

Short Title: Best Fancast

Moved, To amend the WSFS Constitution to revise the Hugo Award category for Best Fanzine and create a new Hugo Award category for non-professional audio-visual periodical works, including podcasts, by ~~striking out~~ and adding words as follows:

(a) Amend existing Section 3.1.13 to remove non-print (where “print” includes paper and digital print publications) works from the Best Fanzine category’s scope:

3.3.13: Best Fanzine. Any generally available non-professional publication devoted to science fiction, fantasy, or related subjects which by the close of the previous calendar year has published four (4) or more issues ~~(or the equivalent in other media)~~, at least one (1) of which appeared in the previous calendar year, and which does not qualify as a semiprozine.

(b) Insert a new section after existing Section 3.1.13 to create a new category:

3.3.X: Best Fancast. Any generally available non-professional audio or video periodical devoted to science fiction, fantasy, or related subjects that by the close of the previous calendar year has released four (4) or more episodes, at least one (1) of which appeared in the previous calendar year, and that does not qualify as a dramatic presentation.

Provided that unless this amendment is re-ratified by the 2016 Business Meeting, Section 3.3.X shall be repealed, and

Provided that the question of re-ratification shall be automatically be placed on the agenda of the 2016 Business Meeting with any constitutional amendments awaiting ratification.

Commentary: *It has been argued that the skills required to write, produce and present an audiovisual fan periodical is substantially different than the skills required to write, edit and publish a print (paper or digital) fanzine.*

It has also been argued that the experience of listening to a podcast (or watching a vidcast) is substantially different than the experience of reading a fanzine.

Finally, it has been pointed out that, among award-granting bodies (including WSFS, where fiction categories are segregated between printed fiction and dramatic presentation), it is extremely rare to consider both print/text publications and audiovisual productions for the same award.

For these reasons, we propose removing audiovisual productions from eligibility in the “Best Fanzine” Hugo Award category.

Simply excluding audiovisual productions from the fanzine category is a punitive act that revokes nominators’ and voters’ existing rights. The pool of active nominators

have shown an interest in fan podcasts, having nominated Starship Sofa twice for best fanzine.

Creating a new award category for audiovisual periodicals preserves nominators' and voters' existing rights to recognize these works.

Audiovisual production and distribution technology changes swiftly, though, and "podcasts" may be irrelevant in the near future, superseded by new methods. Naming this new category "Best Fancast" emphasizes the fannish nature of the works being considered while acknowledging that "podcasting" isn't the only applicable distribution and playback method relevant to fandom.

Ensuring the category is open to existing and new audiovisual production and distribution models preserves nominators' and voters' existing rights to recognize these works.

There is some concern that extending this category to dramatic presentations could cannibalize the "Best Dramatic Presentation" Hugo Award categories. Therefore, this motion excludes audiovisual productions that are eligible in either "Best Dramatic Presentation" Hugo Award category.

It does not exclude audiovisual series with only some dramatic content; the existence of some dramatic content in a series does not necessarily make it eligible for a "Best Dramatic Presentation" category Hugo Award.

It does not automatically exclude all audiovisual dramatic series. A fan-produced anthology dramatic series by a consistent production team could be considered, as a whole, eligible for "Best Fancast" because only individual episodes would be eligible in a "Best Dramatic Presentation" category.

This is consistent with existing rules for fanzines and semiprozines. Fiction-centered fanzines are not excluded from consideration, and the semiprozine nominees have included fiction-centered semiprozines every year since the category's inception.

Finally, there is the question of interest.

One needs only look at the iTunes Store and search the podcast category to find many fannish podcasts. Fans are producing them, they're out there, and people are listening to them.

If we look at the 2010 Hugo Award statistics <<http://www.aussiecon4.org/hugoawards/files/2010HugoVotingReport.pdf>>, we see that the podcast Starship Sofa won handily with 170 #1 ballots and 221 ballots in the final redistribution. That's not an insignificant number of ballots.

In 2011, we have podcasts nominated both in Best Fanzine and Best Related Work. Again in Best Fanzine we find Starship Sofa. In Best Related Work, we have the professionally-oriented writer's podcast Writing Excuses. We'll have to wait for the published statistics to see if other podcasts were nominated but didn't make the final ballot, but those will be available for review before ratification at the 2012 Business Meeting.

There is definitely interest in podcasts, both generally and among Hugo nominators and voters.

If this interest is not borne out in actual nomination and voting, or if the field is too broad and shallow to support nominees that meet the 5% criteria for nominations, there is a re-ratification clause that will allow WSFS to easily sunset the category after 3 years.

This is an opportunity to fix one of the identified issues with the “Best Fanzine” category and at the same time recognize a growing avenue of fanac that, as fanzines have from the very beginning, fosters the fannish community and encourages fannish communication.

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