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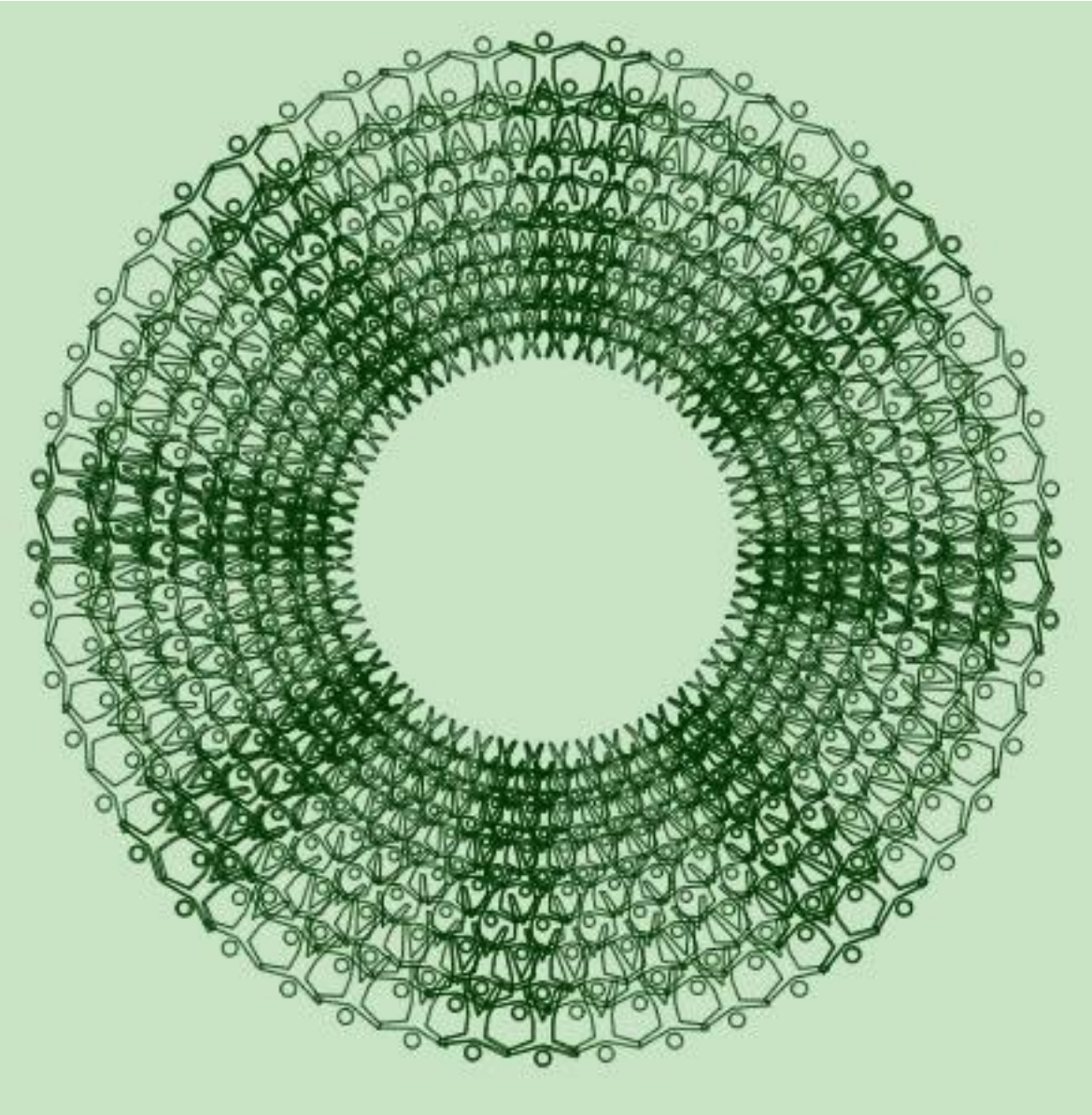
Media production in flux: crowdfunding to the rescue

M.E. Luka

Abstract

This article employs mobility studies to pinpoint the specificity of crowdfunding case studies in 21stcentury media production within a political economy framework. Analyzing how capital is deployed through a systemic, contingent set of social, creative and economic relations suggests a nuanced development of the roles and implications induced by crowdfunding. The changeability of professional roles and the fluid nature of funding and project development, distribution and promotion is crucial. Probing method and theory, the author configures media-based creators in relation to projects through assemblages of support composed of virtual producer-patrons and curator-aggregators along value-generating trajectories in a “culture of circulation” (Lee & LiPuma, 2002).



If you are an established filmmaker living in downtown Halifax, Nova Scotia, or Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, you have probably already produced and/or directed more than fifteen projects of your own. Some may be award-winning; several have likely been produced or distributed with major Canadian media players, such as the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Having established your credentials over the past decade, you seek funding for your next documentary project

but cannot secure the support needed by pursuing traditional industry sources. It is increasingly challenging to draw attention and funding from the financial and distribution hubs of the Canadian media industry in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver to projects under development. Four years ago, as the industry contorted, and the overall economy contracted, that might have been the end of your career – or at least, a serious setback. At about that time, however, an innovative, resource-rich opportunity seemed to open up through the increasingly meshed worlds of dotcom startups and open-source strategies. Over the last three years, many North American filmmakers have successfully navigated the virtual world of crowd-sourced funding for arts and media production. Developing such funding structures require a lot of preparatory work, and a deep, ongoing commitment to motivated community-building, particularly during funding drives. And although there are systemic guidelines emerging about how best to work (in) this funding environment, it is unclear what the long-term possibilities might be for the industry as a whole. Media focus has been on the capability of crowdfunding to provide an indication of market potential,[1] thus reducing risk for investors. Yet it also seems evident that the crowdfunding model is poised not just to take advantage of, but also to overtake what used to comprise certain segments of broad-based fundraising (e.g., personalized letter solicitations). It is doing so in a highly public, specifically mediatized manner, including applications to new fields such as media production, internet, and mobile devices. This is consistent with other money-raising endeavours related to media production, such as venture capital investing in corporate innovation through television shows such as Dragon's Den on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (itself a franchised program from the United Kingdom and Japan[2]). For now, using crowdfunding strategically, hundreds of professional filmmakers have

bought themselves some time to continue pursuing their dreams; others have moved on to blended careers within which filmmaking plays a part.

Financing and resourcing media and arts production in Canada and the United States is currently in flux. Between corporate consolidations, decreasing commissioning funds at the national and international levels, and tightly competitive production and advertising markets, much has shifted dramatically in the last decade. Most recently, it has become evident that there is as much advertising funding in the media business as there ever was, but how it circulates, how many people are employed in media production, and how much (and what kind of) programming is made, is quite different.[3] More generally, digital media technology further complicates arts production and communication practices. This shapes our present-day reading of what Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma helpfully term "cultures of circulation," particularly concerning the mobilization of flows of community, capital, risk, and labour in media production and dissemination.[4] This has a profound impact on how creativity is engendered and funded in North America. Mobility studies can offer a useful analytical approach to understanding the articulation of crowd-sourced funding on virtual funding hubs to creative projects and production resources in filmmaking in this context.

The research below focuses on the experience of three veteran filmmakers with the high-profile crowdfunding website Kickstarter.com (www.kickstarter.com) and the experience of a successful Canadian film promotion club (First Weekend Club) in its efforts to seed-fund a live streaming service for Canadian films on Indiegogo.com (www.indiegogo.com). To begin, I introduce a few key concepts and the working hypotheses that guided my research. This is followed by a brief description of my research subjects and their Kickstarter.com and Indigogo.com projects. Each

interviewee was asked to describe the support structures and key components involved in crowdfunding for their projects, as well as to assess the significance, advantages, and drawbacks of the crowdfunding process. The richly informative qualitative interviews are augmented with metrics from the crowdfunding websites as well as from industry and popular media publications. This methodology helps me to theorize the articulation, assemblage, and circulation of resources and value to project creators. I am interested in whether these encounters with digital technology generate a new way of understanding and developing the relationships of creative labour to resource management and production processes. My analysis is configured to explore how aggregations of mobile assemblages take place in crowdfunding, within which the mobilization of labour and the valuing of risk mark out particular formations. A preliminary mapping of filmmakers or project creators as nodes with specific types of funders form the core of the assemblages. The varying links or pathways between them (i.e., the movement of resources, risks, supporter relations, and "perks") within explicit timeframes suggest temporary trajectories within a culture of circulation that aligns with recent considerations of how circulation itself can constitute meaning.[5] Or, in terms that can describe interpretive communities "in" the internet:

Interpretive communities [...] set the protocols for interpretation by inventing forms, recognizing practices, founding institutions, and demarcating boundaries based primarily on their own internal dynamics [...]. This ethnography of forms [...] can be carried out only within a set of circulatory fields populated by myriad forms. (Gaonkar and Povinelli, 2003, p. 391)

Such an exploration generates provocative questions about the roles of the artist-creator or the producer, the arts patron, and the curator/aggregator in today's media

production environment. These include questions about funders or project-leaders as creative stewards, and specific iterations of crowdfunding assemblages as a series of temporary, virtual producers involved in globalized cultures of circulation that engender value and meaning, potentially indicating the formation of a new social imaginary.[6]

Crowdfunding: assemblage, nodes and trajectories

Key contributions to the definition of crowdfunding emerge from scholarly and corporate environments, including Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams's (2008) research on the implications of crowd-sourced educational and research activity such as wikis. Douglas Rushkoff's (2003; 2010) studies of the internet and other digital technologies center on the potential for mobilizing democratic political actions. More specifically, Paul Belleflamme, Thomas Lambert and Armin Schwienbacher (2011 [2010]) define crowdfunding as the application of crowd-sourced tactics to revenue generation in an entrepreneurial (often for-profit) environment. Their interest is in how it is used – and formulated mathematically – in business rather than in cultural production, or for non-profit uses, though they acknowledge that crowdfunding works effectively for donations to some causes. Extrapolating from this earlier research, for my purposes, crowdfunding refers to internet- and digital-technology-based crowd-sourced funding operations: the creation and growth of virtual social networks of people who provide resources for cultural production. In particular, I am interested in the non-profit nature of assembling groups of financial backers who will realize negligible or no return on their financial contributions.

