

In This Issue...

Theme: Crowdfunding and Media Literacy <i>Navigating the media and information landscape of crowdfunded projects requires skills possessed by media literate consumers and producers.</i>	02
Research Highlights <i>We explore Motivation, Roles and Identities, and Social and Political Uses for Crowdfunding.</i>	04
CML News <i>Tessa Jolls taught a half-day media literacy workshop for international visitors then visited Bhutan for a five-day training.</i>	09
Media Literacy Resources <i>An overview of different types of crowdfunding, and resources for more information.</i>	10
Med!aLit Moments <i>In this MediaLit Moment, your students will study crowdfunding and consider their own campaign.</i>	14

Theme: Crowdfunding and Media Literacy

If the phenomenon of crowdfunding were to take incarnate form, it might have the swagger of a cowboy wearing a 10 gallon hat. In 2015, crowdfunding platforms facilitated the exchange of nearly \$35 billion (Fleming and Sorenson, “Financing by and for the Masses,” p.6). Tall yet true stories abound. A plea for \$10 to make potato salad is met with donations totaling \$55,000 (Perry, “Caution! The Downsides of Crowdfunding”). In 2012, Dresden Dolls singer Amanda Palmer asked for \$100,000 on Kickstarter for her next album, and received pledges totaling \$1.2 million in 30 days from 24,883 people (Kickstarter blog, 4 June 2012). Since 2012, more money has flowed to the arts through Kickstarter than the National Endowment for the Arts (Mollick and Robb, “Democratizing Innovation and Capital Access,” p.76).

What draws the crowds to crowdfunding? Crowdfunding platforms offer greater access to and participation in the worlds of media and finance: access to capital for the small investors whom venture capital firms overlook; access to products and information before official release; the ability to participate in a crowdfund offering through feedback and advice to members of the start-up team. With larger campaign pledges, funders can have exclusive personal access to team members. And the participatory media envisioned by Henry Jenkins and other contemporary media scholars is alive and well on many crowdfunding sites. Media fans of all stripes have a chance to impress team members with their own work, and possibly, just possibly, participate in some of the creative choices of the startup team. The audience is clearly not made up of passive consumers.

But the hope--or demand--for participation in media is just the beginning. Information and judgment are the coin of the realm in crowdfunding. Information asymmetry—the difference in information between what the start-up team knows about the product, and what (often) inexperienced investors can learn about it makes gathering of reliable and credible information of paramount importance. And, how can one judge the quality of the product? Does it have a viable market, or a likely audience? Navigating the media and information landscape of crowdfunded projects requires skills possessed by media literate consumers and producers.

In addition to readying a product for distribution, fundraisers must use all the social media tools available on the crowdfunding platform (and perhaps others) to draw attention to the offering and update current funders on the progress of the campaign. Otherwise, funders may conclude that information is being withheld, and traffic to the project site may taper off. Even if the members of the start-up team have good social capital to work with, outside networks will likely be needed. Moreover, studies have shown that the most successful entrepreneurs on crowdfunding platforms tend to make pledges to other campaigns on the same site—essentially to build an internal form of social capital on the crowdfunding platform itself (Colombo, et al., “Internal Social Capital”).

In sum? With its outsized reputation, crowdfunding can lead audiences to thoughts of fast and

easy money, and visions of basking in the limelight, but it's the media and information literacy knowledge and skills that make successful campaigns possible.

In this issue of *Connections*, we follow a case study of three crowdfunding sites to dig into the novel motivations, roles and identities they generate. In our second research article, we follow the trajectory of a crowdfunding campaign for a Turkish film on LGBT youth to show how crowdfunding can accomplish social and even political objectives for fundraisers. In our Resources section, you'll find an overview of crowdfunding types and many articles for further reading. And, in our MediaLit Moment, your late middle school and high school students will get the chance to think closely about what it takes to create a successful crowdfunded campaign as they evaluate the project pages of both successful and unsuccessful Kickstarter campaigns.

Research Highlights

Crowdfunding: Motivations, Roles and Identities

Crowdfunding is an outgrowth of crowdsourcing, first described by *Wired* columnist Jeff Howe in 2006. Howe defines crowdsourcing succinctly in a 2008 YouTube video: “Crowdsourcing takes jobs that were once performed by employees and outsources them in the form of an open call to a large, undefined group of people, generally using the Internet.” Howe further remarks, “Crowdsourcing forces companies to approach us as potential partners. We do buy things, but we also participate meaningfully in the process by which those products are created. What we see from successful crowdsourcing projects is that they came up organically from people formerly known as customers, from the people formerly known as the audience. . . I like to think of the online community as the building block of crowdsourcing. It’s what the corporation is to the industrial era. It showed that people could come together and self-organize into productive units. What once took managers and a corporate hierarchy can now be done in the context of the community. The managers and the corporate hierarchy are now in the context of community.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0-UtNg3ots>

With crowdfunding, those consumers and audiences take on roles that Jeff Howe might not have anticipated in 2006—but it’s the entire panoply of motivations, roles, relationships and media identities generated through investment on crowdfunding sites which stand out as salient media literacy issues. In 1997, Liz Thoman wrote poignantly about consumer identity: “we learn quickly to yearn for ‘what we have not got’ and to take our identity from what we own or what we can purchase rather than from who we are or how we interact with others” (Thoman, “[The Gospel Challenge of Media Literacy](#),” CML Reading Room).

In “Crowd-Funding: Transforming Customers into Investors through Innovative Service Platforms,” Andrea Ordanini and her colleagues map out various roles and motivations for contributors with case studies of three crowdfunding sites. The first is SellaBand, which works to “unite artists and fans in an independent movement that aims to level the playing field in the global music industry” (Ordanini et al., p. 451). Through the online platform, artists can raise money from the SellaBand community in order to record a professional album. Once an artist reaches his or her investment target, the album is recorded, and all those who have invested receive a free limited edition copy of the CD and a share of the revenues generated by the artists.

