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Screened Justice Framed by Pop Culture: An Examination of Japanese Anime Line Art and the Amplification of Justice/Injustice in Online Courts and Mock Trials

Yayoi Kitamura

Kyoritsu Women's University

Abstract

With the amendment of the Code of Civil Procedure, civil trials in Japan are set to be fully digitized by May 2026. This transition aligns Japan with pioneers like South Korea and Estonia, as well as broader global trends seen in the U.S. and Europe. While digitalization promises efficiency and accessibility, it also introduces critical visual disadvantages that require urgent attention. This study investigates how the "litigation space" is transformed when flattened into the two-dimensional interface of a screen.

Specifically, I interrogate the visual regime of the online courtroom, focusing on how camera direction—angles, lighting, focus, and perspective—can inadvertently produce inequality, regardless of intent. While issues of the digital divide and on-screen micropolitics are relevant, this presentation focuses specifically on the **framing of the subject**.

To analyze the visual structure of online trials (using cases from the U.S., South Korea, and Japan), this study adopts a novel analytical framework: **the line art techniques of Japanese anime**. Just as anime creators use specific techniques to construct depth and meaning within a flat plane, online courts reduce complex human interactions to 2D information. By applying the logic of anime "flattening" to the courtroom screen, I argue that the meaning attributed to this space varies significantly by generation and "screen engagement." Ultimately, this paper demonstrates how pop-culture-derived visual literacy frameworks can expose hidden biases in judicial digital transformation, questioning whether "justice" can be truly rendered when the medium itself alters the message.

Keywords: Intermediality; Judicial DX; Pop Culture; Remote Trials; Visual Regime;