The concept of assemblage as mobilized by Stephen B. Crofts Wiley, Daniel M. Sutko and Tabita Moreno Becerra (2010) in their discussion of fieldwork conducted on

personal networks in Chile is also useful for investigating the experience of filmmakers and funders on crowdfunding websites. The fieldwork analyzed by Wiley et al. specifically maps the articulation of people to overlapping social networks and the evolving spaces of social relations. Using this approach, the authors are able to trace the intersections of social relations and networks related to local, national, global, and above all, cultural spaces, by delineating and mapping the specific day-to-day experiences of each interviewee. To find their subjects, they selected multiple physical sites to investigate (for example, a university, a neighbourhood, and a community centre), seeking individuals who intersected with all of these sites but who were otherwise located in quite different socio-economic strata. The authors conducted in-depth personal interviews and observations to determine how each individual pieces together her or his quotidian connections and how each articulates the rhythms of their lives. Building on this rhythm analysis (based partly on Lefebvre, 1992), they also extrapolated an assessment of primarily urban flows and mobilities that draws from Saskia Sassen's research on cities. Wiley et al. explicitly ask questions about flow in the relationship between internet activity and real-life activity, though the authors do not go so far as to position this as circulation-based. For crowdfunding analysis, assemblage is a useful concept for mapping a similar configuration of virtual life to real-life systemic activities and practices related to media funding, distribution, and production precisely because it provides the opportunity to "read" these practices, both as philanthropy and as investment. It also allows for specificity in the fluidity of those combinations of support. For my purposes, four observations made by Wiley et al. are key:

[1. T]he patterns of circulation of its [the Internet's] discourses, images and sounds; the spatial categories and concepts used in its narratives and representations of space; and

the interactions and social relations it enables [which] both overrun and undercut the political, infrastructural, and cultural space that has been coded

[2. A]ssemblages are composed within and across other assemblages, sometimes in resonance with them and sometimes in contradiction

[3. I]f we consider the spatial practices and lived experience [...], it is clear that they are the result of the subject's negotiation of multiple assemblages operating simultaneously in the subject's milieu [...] one must constantly negotiate [...] the complex intersection of all these assemblages

[4.] The result of this ongoing negotiation is [...] a social space that is an expression of that subject's articulation to multiple assemblages and [...] to multiple global flows out of which local, national and transnational assemblages are composed. (pp. 364-365)

The activity generated by the Kickstarter and Indiegogo websites for arts and media production seems to operationalize what Wiley, Sutko, and Becerra explain as intersecting assemblages, with a particular emphasis on the construction of space and fluidly networked relationships. Further, Stephen B. Crofts Wiley and Jeremy Packer (2010) suggest that the contingent and highly individualized nature of "the production of social space" is critical to this kind of configuration (p. 264). Comparing this to locative mobility studies (for example, Galloway and Ward, 2006; Wilken, 2010), however, my research also suggests that crowd-sourced funding is more than simply the production of social space, as complex as that may be. It is similar to the generating of mobile social space and mobile interactions. Drawing on Adriana de Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith's (2010) research on how users of mobile devices in urban spaces mobile are actually "nodes" of activity, my research suggests that temporary individual and group connectivity on Kickstarter and Indiegogo can be mapped as a constantly-

changing mobile assemblage comprised of nodes and support networks connecting within a specific culture of circulation. Active nodes can be centered on filmmakers/artists or project creators, funders, and possibly curators or aggregators. Further, it is intriguing to consider the impact of conceiving of crowd-sourced activity, including crowdfunding, as cultural production in its own right. By doing so, it becomes clear that a configuration based only on assemblage is inadequate. The term "trajectories" helps indicate how social and economic systems intersect with personal and professional networks and assemblages. This signals that a more robust theory incorporating a culture of circulation can be mobilized to complete the picture, to connect the nodes and their assemblages. Lee and LiPuma (2002) explicitly suggest that:

> The contemporary processes of globalization demonstrate that capitalism [...] has again reinvented itself. It is in transition from a production-centric system to one whose primary dynamic is circulation [where] the labor that increasingly drives the system [...] harnesses technology for the extraction and manipulation of data that can then be converted into quantifiable measures of risk. [...] The advent of circulation-based capitalism, along with the social forms and technologies that complement it, signifies more than a shift in emphasis [...]. The effect is to subordinate and eventually efface historically discrete cultures and capitalisms and to create a unified cosmopolitan culture of unimpeded circulation (pp. 209-210).

Linking to Sassen's urban flows and moving beyond the Marxist analysis of the commoditization of labour into a consideration of how value is engendered by monetizing risk,[7] Lee and LiPuma's analysis of cultures of circulation help to suggest

that media production is as much a matter of generative systems of value and meaning prior to and during production. Further, these are bound together in the creation of new social imaginaries, building on vernacular practices akin to but superseding centuries of nation building. This ought to be particularly visible in practices of crowdfunding, where significant performances of the community-building and fund-raising processes are publicly induced. Together, these elements provide a useful critical lens through which to consider the resourcing of creative production. The significance of the "do-it-with-others" ethos promulgated on cultural crowdfunding websites can be analyzed in detail by comparatively considering how these nodes, networks, and trajectories work in the context of cultural production initiated in relation to crowdfunding. Finally, one of the most interesting critical concepts to emerge from this probing is a new and provisional understanding of what a producer is – and can contribute – in this context, including the identification of a specific type: the virtual producer.

Working hypotheses

My preliminary results were organized through the following working hypotheses:
Funding for film production and distribution can be generated by developing a mobile assemblage of backers. An indication of this was seen through statistics and metrics related to types of projects, funding logistics, and fund generation results, and through the range of creators on Kickstarter and Indiegogo, as well as media attention received.
How do project creators become nodes of mobile activity?
Success in crowdfunding media and arts production is realized mainly by drawing on support from an already-existing network of supporters, similarly to traditional methods of non-profit fundraising and, to some degree, media financing. This was

investigated by asking how many supporters were already known to those seeking funding, how they were found, and what roles they played. Overlaps in how many backers fund multiple projects may indicate a more complicated set of relations, including cause- or passion-related commitments and potential. What happens to ideas about the producer, patron, and curator in this context?

It is possible to observe how groups of backers are strategically activated, by studying the aesthetics and promotion of recent projects on Kickstarter and Indiegogo. I asked interviewees if standardized promotional components had an impact on success, drawing more funders. These included: the preparation of specific types of descriptions and promotional videos; incentive plans consistent with the project; and ongoing promotion among backers. Further, do funders become circulating nodes of activity, and if so, which funders, and how do they become mobile?

