namon) and "How To Get Your Man Pregnant" (written by Noh Gyeong-mu, illustrated by Soki), along with the *Blue Snake Shining* New Year cartoon exhibition held in 2025 to commemorate the Year of the Blue Snake, provided a meaningful opportunity for audiences to engage with comic culture.

(4) Creating a Fair and Sustainable Ecosystem (Comic Artist Help Desk)

According to the 2024 Webtoon Industry Status Survey, among the suggestions for improving unfair contracts and practices, 81.6% pointed to "copyright, contract drafting education, and legal advice support" as a policy measures, while 13.4% identified "consultation and information related to contracts and other unfair practices" as necessary support for webtoon artists.

It can be seen that creators working in the comic and webtoon market are still suffering direct and indirect harm from unfair practices occurring during the creative process. To help resolve the harm caused by unfair practices through legal and institutional means, a free legal consultation service called "Comic Artist Help Desk" was operated.

Figure 1-46 2024 Fair and Sustainable Ecosystem Project Outcomes



The consultation areas were divided into various fields such as law, accounting/tax, entrepreneurship, welfare, and labor, with a total of 30 legal experts conducting 250 professional consultations. In particular, the service was expanded to include consultations on discrimination and harassment, which have recently been prominent issues in the cultural and artistic sectors.

For creators who need face-to-face consultations, a Comic Artist Support Center was established at the Webtoon Convergence Center to provide on-site consultations. Additionally, to ensure regional distribution, a total of 14 outreach education sessions were conducted, including standard contract education and face-to-face consultations for creators active in various regions, contributing to the protection of comic artists' rights and the establishment of a fair environment.

(5) Promoting Comic Criticism

The project to promote comic criticism aims to broaden readers' perspectives on viewing works and provide authors with an objective view of their own works, thereby revitalizing comic works and laying the foundation for stimulating comic consumption.

In particular, the comic criticism magazine "Now, Comics," which features critiques, interviews, and reviews by professional critics, carefully selects timely topics in the comic and webtoon market and focuses on production aspects such as planning and editing. It has published a total of four issues of criticism magazines: Issue 22 (Children + Comics), Issue 23 (Youth + Comics), Issue 24 (Middle-aged + Comics), and Issue 25 (Space + Comics), promoting the the accessibility of comic criticism criticism and enhancing the value of comics.

Figure 1-47 2024 Comic Special Critique Magazine "Now, Comics"



A contest for discovering new critics to expand the base of comic criticism and advance the field was also held in South Korea. The comic criticism contest received a total of 44 in-depth critiques across four categories: work theory, author theory, policy theory, and industry theory, and selected the final 6 works based on the quality and reception of the critiques.

The selected works were awarded certificates and prizes, and were given the opportunity to be introduced to the public through the comic special criticism magazine "Now, Comics" and the "Digital Comics Gyeongak" webzine.

For new critics participating in the contest, submitting critiques comparable to those of established critics provided a glimpse into the professionalism and capabilities of South Korean comic critics, while also raising the level of comic criticism culture in South Korea.

(6) Support for Export Translation of Works

To support the overseas market entry of high-quality Korean comics and webtoons, sample translations of various comic and webtoon content were provided. In 2024, in connection with the global comic and webtoon event (K-Story & Comics) hosted by the Korea Creative Content Agency and the Korean joint pavilion (K-Comics) at overseas markets, business sample books and promotional materials were produced for participating works, and support for translations of selected works through a separate application

process was provided to assist comic and webtoon creators and companies in independent overseas export consultations.

Through this support, a total of 42 companies and 113 comic and webtoon works were translated into 6 languages (English (27), French (27), Japanese (25), German (19), Thai (1), Russian (1)), providing a foundation for distribution and export to various countries around the world.

Figure 1-48

2024 Comic/Webtoon Translation Support Utilization Cases



Comic/Webtoon Sample Book and Promotional Material Utilization Cases

3. Conclusion

According to the 2023 Content Industry Survey (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2023), the revenue of the comic industry in 2023 was 2.73 trillion won, growing 4.4% year over year (YoY), and the export amount was 178.96 million USD increasing by 65.3% YoY. Despite the increase in exports, the revenue, which indicates the size of the industry, shows a trend of slowing growth compared to the 5-year average annual growth rate(CAGR) of 19.6%.

The "2024 Comic Industry White Paper" (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2024) identifies the expansion of webtoon IP and its adaptation into video as major industry trends. Among the 14 Korean dramas released as Netflix Originals in 2023, 8 were adapted from webtoons, and titles like *Sweet Home* and *Bloodhounds* ranked in the top 10 of Netflix's global TV shows in the non-English category. In addition, several dramas based on webtoon IP, such as Disney+'s *Moving*, MBC's *A Good Day to Be a Dog*, and ENA's *Daytime Moon*, have been produced. In particular, the animation production of *Solo Leveling* is a representative case of webtoon IP diversification. In 2021, an online petition for animation production was launched on Change.org, gathering 210,000 signatures, leading to production by Japan's A-1 Pictures, which is set to be released in January 2024 and has received significant acclaim. Generally, webtoon IP is considered easy to adapt into animation, and it is expected that specialized OTT services for animation, such as Crunchyroll and Laffey, will positively contribute to the diversification of webtoon IP and the growth of the webtoon industry.

In the 2024 Webtoon Industry Status Survey (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2024), companies identified drama/web drama (73.0%) as the leading secondary content format for IP expansion, followed by animation (42.1%), film (27.7%), and games (21.4%). Additionally, webtoon companies that participated in the survey agreed that the webtoon industry will continue to see an increase in the market share of Korean webtoons overseas and the expansion of secondary IP content, but agreement on the outlook for the continued growth of the Korean webtoon industry decreased from 52.1% in 2023 to 47.8% in 2024. Among the difficulties in operating as a business, 36.9% cited illegal distribution sites, followed by challenges in

discovering authors and works, and attracting investment.

According to the 2024 Webtoon and Comic User Survey (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2024), the number of respondents who use webtoons once a week or daily is increasing, and the proportion of heavy users who consume more than 10 webtoons per week has also risen. The rate of paid webtoon usage slightly increased from 46.6% in 2023 to 47.2% in 2024, and it is noteworthy that the use of Instagram as a webtoon service increased from 13.6% in 2023 to 20.9% in 2024. This is likely due to the accessibility of webtoons that are linked to social media activities and based on everyday life, which has contributed to the increased user engagement. On the other hand, the use of published comics is declining. The rate of purchasing published comics was 54.4% in 2023, but decreased to 28.2% in 2024.

Currently, there are various perspectives regarding the use of AI in the webtoon industry. Webtoon authors and producers find it easy to access AI technology due to their extensive use of various IT tools. While there is a positive perspective that AI can reduce labor intensity and time in the completion of artwork rather than in the creative domain, there are also concerns about copyright infringement and the reduction of job opportunities for authors, as well as user boycott activities targeting works utilizing AI. Although a clear direction has not yet been established, it is necessary to prepare for the future.

Additionally, through the Webtoon Co-Prosperity Council discussions initiated in 2022, six types of standard contracts have been revised, and two types have been established. These include clarifications on revenue distribution regulations, strengthening transparency in the settlement process, and improving and protecting the working conditions of webtoon authors, with institutional measures established to improve the industrial environment, including the announcement of the standard contracts on June 13, 2024.