Sony Acquires Crunchyroll for $1.175 Billion

Crunchyroll will become part of Sony's Funimation Global Group.

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UPDATE 12/10: Negotiations were ongoing in October, but a final deal has now been agreed, and AT&T will receive $1.175 billion in cash from Sony.

"We are proud to bring Crunchyroll into the Sony family," said Tony Vinciquerra, Chairman and CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment. "Through Funimation and our terrific partners at Aniplex and Sony Music Entertainment Japan, we have a deep understanding of this global artform and are well-positioned to deliver outstanding content to audiences around the world. Together with Crunchyroll, we will create the best possible experience for fans and greater opportunity for creators, producers and publishers in Japan and elsewhere. Funimation has been doing this for over 25 years and we look forward to continuing to leverage the power of creativity and technology to succeed in this rapidly growing segment of entertainment."

"We are excited to embark on this new journey. Crunchyroll has built a world-class brand with a passionate fan-base of over 3M subscribers, 50M social followers and 90M registered users. These amazing fans have helped to propel anime into a global phenomenon," said Joanne Waage, general manager of Crunchyroll. "Combining the strength of the Crunchyroll brand and the expertise of our global team with Funimation is an

exciting prospect and a win for the incredible art form of anime.”

Original Story 10/30:
Sony’s focus is mostly on the PlayStation 5 right now, but in the background the company is also attempting to finalize a deal to acquire Crunchyroll.

As Nikkei reports, Sony is thought to be in final negotiations to acquire the American distributor, publisher, and licensing company, which focuses on streaming anime, dorama (Japanese TV drama) and offering a huge library of digital manga titles. The price of this acquisition? Around $957 million.

Crunchyroll is currently owned by Otter Media Holdings, and if you follow the chain upwards it’s ultimately owned by AT&T’s WarnerMedia. Currently, Crunchyroll has more than 70 million registered users worldwide; three million of those users are paying subscribers. The service boasts more than 30,000 anime episodes to watch and “hundreds of chapters across dozens of manga titles” to read.

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As well as creating its own anime, Sony owns anime distributor Funimation and studio Aniplex, so it already has a stake in this area of entertainment. By acquiring Crunchyroll, Sony would not only gain access to a huge number of users, it would be in a stronger position against rivals attempting to secure anime content, in particular Netflix and Hulu.

The pandemic has highlighted how important digital content is becoming to consumers and therefore the services they choose to subscribe to. For Sony, the huge amount of content available on Crunchyroll could be leveraged in a number of ways, for example, what’s to stop Sony offering premium access to anime and manga as part of a PlayStation Plus membership on PS4 and PS5?

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