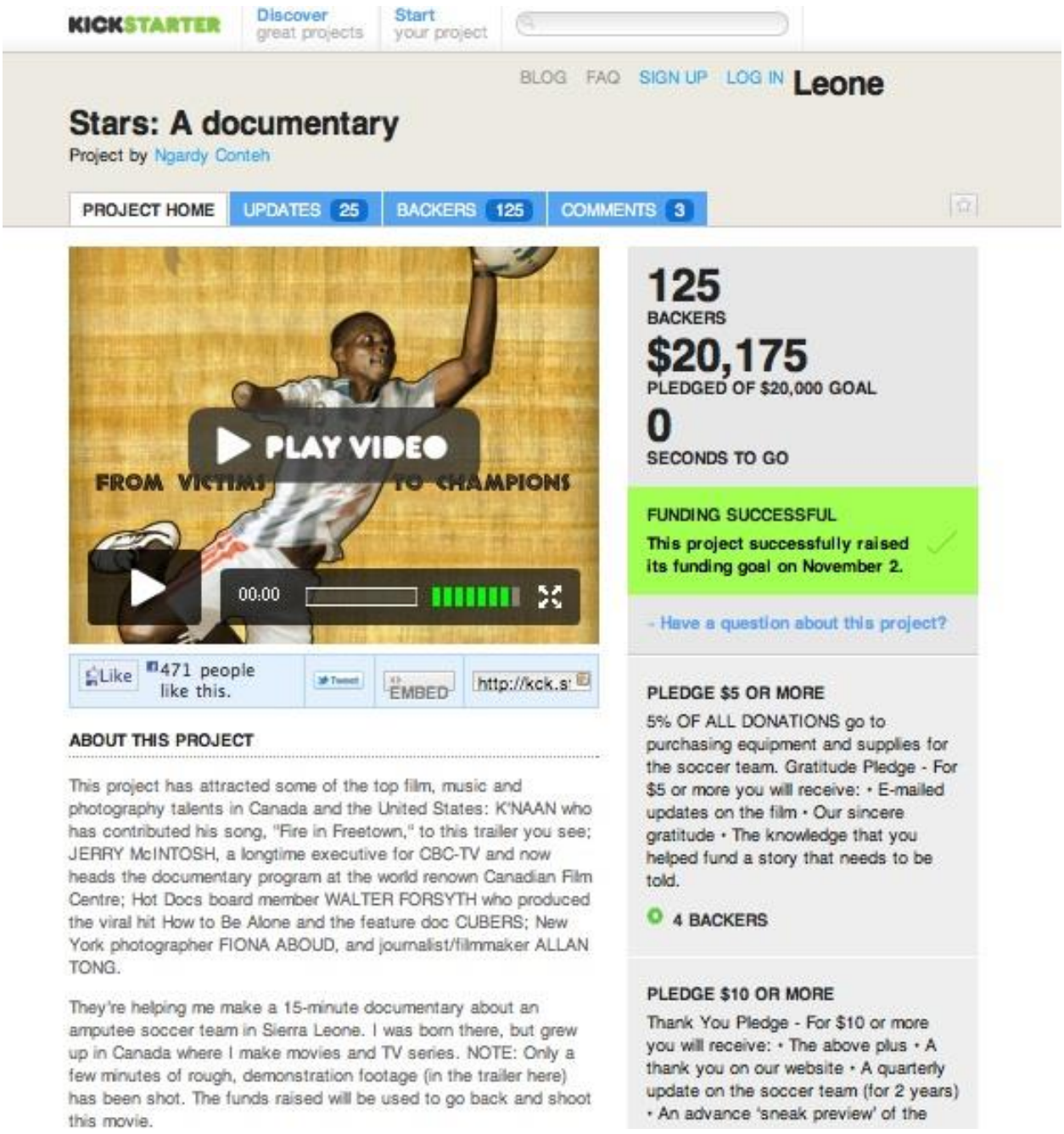
Project creators and their projects

The first project creator I interviewed was filmmaker Connie Littlefield, from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Littlefield has made a few attempts to raise funds on both Kickstarter and Indiegogo. Littlefield articulates a strong opinion about what contributed to her experiences of uneven financing success.


KICKSTARTER
Better
Living Through Chemistry: the documentary
PROJECT HOME
PLAY VIDEO
25
BACKERS
$15,091
PLEDGED OF $15,000 GOAL
0
SECONDS TO GO
FUNDING SUCCESSFUL
PLEDGE $10 OR MORE
ABOUT THIS PROJECT
PROJECT BY


INDIEGOGO
Browse
Create
Learn More
Life After Hate
: a film about tolerance & redemption
CREATED BY:
LOCATION:
CATEGORY:
$0
TIME LEFT
Perks for your contribution
SHARE THIS CAMPAIGN
ADD TO FAVORITES

Most recently, she secured $15,091 against a $15,000 goal on Kickstarter to undertake development for her newest documentary, Better Living Through Chemistry, about the history of LSD in the United States and Canada. Littlefield maintains a Facebook page about this project,[8] and runs her own production company, Concepta Film.[9] Littlefield has produced and directed four feature-length documentary films dealing with health, adolescents, drugs, and mental illness over the past decade, while also working in the television industry as an episode director for children and youth programs. This combination of personal projects and director-for-hire is typical in the Canadian media industry and is reflected in the professional history of all three filmmakers.



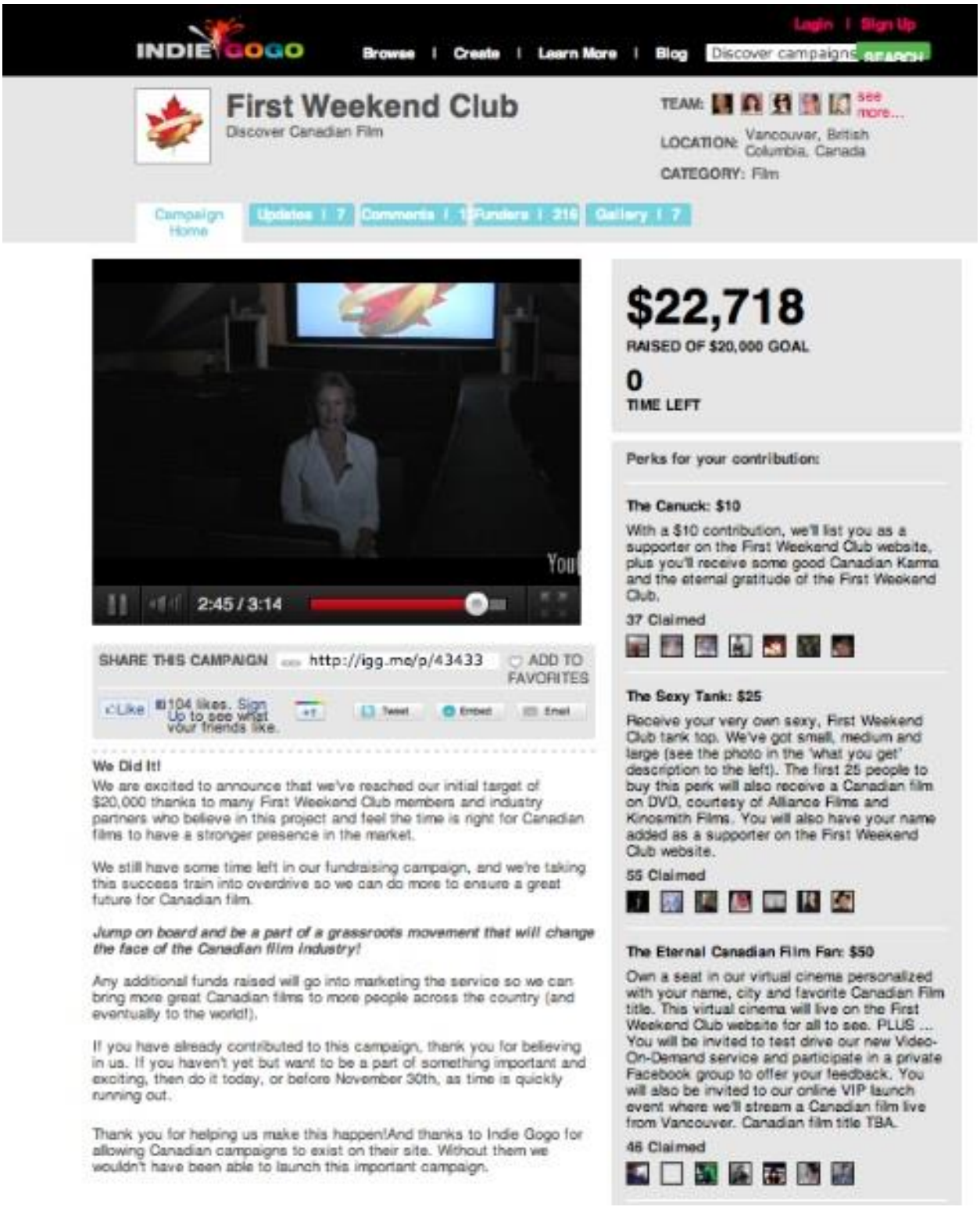
Next, I interviewed director Ngardy Conteh about her short film Leone Stars, along with one of her producers, Walter Forsyth. Conteh has directed two short documentaries, three music videos, and dozens of episodes of reality programming for internet or television focused on food, the home, and music, telling stories from culturally diverse communities or points of view.[10] Forsyth's credits include seven short films, six music

videos, and four long-form documentaries about personal relationships, art, and co-operative filmmaking over the past decade .[11] He has been actively involved in talent and program development in the industry, including as Executive Director of Atlantic Filmmakers' Co-operative (AFCOOP) for many years. Conteh and Forsyth are members of a transnational production team for Leone Stars: Conteh is Canadian, born in Sierra Leone and co-located in Barbuda (near Antigua) and Toronto; Forsyth is in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Conteh's co-director Allan Tong is Canadian and located in Toronto, as is executive producer Jerry McIntosh; another producer (Fiona Aboud) is in New York; and since the initial research period, another producer has been added, Katarina Soukup, who is based in Montreal.[12] As well, musician K'Naan lent a song to the project, and is based in Toronto.

