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Online anime fan communities give Laurier researcher insight into how people connect

WATERLOO – As Valentine’s Day approaches, people may be thinking about finding love through online connections. Laurier researcher Sandra Annett’s latest book, *Anime Fan Communities: Transcultural Flows and Frictions*, uses anime fan communities to explore how people make connections online across distances and cultures.

“Working through the friction of communicating online is the first step towards joint understanding,” said Annett, an assistant professor of Film Studies at Laurier. “Creating connections is the first step towards potential love.”

Annett’s book uses *There She Is*, a story of interspecies love between a rabbit and a cat, as an example to explore these ideas. The cartoon was created by South Korean artists known as “SamBakZa.” Fans of the story used SamBakZa’s online message board to talk about their experiences watching the cartoon.

After spending three months in Japan working with other scholars through the Japan Society for Promotion of Science to hone her ideas, Annett came to understand how changing technologies have opened new avenues for audiences to connect with each other.

“It is possible to build community in both physical and online places, as transnational anime fans often do,” she said. “Works like *There She Is* are often a starting point for dialogue.”

An excerpt from Annett’s research, including a video clip of the *There She Is* web cartoon, is featured on the Council of Ontario Universities’ Research Matters website: <http://yourontarioresearch.ca/2015/02/cat-rabbit-flash-story-forbidden-love/>

Annett’s book is published by Palgrave Macmillan and is available on Amazon.com. For more information about Annett and her research, visit her [profile](#) on the Laurier website.

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