

A Brief Analysis of the Homestuck Community

Some Random Guy

1. Section I - Synopsis

The Homestuck community was one of (if not, the) first large-scale internet community that developed around a work that was not originally made with the intent of being "one-off" (for instance, a video game). While the community is certainly wavering in the present timeframe (2022) and it has, without a doubt, passed its heyday, the community continues still with a reduced size; what members do remain have intense enthusiasm regarding this work.

This section will provide a brief summary of the community as it evolved throughout the years.

1.1. 2009.

The original Homestuck fandom were mainly people that you would associate with the programmer stereotype (as in, a paid professional programmer that was looking to have a laugh). Almost all fans were imports from the earlier MSPA works. During this time, it was said that the community was in control of the work.

1.2. 2010.

The community slowly but surely grew, with the suggestion box method of fan interaction leading the way in story development. The community was still, at this point, not very large. Hivebent (Act 5.1) was published initially, and the community exploded. Some fans of the Hetalia webcomic (which will not be covered in this analysis) became interested in Homestuck and found themselves in the community.

1.3. 2011.

The community was expanding at an accelerating rate. Troll cosplayers dominated every convention there was, and the Vriska Did Nothing Wrong debate started. The Cascade animation was released, to amazing critical acclaim (see section 4 for a discussion on the reactions to it). The incessant arguing between community members caused the reputation of the community from the perspective of outsiders to shift.

1.4. 2012.

It is said that 2012 was the peak of the Homestuck craze, thanks in no small part to the Kickstarter campaign that was started that year. The campaign's goal was to raise \$700,000 over the course of quite a while, but it ended up completing in two days. The final outcome of this campaign netted about \$2.5 million dollars, which was promptly realized by mainstream news outlets. The intense popularity of the community at this time meant that almost every aspect of internet culture then was, in one way or another, affected by Homestuck. Even communities that had absolutely no relation to Homestuck saw its effects (for instance, many Minecraft players donned Homestuck-themed player skins at this time). Fan-made creations were at an all-time high as well, as the production of fanworks was highly emphasized in the community.

1.5. 2013.

The original authors decide to "go on hiatus" (i.e. temporarily stop publishing material) for a brief time, which caused the community growth rate to slow drastically. The multiple hiatuses that occurred exasperated this, but the Namco High work was released during this time. Nonetheless, it did not re-engage the community as was hoped.

1.6. 2014.

Paradox Space was launched, but the community was already on a decline by the time that it was released. Most community members had grown dissatisfied with the stark lack of new content, and opted to move on to other communities that were growing at that time. Legal issues surrounding the Kickstarter project left a bad taste in the mouth of some community members, furthering the decline.

1.7. 2015.

The series would get some sporadic updates, but it was not enough to retain a large growing community. Paradox Space was cancelled before it even got to be popular, and what some people have called "strange story choices" cemented an outsider's perception of the community in a negative light.

1.8. 2016.

The original Homestuck comic comes to an end. Community members that once loved the series but left it rushed back in an effort to catch up, and relive some of the fun they had way back when. Review and opinion of it are still relatively positive, and Hiveswap (the Kickstarter game) gets a trailer. Interest continued to wane, nonetheless. The anticipation for Hiveswap is relatively high, yet the issues behind the scene marred its chances of success in the eyes of some fans.

1.9. 2017.

Hiveswap Act 1 was finally released to decent critical acclaim. The Extended Zodiac system was published as well, which drew interest from outsiders to the community to see what "all of the commotion" was about.

1.10. 2018.

The first volume of Hiveswap Friendsim was released in the spring, which was intended to "tide the community over" until the eventual release of Hiveswap Act 2. The "Vriska Did Nothing Wrong" trope was re-ignited when someone paid a podcaster to publicly state that exact expression.

1.11. 2019.

Homestuck had a slight uptick in 2019, when the first few chapters of the Epilogues were published, as well as an official continuation of the original work, Homestuck². Community reactions to both of these works were somewhat mixed, but it was still a new body of work that the community could finally interact with after a somewhat decent lack of new content for a while. In addition, the Pesterquest visual novel series was started, following in the footsteps of the Hiveswap Friendsim style.

1.12. 2020.

The three works that were started in 2020 continued to evolve into 2020. The Pesterquest game was finished, the entirety of the Epilogues were published, containing both story paths.

1.13. 2021.

The community continued to await the highly-anticipated release of Hiveswap Act II, which came out this year.

1.14. 2022.

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