[The proposed half-hour film] will profile [soccer] players whose arms and legs rebel soldiers hacked off in the [Sierra Leone] civil war of the 90s. They were children then, and today the players have no family, job or home — only the game of soccer. The team is their family, and their fans their admirers. Soccer has turned these amputees from victims into champions. (Leone Stars, Kickstarter.com)

Conteh's team raised $20,175 against their $20,000 goal on Kickstarter. They maintain an active presence on their blog/website and Facebook page,[13] and sustained active contact with their contingent of Kickstarter supporters for more than a year. Like Littlefield, Conteh and Forsyth articulated complex understandings of how they used Kickstarter, and their plans for further crowdfunding projects. Leone Stars mobilized the momentum of the crowdfunding experience to complete production of the half-hour "demo" funded by Kickstarter, and leveraged that success into securing development support for a feature film-length version of the story. In September 2011, the Leone

Stars feature film project won the "Pitch This!" competition at the intensely competitive Toronto International Film Festival – the first documentary to do so.[14] In November 2011, the project secured support through the prestigious Sundance Institute Documentary Program[15] – the only Canadian project in a list of 29 – and in January 2012, co-directors Allan Tong and Ngardy Conteh were invited to attend Sundance as one of ten teams in the Sundance Documentary Fellows' Program. Each time additional funding has been secured, additional production work has been undertaken. Forsyth credits the Kickstarter campaign as a strategic early step in generating profile and support for the project, enough to propel them firmly towards significant industry markers of success.[16]



My final interview was with Anita Adams, Executive Director of First Weekend Club (FWC). Since 2003, FWC has encouraged supporters of Canadian filmmaking to help

build word-of-mouth and attendance for Canadian films by purchasing tickets during the first weekend of a feature film release in theatres. The box office receipts realized during that first weekend determine how long a theatre run will be, and how many theatres or cities will be involved. FWC began as an email list-serve in Vancouver and has subsequently grown to include 15,000 members via email, their website, and Facebook.[17] In 2010, FWC began formally exploring the possibility of setting up a subscription-based streaming service for Canadian films, around the time that the American service Netflix entered the Canadian market.[18] Through a six-week Indiegogo campaign in late 2011,[19] FWC raised $22,718 on a $20,000 goal from 216 funders to provide seed dollars towards the establishment of the FWC streaming service. A beta version of the service was to be launched in spring 2012, with the full service expected in August 2012. Over the course of planning and executing the campaign, Adams had several conversations with existing FWC partners and funders to assess their interest in supporting the project. She was able to leverage the funding raised in the Indiegogo campaign to persuade several industry organizations to participate. In addition, FWC continues to accept contributions towards the founding and launch of the subscription service through its website.

Screen shots of "First Weekend Flix" (in-progress) from the FWC website, March 6, 2012.

Metrics and aesthetics, language and logistics

New York-based Kickstarter.com and San Francisco-based Indiegogo.com are similarly structured crowd-sourced funding websites, in terms of their stated goals, visual organization and financial logistics and industry leaders among a proliferation of such sites since 2010. In this section, I briefly consider traffic and related metrics to help

contextualize these comparisons. In particular, I studied metrics from industry websites such as Alexa Graphs and VentureBeatProfiles, as well as on the Kickstarter website itself. Indiegogo has not published extensive metrics itself, nor has it been the frequent subject of the kind of popular press analysis which Kickstarter enjoys.

In terms of demographics, Alexa Graphs suggests that the typical audience member for Kickstarter is 18 to 45 years old; Indiegogo is similar, but tends to reach more 25- to 34-year-olds. Both tend to attract users with college educations but no children, browsing the sites while at work (Kickstarter) or home (Indiegogo). Kickstarter tends to attract more males than females, while at Indiegogo, the opposite appears to be the case (Alexa.com, 28 April 2011, 1 May 2011, 6 March 2012). On VentureBeatProfiles, a comparison of the number of unique visitors on Kickstarter.com and Indiegogo.com suggests that audience numbers for Kickstarter fluctuate significantly: between 300,000 and 500,000 in any given month throughout 2010, and between 375,000 and 800,000 throughout 2011. Indiegogo remained steady at about 100,000 during 2010 and increased incrementally to just over 200,000 by year-end in 2011. At its peak, then, Kickstarter draws about five times the number the audience as Indiegogo, and even when that number dips, Kickstarter shows about three times the volume as Indiegogo, plotting a steady incline to higher levels over the last two years (VentureBeatProfiles.com, 28 April 2011, 6 March 2012). This incline has been particularly pronounced since January 2011, correlating with an increasing level of industry and popular media attention (for example, Adler, 2011; Andrews, 2011; Baughan, 2011; Martin, 2010; Mills, 2011; Ryzik, 2010).[20] Indiegogo tends to have proportionately fewer page views (in whole numbers), however, it often has a slightly higher number of page views per visitor when compared with Kickstarter, which

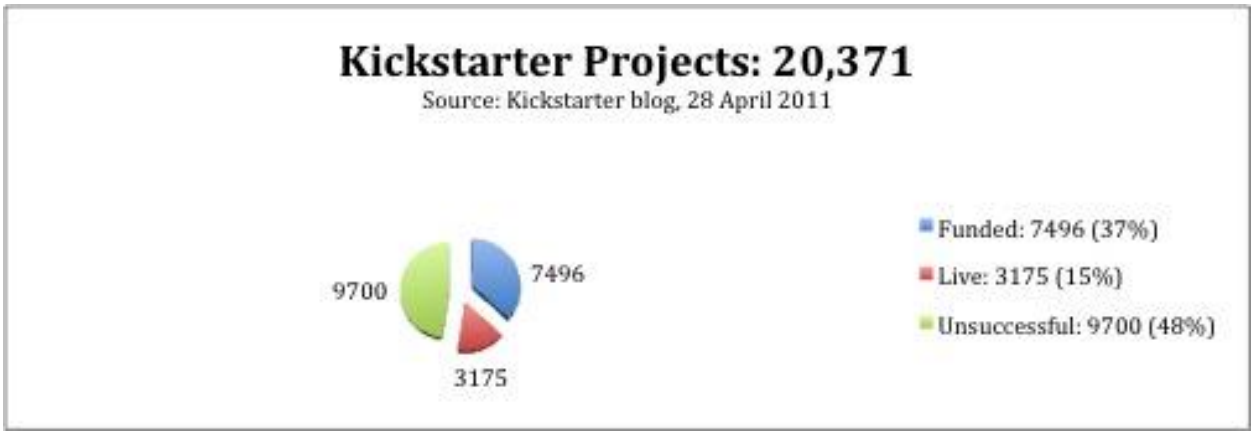
averages about 3.4 page views per day per visitor. Time spent on each site is consistent, at about five minutes (Alexa.com, 1 May 2011; 6 March 2012).

In terms of numbers (and dollars raised) related to the projects and success rates of the two websites, quite a bit more information is available about Kickstarter than Indiegogo. One journalist estimates that

> [approximately] $80 million [U.S.] has been pledged through these [crowdfunding] sites, by fewer than a million supporters. New York's Kickstarter is kicking it amongst the head of the pack. Since it started, it's taken pledges worth $35 million on over 12,000 hopeful projects. (Andrews, 2011)

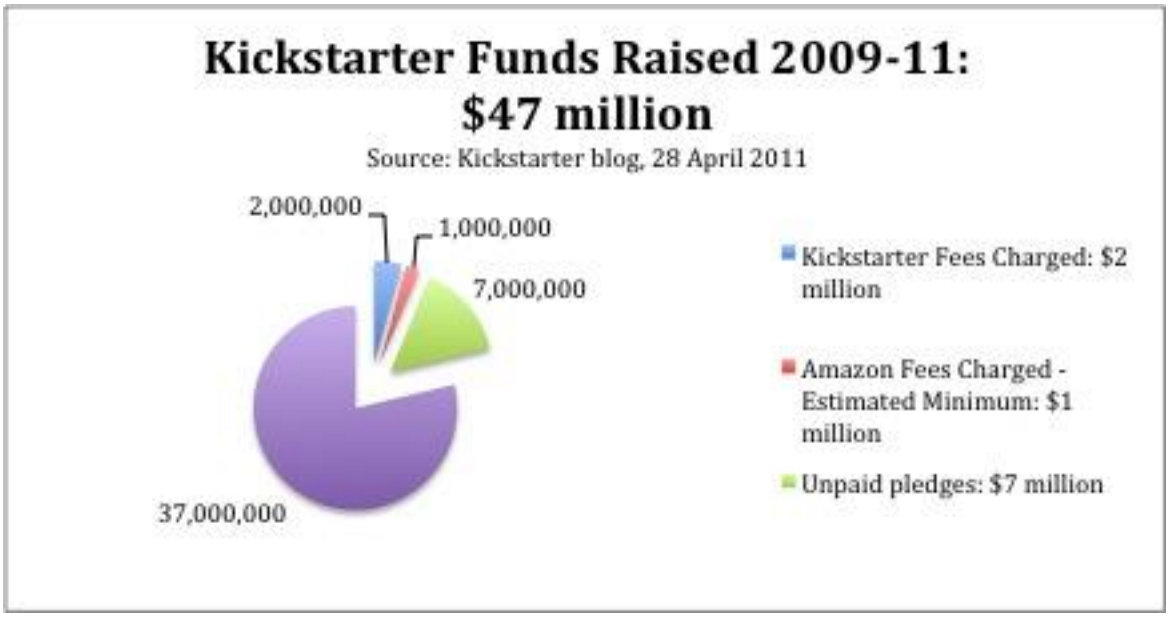
According to a Sundance Festival release announcing a partnership with Facebook and Kickstarter in January 2011, more than 350,000 people have pledged funds to Kickstarter since spring 2009. Of the first 12,000 projects launched on Kickstarter, popular press estimates ranged between 1,500 and 3,000 fully-funded projects (Cosco, 2011, Ryzik, 2010, Amy, 2011). This might suggest a success rate between 12.5 and 25%. However, Kickstarter itself claimed a success rate of 43% after its second year of operation (see below for a more detailed analysis). On Indiegogo, of the 25,850 campaigns conducted up to 1 May 2011,[21] it is not indicated how many have successfully met their funding goals. It is evident that a substantial portion of projects in the crowd-sourced environment are not fully funded. Furthermore, though developing new supporters is a stated goal at Kickstarter and Indiegogo, it is not possible to do so for all the projects they accept. Nor does finding new backers guarantee reaching a financial goal.

