

## **Theatrical Anime for Popular Japanese Light Novel *Sword Art Online* to Be Simultaneously Released Worldwide Feb. 18, 2017; Official English-Version Novel Website Now Open**

KADOKAWA CORPORATION has published the light novel series *Sword Art Online* (author: Reki Kawahara / illustrator: abec) under its light novel label “Dengeki Bunko.” Following the announcement of the worldwide simultaneous release of “*Sword Art Online The Movie -Ordinal Scale-*,” a movie based on a whole new story written by the original author, Reki Kawahara, KADOKAWA CORPORATION has opened a website for the English version of the light novel series to raise the awareness of the title worldwide. The English website features explanations about each of the novels and episodes, including the Aincrad Episode and the Fairy Dance Episode.

### ■ ***Sword Art Online* English-version novel website**

[http://dengekibunko.jp/title/sao\\_en/](http://dengekibunko.jp/title/sao_en/)

*Sword Art Online* is set in the world of a mysterious next-generation VR online game called “*Sword Art Online*” in which those who die in the game will die in real life as well, with the storyline following the main character, Kirito. Currently 22 volumes of light novels have been published in Japanese. The light novel series has become a mega hit worldwide with 19 million (\*) volumes being sold, including translated versions.

(\*) “*Sword Art Online*” novels in circulation by country/region: Japan 12.5 million / Mainland China 3.73 million / Taiwan 1.45 million / South Korea 770,000 / North America, U.K. 370,000 / etc. As of August 2016, total overseas sales reached 6.5 million, bringing the total sold worldwide to 19 million.

*Sword Art Online* is also popular for its extensive cross-media developments, which to date include nine comics, two TV anime adaptations, video games, and various merchandise. Since the release of its first console game in 2013, the series has sold 1.9 million copies and achieved 9 million downloads of its mobile games. Also to date over 9.3 million home video units of the TV anime series, produced by A-1 Pictures under the coordination of Aniplex, have been sold worldwide. In March 2014, the series earned even more popularity when it began streaming on Netflix in North America. In August this year, Skydance Media, a diversified U.S. media company, acquired the global live-action rights to *Sword Art Online* and announced an ongoing project to create the world’s first *Sword Art Online* live-action TV series. As theatrical animated movie fans had been long awaiting, “*Sword Art Online The Movie -Ordinal Scale-*,” will be simultaneously released worldwide on February 18, 2017.

Furthermore, a *Sword Art Online* stage event titled “*Sword Art Online Festival @Anime Expo 2016*” was held on the second day of Anime Expo, the largest anime event in the U.S. that spanned four days from July 1 to 4 in Los Angeles, and welcomed 300,000 attendees. During the event, a teaser trailer of the movie was released along with the second key visual. There was also a live recording of the English dubbing cast and more, all of which greatly excited the 3,000 fans in attendance.

A special stage event for “Sword Art Online The Movie -Ordinal Scale-” was also held at the main stage at the hugely popular “Dengeki Bunko Fall Festival 2016” (attendance: 79,213) which was held in Akihabara, Tokyo, on October 2, featuring guests from the original female casts including Haruka Tomatsu, who was cast to the voice of Asuna, and also introduced the third new key visual and teaser trailer. Moreover, the venue reached a fever pitch with the announcement of the movie’s release date set on February 18, 2017, and the second version of advanced tickets set to go on sale on October 15, as well as by the introduction of three new characters in the movie: The mysterious songstress Yuna; the second-ranked player in the new game *Ordinal Scale*, Eiji; and the developer of the Augma AR device, Professor Shigemura.

There is also a collaborative tour planned between “Sword Art Online The Movie -Ordinal Scale-” and travel agency H.I.S. tentatively titled “Sword Art Online Release Celebration: SAO Tour Japan -Presented by H.I.S.-.” In addition to this, there are even more projects and collaborations in the works.

■ “Sword Art Online The Movie -Ordinal Scale-” website

<http://sao-movie.net/us/>

■ “Sword Art Online” English website

<http://www.swordart-onlineusa.com/>

**About Reki Kawahara**

Author. Chosen from among 3,541 entrants as the winner of the Grand Prize of KADOKAWA’s “15th Dengeki Novel Prize” for the Rookie of the Year. His award-winning novel *Accel World* debuted under the “Dengeki Bunko” imprint in February 2009. *Sword Art Online* and *The Isolator*, novels written under a different pen name that were originally serialized on his homepage, began being published by “Dengeki Bunko” in April 2009 and June 2014 respectively. Collectively, more than 17 million volumes of his works have been sold just in Japan alone. He is one of the most prominent light novel authors in the industry at the moment, and continues to captivate fans with his work.

**About KADOKAWA CORPORATION**

Founded in 1945 and headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, KADOKAWA CORPORATION is one of the most well-established Japanese entertainment companies, producing a wide variety of publications and visual content including novels, comics, magazines, live-action films, and animation series. In April 2016, KADOKAWA announced partnerships with Hachette Book Group and Crunchyroll, Inc. to distribute its content to the North American market.

<http://www.kadokawa.co.jp/>