On the anniversary of their second year in operation (April 28, 2011) and at 2011 year-end (9 January 2012), Kickstarter.com published several participation and funding metrics that are useful for contextualizing the qualitative research I undertook, clarifying and augmenting the speculative and journalist estimates previously published about Kickstarter's successes. These metrics provide an explicit quantification of how much funding circulates, while analysis of promotional materials and the composition of supporter assemblages suggest how and why value is created by the crowdfunding work. The most promoted of Kickstarter's reported figures concerns successful projects: the blog now regularly summarizes data here. Of the 20,371 projects launched by April 28, 2011, some 37% or 7,496 had already been successfully funded. An additional 3,175 (15%) are "live projects," which means projects currently raising funds. That leaves 9,700 projects (or 48%) that were unsuccessful.



Note that Kickstarter published their success rate as 43% in April 2011, and as 46% in December 2011, based on the proportion of successful projects (7,496) to already-completed projects – extrapolated as 17,196 projects in 2011 (http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/happy-birthday-kickstarter, 28 April 2011; http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/2011-the-stats, 9 January 2012).[22] However,

Kickstarter aggregates “dollars pledged” to include “live” projects and “successful” projects, lifting “dollars raised” significantly, to $53,107,672 in April 2011; one million dollars (in total pledges to date) by one million backers by October 2011; and $99,344,382 for all of 2011 (http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/happy-birthday-kickstarter, 28 April 2011; http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/2011-the-stats, 9 January 2012). With a 37% success rate, almost two-thirds of pledged funding in current campaigns will never be redeemed; that is, the actual funds flowing to the projects is considerably lower. Even the most favourable self-published rate of 46% indicates that more than half the pledges received will not be redeemed. Though it is evident that a noteworthy amount of money is generated by crowdfunding, Kickstarter acknowledges lower redemptions: approximately 85% of the money pledged to date – for successful projects only – has been collected. At 85%, Kickstarter.com figures suggest that $40 million was redeemed in the first two years (versus $47 million pledged). Seven million dollars in unredeemed pledges, however, is a sizeable drop-off, especially in addition to administration fees of another 5% (of the total pledged) to Kickstarter, and between 3 and 5% of total redeemed pledges paid out in credit card fees to Amazon, suggesting actual funds flowing to projects was $37 million or 79%.



At Kickstarter, the funding generated towards broadly defined cultural production fields seems likely to bear some relationship to overall industry proportions in North America. For example, in the two-year period ending April 2011, film projects topped the list, receiving pledges of almost $20 million (2011 total pledges were $32.5 million from 308,541 backers).[23] Some levels of funding are increasing at a significant rate by category, while others are staying roughly proportional to each other.[24] Film and music – though the most-funded of the categories of support in Kickstarter projects – are not increasing at nearly the rate that design, technology, or games are. For example, in one week in early February 2012,[25] a design product (the "Elevation Dock for the iPhone"), and a video game ("Double Fine Adventure") both secured over $1 million in pledges, far exceeding their original, respective goals of $75,000 ($1.5 million raised), and $400,000 ($3.36 million raised by 87,142 backers, of which the last $1 million came in during the final week). Both types of products have typically been funded by venture capital in the past, potentially at this level. Aside from a few superstar projects of this nature, however, the majority of funding and the number of projects that have entered

the North American cultural production industries through crowdfunding have done so as small-scale individual projects.[26]

A comparative analysis between Kickstarter.com and Indiegogo.com suggests the importance of the artist, filmmaker, or project creator as a hub or node of activity. In particular, the financial and administrative mechanics used to generate a consistent approach and logistics on each site are revealing, as are the visual presentation and language. These mechanics include how each mobilizes the blog format, payment systems, and database structure. For non-Americans, there is an important difference between the sites: Kickstarter requires an American bank account, as well as evidence of American residency; Indiegogo does not. For Canadians, this can be a significant challenge, notwithstanding co-production histories and agreements between the two countries. The filmmakers I interviewed met the Kickstarter requirement in inventive ways. Conteh and Forsyth operate with an international producer team, while Littlefield secured the endorsement and support of an American foundation through which funding was channeled. Their determination to make use of Kickstarter is notable. As one filmmaker put it, "It's like the difference between Coke and Pepsi… Coke is at 100% [desirability and market reach] and Pepsi is 70%" (Forsyth interview, 2011). Although Indiegogo correctly touts its international reach and ability to collect funds on behalf of projects around the world as an advantage in comparison to other crowdfunding websites and endeavours, it is still the case that all funds are secured in American dollars, and that participants are liable to American laws through participation on the website. For a specifically Canadian project like First Weekend Club's video-on-demand service, the inability to contribute in Canadian dollars proved to be a significant

deterrent to a few potential funders (Adams interview, 2011). For most participants, however, this is simply how business is conducted in a global cultural context.

Both websites are quite similar in their presentation formats. Kickstarter.com and Indiegogo.com are presented using deliberately clean and visually rich imagery and not-for-profit marketing rhetoric. They are promoted as sites for networks of mostly urbanized cultural supporters, incorporating particular beliefs, values, and economic exchange practices regarding art and culture that transcend nation-state boundaries, implicitly participating in a specific culture of circulation. The wealthier, higher-profile, and more sophisticated-looking website, Kickstarter, has received a great deal of attention in the popular press, including Wired, The New York Times, Social Times, and several blogs. In fact, it receives so much coverage that it does a "roundup" of news items on a weekly basis in their blog. Indiegogo is also a favourite in blogs (see, for example: Adler, 2011; Andrews, 2011; Baughan, 2011; Martin, 2010; Mills, 2011; Ryzik, 2010), and, according to the "Press" list on their website, enjoyed coverage in 101 media items during the period March 2011 to February 2012. Like other member-based websites, you can join as a voyeur member, as a funding participant – a "backer" at Kickstarter or "funder" on Indiegogo, and/or as a generator of content – "project proposer" or "campaign." Each member becomes a friend as well as an investor. Members know up-front that they will never get a financial return, but will be rewarded by "incentives" or "perks" at various levels of support; sometimes these are material benefits, often they are temporal (e.g. "the first to get"). The objective is to pledge together with others to share in the creation and early adoption of primarily visual culture by directly funding projects. Kickstarter and Indiegogo employ straightforward processes for signing members up, and making pledges or payments, primarily through

PayPal and credit card options. This makes it logistically easy for potential backers to support creative production and match themselves to creators with specific types of projects on offer.

There is, however, a significant difference in the approach to generating revenue between Kickstarter and Indiegogo that invokes difference in the commodization of risk suggested by Lee and LiPuma (2002), a key feature of cultures of circulation. Kickstarter is a no-risk proposition for the backers pledging to projects on the site. If a project does not reach its goal on Kickstarter, no money changes hands but the value of participation is publicly recognized. Although this means that Kickstarter collects no fees, the creator collects no funds, and the backer doesn't hand over money pledged to the project, everyone involved has performed participation in the creation of value. Further, participation on Kickstarter suggests that only accurate evaluations of what the market can bear will be rewarded. On Indiegogo, the funder's pledge is processed immediately. Whether or not a project makes its goal, the creator keeps the funds raised. Significantly, a fee is always charged on Indiegogo – indeed, higher percentages (9%) of funds raised are charged if the goal is not met (versus 4% if the goal is met on Indiegogo, or 5% on Kickstarter). Indiegogo seems to represent a higher financial "risk" for the funder, but provides the potential for at least partial "success" for project leaders: a more philanthropic gesture perhaps. Value is created and circulated even in this risky proposition. Each of the interviewees felt this important difference in positioning their relationships with funders as well as their likelihood of "success." The filmmakers tended to prefer Kickstarter, seeing it as maximizing the chance of financial success

without risk to funders, while FWC decisively preferred Indiegogo for its philanthropic, global (rather than U.S.) positioning.

Funders and supporters

How filmmakers and artists manage to attract varying and highly diffused groups of participants (and particularly funders) to projects speaks to a complex set of social relations, as well as to the fluidity of the projects and their networked assemblages of supporters. Georgina Born (2004) suggests in her ethnography of the British Broadcasting Corporation – and explicitly theorizes in more recent work (2010) – that the social relations involved in the management of aesthetics and creative labour in cultural economy terms are critically and helpfully interlocked in five important thematic ways. These include: "aesthetics and cultural object[s]; the place of institutions; agency and subjectivity; questions of history, temporality and change; and problems of value and judgment" (Born, 2010, p. 172). She offers examples from the ethnographic work she has done, including her rethinking of the implications of the public service mandate and the role of the creative producer as articulated at the BBC in the 1990s. Likewise, the mission statements and non-profit rhetoric found on crowdfunding websites seem to depend less on democracy or an educational role, and more on the mobilization of affect through an ambiguous, hybrid combination of commercial and public service production practices and aesthetics, resulting in a "participatory" (aka funding) appeal based on a sophisticated combination of entertainment value, philanthropic mores, and the display of strategic marketing savvy. This appeal to a combination of entertainment and philanthropic aesthetics in cultural production bolsters the illusion that there is no institution behind the projects, and that

agency rather than subjectivity is structurally paramount for the project creators involved, as well as for their funders and supporters. The formula is compelling. Working through proven website-based mechanisms that enable affective appeals to specific audiences and funders in a compressed time period is an effective fundraising method. It also ably institutionalizes the projects more quickly than the crowdfunding websites' promotional stances might suggest. Kickstarter and Indiegogo aspire to showcase the strengths and unique qualities of individual projects, but run the risk of homogenizing the projects in order to fit the format of the websites. I am interested in how this emphasis on the individuality of the projects also sets up each project creator and their project as an important – or even crucial – centre of activity. In de Souza e Silva and Frith's configuration, this would logically delineate the project leader, rather than the project itself, as a node of activity. Indeed, this is borne out by how the support networks act.

Funder Type	***Funder Description***	***No. of projects funded***	***Degrees of separation***	***Project of their own?***	***No. of genres or categories***
1	One-time funder	1	1-2 mostly	No	1
2A	Friend funder	1-3	1-2 "	No	1
2B	Artist/leader friend funder	1-3	1-2 "	Yes	1
3A	Genre funder	4+	1-3 "	No	1 (mostly)
3B	Artist/leader genre funder	4+	1-3 "	Yes	1 (mostly)
4A	Culture funder	4+	1-3 "	No	2-3 (mostly)
4B	Artist/leader culture funder	4+	1-3 "	Yes	2-3 (mostly)
5A	Culture sector funder	4+	2-3 "	No	Multiple
5B	Artist/leader culture funder	4+	2-4 "	Yes – often also a curatorial role	Multiple

In each of the cases analyzed, it became evident that success was realized

primarily by drawing on two layers of already-existing networks of supporters. This was particularly evident through the mobilizing of one percent of the 15,000-strong membership-driven First Weekend Club, as well as the more intensely personal networks engaged for Leone Stars and Better Living Through Chemistry. The largest group of supporters for each project included those with significant personal connections to the filmmakers or to FWC, often no more than one or two degrees of separation away; usually, more than two-thirds of supporters were in this group. The second, smaller group of crowdfunders was comprised of a small proportion of strangers to the project creator who were already involved in the Kickstarter and Indiegogo crowdfunding spaces. Funder types include those represented in the chart below:[27]

Source: Based on detailed analyses of lists of supporters and funders of the projects run by the interviewees.

The particular combination of supporters generated by each successful project served to grow the networks of each project creator as well as populate the trajectory of funding associated with each project, although this manifested slightly differently from one project to another. Based on the number of backers who were personally known, each project seemed to grow the number of overall Kickstarter and Indiegogo funders. Those who supported at least one other project increased the likelihood of further contributions. This is strikingly similar to effective non-profit fundraising strategies, and was particularly evident in the rollout for FWC. That is to say: project creators, in concert with the crowdfunding website, first ask past funders and supporters to give, particularly those they know best, and then ask those who have already supported

unrelated but similar projects. Furthermore, in the case of both Leone Stars and FWC, the success of the crowdfunding campaigns enabled them to leverage additional funding and resource support from backers with far more resources than most of the individuals who contributed to the crowdfunding endeavour. Typically, this is also an important outcome for a successful fundraising campaign. The lower-key Better Living Through Chemistry campaign realized the modest goals of its crowdfunding campaign; by March 2012, shooting for the development phase had begun.

All the projects capitalized (on) extended personal networks. Forsyth indicated that between two-thirds and three-quarters of their 125 backers were personally known or were involved in a target group or community where they knew at least one filmmaking team member by reputation and felt a close connection (e.g. the documentary community in Canada, in which Forsyth is an active and well-known leader). The steady growth in pledges was maintained during the campaign because each key team member (Conteh, Forsyth, Tong) sequentially took responsibility for contacting their networks and soliciting support. Of the 125 backers, 11 gave to one other project (funder type 2), and six to between two and six projects (funder types 2-5). Four frequent backers (funder types 4 or 5) gave to 9, 14, 31 and 103 other projects respectively. Littlefield's project persuaded 25 backers, including six who gave to one other project, and five who gave to between two and four other projects (Better Living Through Chemistry – Kickstarter.com, 2011). Littlefield noted that a number of participants were personally known to her (i.e. one degree of separation); others came from the fan base of the foundation through which funding was funneled (i.e. two degrees of separation). Adams acknowledged each contribution to FWC with a personal email, simultaneously

engaging in conversations with existing key sponsors of FWC throughout the campaign and afterwards. She notes: that the bulk of the 216 contributions came from already-existing FWC members; that the geographical distribution reflected the distribution of the regular FWC membership list; and that FWC did gain some new members during the crowdfunding campaign. Certainly, the statistics bear out the predominance of existing FWC members in this assemblage of support. Of the 216 contributors, 159 have never given to any other project on Indiegogo (more than three months after the close of the FWC campaign). Of the other 57 who gave to at least one other project, all 57 gave to film-related projects. Of these, 27 were already Indiegogo supporters, and most of these individuals gave to FWC early in that campaign, enabling momentum.[28]

The creation of an assemblage of support by tapping into or generating these distinct levels of funders or backers supporting one (or a few, or many) project(s), consistently results in successful projects. More interestingly, the group of funders for any successful project in essence becomes a kind of virtual producer participating in this particular culture of circulation by visually demonstrating support and thereby generating momentum. Intuitively prepared for this, some of the project creators explicitly offer producing credits for some projects as a "perk," depending on level of financial contribution. This was a source of astonishment for one project creator interviewed, and a source of interest for others. In the North American media industry, a producer is responsible for generating, co-ordinating, and supervising the resources and the creative approach needed to see a project to completion. There are many kinds of producers, including creative producers (responsible for research, visual styles and/or narrative), executive producers (usually risk or finance guarantors), and co-ordinating producers (logistics and budget management). On larger projects, there can be as many producers

as required to generate and manage all of the resources required. In collaborative projects, the producer role can be shared among all or most of the creative group involved. In television, the creative producer can also be the director, particularly in small unit production.[29]

In crowdfunded media production, it appears that the relatively small group of key funders involved in some projects is treated as a kind of producer – albeit virtual and multi-headed. The crowdfunding virtual producer is meant to indicate a group that comes together "on" the internet: using technology and software to temporarily assemble a deeply-connected collection of funders, resource providers or creative contributors who are not usually otherwise associated with one another. The virtual producer clearly takes on the position of a minor investor, interested in (at most) a financial write-off, and more usually, the simple financial viability of the project. Rather than being paid as a producer for work done, the virtual producer accesses perks that cost little to the production, and pays for the privilege of contributing the value of what could have been their own labour. A certain proportion will actively contribute additional support throughout the existence of the project.[30] The many-headed virtual producer generated through crowd-sourced funding is different in at least one other significant way from traditional producers and funders. The virtual producer is a producer with no producing authority; she or he is a passive backer who has more in common with "friends" and "club members" generated through non-profit fundraising methods than with typical North American media and arts finance-seeking producers. Kickstarter and Indiegogo seem to generate committed networks of supporters, suggesting that a highly mobile and individuated creative work force (McRobbie, 2002)

can provide linked funding hubs for multiple creative projects. Minna Tarkka (2010) proposes that research into creative forms of mobility practices specific to "space, place, case (or race)" may illustrate new ways to demand unpaid labour from artists, creators, and crews (p. 132). The Kickstarter and Indiegogo funding model seems to rely not only on convincing artists, creators, and crews to take turns working for free, but to take turns funding the projects of those they know and admire. The one degree of personal separation embedded in this process suggests that those already involved in creative labour are more likely to assist each other, whether for profit or for social good. Such a reconfiguration of shared interest in the arts from already-committed (and sometimes financially-stretched) cultural supporters holds promise and risk as a social phenomenon worth understanding. This begs an important question: how can we accurately assess the generative nature of the crowdfunding virtual producer?

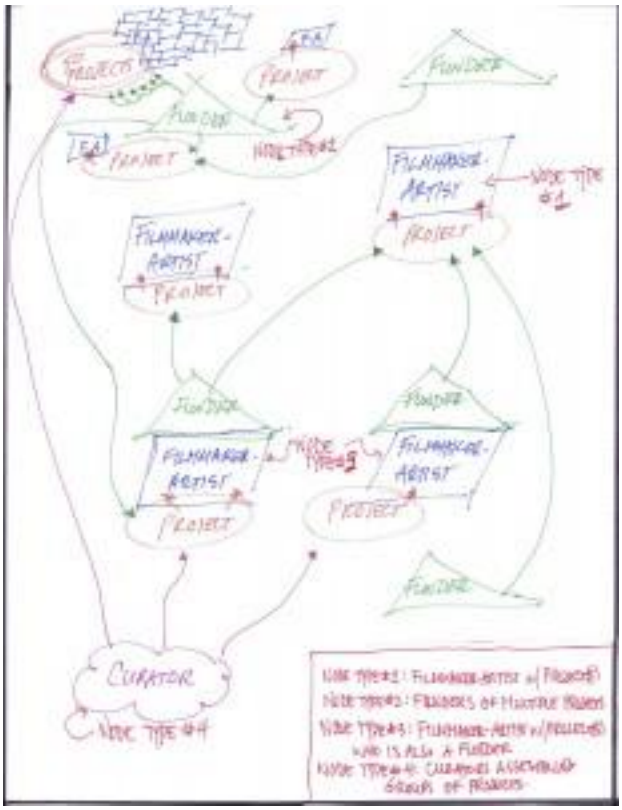
Generative nodes, trajectories and networks

Grappling with the meaning and role of the virtual producer returns us to a consideration of how crowdfunding websites and filmmakers/artists articulate together to generate project support within a culture of circulation. Developing a profile in order to attract funders is a key function of crowdfunding sites. Both Kickstarter and Indiegogo recommend a particular configuration of how to profile and promote each project. For both sites, this includes preparing a written one-page pitch, developing a list of appropriate incentives or perks for backers or funders, and presenting a short video that illustrates something compelling about your project (Kickstarter, 2011; Indiegogo, 2011). Littlefield participated at a minimal level in this marketing strategy: she provided only a small amount of sample footage and a very short list of imaginative incentives to

Kickstarter, including "good karma." In her opinion, the recommended marketing structure did not have a significant impact on reaching her goal. For Adams, Conteh, and Forysth on the other hand, developing compelling videos and one-page pitches, combined with original incentives lists grounded in the projects, were critical. Adams and Forsyth both described a creative process that identified an extensive list of incentives that was subsequently modified in order to bring costs down or to appeal to a more geographically diverse audience. Plugging in content to the recommended promotional structure was a significant contribution to their success, as well as reinforcing a support relationship that they hope will continue by converting crowdfunders to blog, website, or Facebook participants.

As discussed earlier, raising funding for filmmaking and other forms of media production is traditionally considered a producer's responsibility. Likewise, investing in a project with no expectation of financial return is a patron's prerogative. Are these individuals involved in a kind of creative stewardship, or civic contribution, that goes substantially beyond the funding contribution the virtual producer makes? Or is this a genuine hybrid? It seems that it might be. The virtual crowd which funds individual media and other projects sorts itself into temporary assemblages that become a stand-in collective patron as well as (virtual) producer, generating flexible trajectories of support. It makes sense to consider the funding assemblages as comprised of individuals displaying this specific hybrid function: virtual producer-patrons who generate and leverage funding activity for the sector. The composition of these mobile hubs of activity resembles and combines with the activity nodes of filmmakers and artists discussed earlier in the creation of value related to risk as well as to labour. Each type of node

includes an individual who makes a series of deliberate decisions related to creative production and engagement, actions and interactions that repeat frequently in new combinations and permutations that can be systematically tracked and almost formulaically predicted into a series of assemblages connected by trajectories. In the preliminary schematic below, it is evident that there are at least four possible types of this activity. The four preliminary nodes and their linking trajectories can be represented this way:



The first type of node is the project creator who has one or more projects they wish to have funded or otherwise supported. These are the individuals that crowdfunding is putatively set up to assist. What makes this node mobile is the changing composition of the funding network attracted to each new project and the short-term nature of each project. Each new campaign on Kickstarter or Indiegogo highlights the potential for

constantly reforming the support base and personal networks of each individual and their projects, as well as groups of projects, and the crowdfunding sites themselves. This is the creation of a culture of circulation based on a social imaginary articulated as mobile global culture. The ongoing nature of the relationship, and the seemingly transparent documenting of the assemblages configured in the public space of the website are important, integral parts allowing for the formation of the mobile node. Adams, Conteh, and Forsyth spoke to this in their interviews when they described the need to generate momentum. All interviewees observed that the most lucrative periods were right at the beginning, and once the deadline loomed, with the overhanging threat/motivation for a renewed sales pitch to the network of potential supporters that there might not be enough funds pledged in time.[31]

The second type of node is composed of funders who support multiple projects. This is a much smaller group of individuals and includes funder types three, four, and five from the funder table. These are people who have contributed to at least four projects, suggesting that these individuals are moving beyond personal networks or single causes or interests into a more visibly philanthropic mode. In the case of these individuals, it is quite possible that they are two or three degrees of separation from the makers of at least some of the projects they support, but likely not all. Future aggregative research on more projects will bear this out. Based on the project creator interviews and metrics available, it is evident that multiple funders definitely support projects offered by individuals they do not know. In this case, either the category or a specific subject or cause predominates in the selection of projects to support.[32] Generating a trajectory of support for several complementary projects is the task – or perhaps more accurately, the

modus operandi – of the funders who become node type number two. All three filmmakers and Adams spoke of the importance of identifying and speaking to fan groups or organizations already interested in the cause or purpose of the project for which funding is being sought. Emphasizing category and cause is also a strategy employed by crowdfunding websites in promotional or summary emails sent to subscribers, encouraging them to look at new projects and help fund the ones they like most. All interviewees spoke of the considerable personal efforts required to generate interest and expand their networks of supporters. Success in attracting these multiple funders may well play a determining role in the overall success rate for crowdfunding, particularly in the early stages of the campaign.

Node number three is created by combining project-leader networks and funder trajectories. This third type of node is an intriguing combination of types one and two. These are project creators who fund and support projects other than their own. They include funder type "B"s in the funder table, though to be truly different nodes from one and two, it seems reasonable to suggest that this third type of node is created when project creators support projects by other project creators who are more than two degrees of separation from themselves. According to Forsyth, showing support by genre or category, for example, through cross-promotion of other films, allows all the projects to gain more attention, no matter how little you know the individual maker. The film-centric focus of FWC's multiple-project supporters suggests this is correct. In conversations with Forsyth and Littlefield, we discussed how conducive the filmmaking culture in Canada's Atlantic region is to this kind of sharing of networks and responsibilities. Likewise, Adams emphasized the significant support realized from

localized Vancouver and Atlantic filmmaking communities for FWC. Certainly, a perusal of the names involved in Leone Stars and in FWC suggests that this is the case; less so in the case of Littlefield's project. This is consistent with John McCulloch's observations about culture and space in media production in Atlantic Canada, Tracy Zhang's discussion of co-operative filmmaking in the Maritimes, and Darrell Varga's (2009) analysis of place in art films generated in the region.

Finally, a fourth type of activity presents itself more comfortably as a node rather than a funding type. These are the curators or aggregators of projects on the website, or in live events reported on the website. In July 2010, a film festival was hosted and curated by some of the founders of Kickstarter, who have themselves funded several projects (Ryzik, 2010). Additional curated or aggregated sections on the Kickstarter website include those of the New Museum in New York, City of Portland, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and a dozen others. These sections feature or commission Kickstarter projects that have an association with the respective curator or aggregator. So, for example, the RISD section features projects from students and alumni and actively encourages students to participate, while the City of Portland features projects from residents of Portland (Kickstarter.com, 2011). On the other hand, Indiegogo favours partnerships over curated zones or pages. Organizations such as Facebook, Power to the Pixel, The Workbook Project and others provide services directly to Indiegogo, or to those generating projects for funding on the website; in addition, partnerships such as Indiegogo's work with the entrepreneurially-oriented Startup America Partnership headed up by United States President Barack Obama is another example of a form of aggregation related to crowdfunding (http://www.indiegogo.com/partners/suap, 2011).

The Sundance partnership at Kickstarter mentioned earlier is a good example of this type of activity, through its emphasis is on a group of projects that have the Sundance Institute stamp of approval. Though each of these examples contributes to the building of networks and trajectories for funding, they do so as a contribution to the circulation of value rather than through direct funding or even as a component of a temporary assemblage of support. The advantage of grouping projects by curators or aggregators or in partnerships may be more significant at the distribution stage of a project rather than the funding stage.[33]

Anomalies, intermediaries, and future directions

Furthermore, many of the virtual producer-patrons, curators, aggregators, and/or partners can easily be configured as Bourdieuian cultural intermediaries in the marketplace, supporting project creators and funders alike including those who are mobile nodes. Intermediaries are not nodes of their own or assemblages.[34]Rather, the idea of cultural intermediaries is useful for pointing to structural power relations and production patterns typical of theories of circulation and the construction of non-labour-related value. Cultural intermediaries are implicated in a complex and relational class- and education-based system comprised of taste-making workers involved in cultural production, including artists, television producers, graphic designers, architects, and fashion models (Soar, 2002; Steven, 1998; Wissinger, 2009). Sean Nixon and Paul du Gay (2002) critique the lack of precision and overdetermination of Bourdieuian cultural intermediaries in order to make explicit its too-broad conceptual boundaries. By complicating this concept with that of precarity (for example, Neilson and Rossiter, 2008), however, a more nuanced understanding of creative workers and

supporters may be generated, some of who can become crowdfunding nodes. A Bourdieuian approach suggests that little agency is available to creative industry participants. Scholars studying the precarious nature of employment in the creative field focus on the dynamic between individual workers, the group of workers to which he or she belongs, and the employer groups. By including artists, fans, volunteers, and other low- or non-paid personnel, this suggests a focus on how all possible creative participants can feel that they belong – and contribute – to the field (Terranova, 2000; Deuze et al, 2007, 2010; Christopherson, 2008). Variously termed affective, emotional, or immaterial labour, the core contribution to be made from this literature is the acknowledgement of a deep emotional connection to and ownership over creative work, as well as a sense of control over cultural production. Often couched as entrepreneurial or independent work, the upside of economic instability in the cultural industries is precisely the individual's sense of commitment to and control over their art (McRobbie, 2002)[35]. This is consistent with the experience of crowdfunding participants, and is helpful in locating the contributions of funders, curators, and aggregators as nodes to Kickstarter and Indiegogo.

Finally, I am left with the task of more thoroughly reconciling these not altogether congruent theoretical configurations: flexible assemblages centered on mobile nodes, cultural intermediaries, and trajectories of circulation. Georgina Born proposes a post-positivist empiricism in order to articulate a post-Bourdieuian theoretical approach to understanding cultural production. She usefully draws on Raymond Williams' discussions of culture and cultural materialism, Bourdieu's delineation of the field of cultural production and the role of cultural intermediaries, and the empiricism of

sociology of art studies (e.g., Becker, 2008 [1982]), in order to move beyond models and grapple with the dialogic nature of theory and cultural production practices. Born makes this interdisciplinary inquiry more complex by bringing "generative thinking in contemporary anthropology" into a scholarly conversation with the above theoretical discussions (Born, 2010, p. 172). By this, I believe she means to indicate the importance of immersion in the empirical over time and the knowledge to be gained through the reflexivity of professionals and participants in particular fields and case studies.[36]Such an approach is useful in the context of this paper to suggest it is possible to generate an understanding of the particularity of what happens in crowdfunding in part by continuing the conversation.

The mobility of the configurations of project creators in relation to their projects, networks of virtual producer-patrons, and curators/aggregators/distributors can usefully be understood as assemblages of support for nodes of activity through the actions of all of the involved parties (many of which can more generally be understood as cultural intermediaries) along trajectories generated by the decisions of the project leaders. Consequent actions and reactions of the virtual producer-patrons and the curators/aggregators/distributors mobilize these flexible and contingent assemblages within those trajectories of support, creating and reassessing value in a global culture of circulation. Reflecting on such configurations with the interview subjects makes sense in combination with the kind of metrics analysis undertaken here, as well as within the context of existing industry knowledge and experience. For this, I have drawn on my own 15 years of experience as a television and internet producer-director, video-artist, and broadcasting programmer. The configuration outlined here is consistent with my

experience. This nuanced framework employs mobility studies to pinpoint the specificity of crowdfunding and 21st century media production within a framework of a power-based, systemic, and also contingent set of social, creative, and economic relations, as well as in terms of analyzing the roles and implications involved in crowdfunding itself. Such an analysis of changes and inter-changeability in creative and professional roles, social relations and the fluid nature of funding and project development, distribution, and promotion is crucial. It provides openings for new questions to emerge, and for research potential to grow in both anticipated and surprising ways. In the extremely consolidated, tightly financed North American media industry and arts environment, arts and media production may leverage technology and supporters using original, contingent, and temporary strategies and tactics that change not just business models but also the way in which social relations develop. I am attentive to the challenges of how to map these new mobile sources of funding creativity, and I am grateful to the networks of professionals, participants, and scholars to which I have access for their willingness to continue to provoke and enrich these inquiries in my research as well as our respective creative pursuits.

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1. For a recent example, see Hon, 2012. ↩
2. See, for example, http://www.cbc.ca/dragonsden/faq.html, and http://www.bbc.co.uk/dragonsden/aps/about.shtml. ↩
3. See, for example, reports such as the June 2011 CTRC report on profits in Canadian media in 2010, http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/com100/2011/r110602.htm, or from Statistics Canada such as this November 1, 2011 bulletin: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/111101/dq111101a-eng.htm. ↩
4. See, for example, the critique of globalized capitalism and the derivatives market based on the juxtaposition of gift exchange social systems and a post-Marxist "labour as commodity" analysis, including a reconsideration of the separation between economy and culture, the importance of temporality, and the potential impact on citizenship, nation-state, (etc), offered by Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma (2002). ↩
5. See, for example, the discussion of the post-1973 practice of "derivatives hedging" in the circulation of global currencies in Lee and LiPuma (2002, pp. 206-207). ↩
6. Lee and LiPuma (2002) discuss just such a development in general terms in the European and American context over the last quarter of the 20th century, emerging from sociological, anthropological, and political economy investigations of modernism concerning capital and gift exchange (including Pierre Bourdieu and Marcel Mauss, among others), linguistics and performativity (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Emile Beneviste, and others), nation-building through the vernacular (Anderson, 1991) and the modern social imaginary (Taylor, 2004), cultural flows (Appadurai, 1996), and public space (Habermas, 1989). ↩
7. In hedge funds management, for example. ↩
8. For more, see https://www.facebook.com/pages/Better-Living-Through-Chemistry/153453888047074. ↩
9. Please see http://www.conceptafilm.com/ for more information. ↩
10. Please see http://mattrumedia.com/ for more information. ↩
11. Please see http://www.gorgeousmistake.com/ for more information. ↩
12. Please see http://www.catbirdproductions.ca/ for more information. ↩
13. See http://leonestars.blogspot.com/ and https://www.facebook.com/LeoneStarsDocumentary. ↩
14. See http://tiff.net/industry/programmes/telefilmcanadapitchthis for more details. ↩
15. Please see http://www.sundance.org/press-center/release/29-documentaries-receive-582000-in-grants-from-sundance-institute-documenta/ for details. ↩
16. Walter Forsyth, email communication with the author, 27 February 2012. ↩

17. Anita Adams, Executive Director, FWC, interview, 19 December 2011. See FWC website: www.firstweekendclub.ca and FWC facebook: https://www.facebook.com/FirstWeekendClub. ↩
18. See, for example, CTV News: http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/TopStories/20100922/netflix-canada-100922/. "Netflix arrives in Canada amid controversy." ↩
19. See http://www.indiegogo.com/First-Weekend-Club. ↩
20. My thanks to Mariana Obanda, a student in the "Cultures of Production" class I taught in winter 2011 at Concordia University, for identifying four of the dozen or so articles that were published between late fall 2010 and early spring 2011, alerting me to the recent uptick of popular publishing on Kickstarter. Since then, the attention has only grown: between March 2011 and February 2012, Indiegogo identified 101 individual instances of media coverage on crowdfunding that included Indiegogo (http://www.indiegogo.com/contact/press, 6 March 2012). Kickstarter does a round-up of media coverage on Kickstarter projects on a weekly basis on their blog (Kickstarter.com/blog, 6 March 2012). For examples, see http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/categories/news?ref=blog. ↩
21. Indiegogo no longer indicates the number of campaigns conducted on its website. A February 2012 Indiegogo-authored blog entry suggests that over 50,000 campaigns have been started. See http://www.fanbridge.com/blog/crowdfunding-your-project-with-indiegogo-and-fanbridge for more. ↩
22. The implications of a success rate in the 37-46% range are explored below in the context of how finances are administered. ↩
23. Additionally:
    music had pledges of $13 million versus 2011 pledges of $19.8 million from 260,178 backers;
    design pledges equaled $3.6 million by April 2011 compared to a significant increase to $9.2 million in 2011 pledged from almost 100,000 backers;
    technology projects experienced a significant jump from $1.75 million by April 2011 to $4.7 million in 2011 alone;
    fashion likewise increased from $0.5 million to $1.4 million in 2011 alone;
    games increased from $1 million by April 2011 to $3.6 million in 2011 alone;
    art $3.2 million (2011: $5.9 million pledged from 78,558 backers);
    publishing $2.7 million (2011: $5.1 million pledged from 74,280 backers);
    theatre $2.6 million (2011: $4 million pledged from 50,144 backers);
    food $1.7 million by April 2011 vs $2.8 million in 2011;
    photography had a slight increase from $1.6 million in the first two years to $2.1 million in 2011;
    comics saw almost $1 million in pledges in the first two years, compared to $1.8 million in 2011; and
    dance received $0.6 million in pledges versus $1.05 million in 2011. (Kickstarter blog, 28 April 2011; 9 January 2012). ↩
24. There isn't space here for a detailed analysis of how all projects to date match or do not match industry or arts-sector categories and statistics, though they seem to generally match broad cultural sector categories. ↩

25. This was first noted in this article: http://digitaljournal.com/print/article/319501 by Leigh Goessi (2012). ↩
26. For example, there were 15,746 projects on Kickstarter in the two years ending December 2011, almost all well under $25,000 (http://www.kickstarter.com/blog/2011-the-stats, 9 January 2012). ↩
27. Type "A"s in this chart are only funders (i.e. not filmmakers or artists). Type "B"s noted in the chart are funders who are also filmmakers or artists with projects in the respective crowdfunding websites. ↩
28. 39 gave to only one other project (of these, 10 gave to projects prior to FWC). Six people gave to two other projects (all before their FWC contribution); six people contributed to three other projects (five before FWC); four people gave to four projects (all before FWC, and with projects of their own); one person each gave to five projects and twelve projects (before and after giving to FWC, and both of whom had projects of their own). This suggests that 27 contributors to FWC were already Indiegogo project-supporters. Of the 216 contributors, 12 had projects of their own For additional details, please see the FWC campaign on the Indigogo.com website, http://www.indiegogo.com/First-Weekend-Club (2012). ↩
29. This is borne out by my producing and broadcasting experience in the media production business for the last fifteen years. ↩
30. For example, several of the participants in FWC (including the author) are involved in a private Facebook (focus) group during the spring of 2012 concerning brand management and rollout strategy for the subscription service. ↩
31. This is consistent with the information gathered in popular press articles, as well as the growing number of "how to" guides, such as Ideavibes (2011), and Youngdale (2012). ↩
32. This is also the case with social media marketing for media production in general, as Julie Giles (2011) indicates and presented during a WIFT-AT workshop (2012). ↩
33. Seeking support for distribution is also commonly a producer function, though the producer's roles has traditionally been to find a distributor or broadcaster rather than to become one themselves, as well as to submit projects to film festivals and public profile events. This is obviously in the process of changing, not just via crowdfunding but also as a result of user-generated material. ↩
34. The rest of this paragraph is based in part on an earlier version drafted for my doctoral thesis proposal. I am grateful to Jacqueline Wallace for suggesting that I revisit cultural intermediaries in this context. ↩
35. McRobbie also discussed this at some length in a talk given at McMaster University in February 2012. The video of the talk is posted at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-QMaaFITKM. ↩
36. Born mobilizes her own ethnographic work at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique (IRCAM) as deep and rich case studies through which to explore her theoretical inquiry. ↩