The second crowdfund site, Kapipal, launched in 2009. It allows people to collect money for any purpose, from a group donation to a charitable organization to a personal project or a birthday or wedding present. A “Kapipalist” creates the request, collects money on the site, creates a web page, and manages collection by setting a target amount and duration of collection. Once the page is created, the URL address is shared with friends and anyone else who might wish to contribute.

Ordanini and her colleagues observe that “a significant proportion of crowdfunding participants in

both SellaBand and Kapipal shared a strong sense of identification with the proponents and/or projects being funded. In these cases, crowd-funding is a way to contribute to a cause in which participants believe, and typically people with the highest levels of identification are the first ones to invest” (456).

With regard to motivation, one SellaBand manager commented that, by investing in an artist, “you not only buy the music, you also buy the idea that you have made it possible, you are the one who discovered the artist, so you are part of the whole thing” (455). In terms of roles, funders on SellaBand essentially act as agents of the artists, selecting and promoting offerings that merit patronage, and being rewarded with a royalty on future sales.

According to the authors, the main motivation that drives consumers’ engagement in crowd-funding initiatives at Kapipal might best be labeled as ‘social participation.’: “Kapipal’s founder call this element ‘participation spirit,’ underlining a desire to take part in something that helps a friend or someone who needs money for a social or a personal cause. According to the founder, ‘Either in the case of social initiatives, where the charitable dimension dominates, or for more personal initiatives, the Kapipalist feels a strong sense of belongingness to the initiative, and gets satisfied because he senses the project is achieved, thanks to his contribution.’” (455).

Also launched in 2009, Trampoline represents the first example of crowdfunding in the financial sector. The platform is associated with a London-based technology firm that sells a software program which maps expertise and relationships within companies. Instead of raising money from a venture capital firm, Trampoline seeks to raise smaller stakes from a community of “smart private investors” (459). In addition, the platform is not a separate entity, but is organized by the the supplier itself to fund its proposed initiative. As one Trampoline manager stated, “There is no intermediation between supply and demand in Trampoline, but crowdfunding is used to seek for potential entrepreneurs on a specific and unique innovative project” (460).

While staff and contributors at Trampoline were clearly motivated by the prospect of high financial returns, managers noted that many funders, though interested in the content of the crowd-funding initiative, were most attracted to novel uses of the underlying technology platform, particularly in the context of social networking: “They perceive the potential of the crowd-funding business model, but they decided to invest because they want to be first, and they like the idea of using highly interactive tools” (455). One Trampoline manager described them as ‘experience investors’(ibid). Indeed, in interviews with staff across all three platforms, respondents agreed that consumers participated in crowd-funding websites because they liked engaging in innovative behavior.

The roles and motivations illuminated by Ordanini and her colleagues indicate there’s a rich field of media inquiry to be explored. Could funders on SellaBand become so involved that they begin to constrain artists’ creative choices? Could funders be inspired to seek out employment in the field? What kinds of satisfaction do Kapipalists derive from participation in personal initiatives as opposed to more social campaigns? Do some of these campaigns generate a

greater sense of agency for recipients than others? What are the pitfalls of “experience” investing, and the advantages, if any? Are there situations in which crowdfunding lends itself to the creation of media identities which are less than authentic? What do the emotional risks look like for funders? For fundraisers? Clearly, scholars in this area have far to go in defining the field.

The Social and Political Uses of Crowdfunding

On May 30th, 2013, Turkish police cleared a small group of protesters from Gezi Park at the heart of Istanbul. Demonstrators were opposing a government plan to demolish the park in order to rebuild an Ottoman-style army barracks with a high-end shopping mall. The state denied the right of citizens to protest, triggering a wave of anti-government demonstrations. In the following days, police forces violently cracked down on protesters; seven were killed, dozens were injured, and hundreds were taken into police custody.

On June 7th, 2013, 8 days after the protests began, an ad appeared in the *New York Times* which spread immediately through Turkish social media. The ad, titled “What is happening in Turkey?”, exclaimed, “The People of Turkey have spoken, we will not be oppressed!” Turkish public relations scholar Suncem Koçer writes, “The ad was unusual, not only because it sought to train the global spotlight on the Gezi protests, but especially because it was placed in the *Times* by an anonymous group of people. In fact, the ad ended with a note stating that it had been ‘crowdfunded entirely by concerned individuals from around the world.’ . . . The online crowdsourcing of funds by a faceless collective agency was a perfect match to the Gezi spirit marked by anonymous people’s collective will to speak up for their rights (Koçer, *Social Business in Online Financing*,” p.232).

Koçer explores crowdfunding as a “technology of publicity” which can draw public attention to media texts for which online funding drives are organized. As crowdfunding campaigns circulate through social media, they “forge publics around the related films, videos, stories and social causes around which these media revolve” (p. 232).

The full title for Koçer’s article, “Social Business in Online Financing: Crowdfunding Narratives of Independent Documentary Producers in Turkey,” draws on a definition by interpersonal communications scholar Jane Goodman: “A social business refers to the ends achieved in and through communication against a backdrop of larger questions of values, identity or power that form and emerge from particular interactions” (quoted p. 233). Koçer’s interviews with three documentary filmmakers illuminates a variety of ends for a social business. While the director of *My Child* worked to bring public visibility to the LGBT movement in Turkey, the team producing *Ecumenopolis* (2011) mounted a crowdfunding campaign to help ensure the full independence of their documentary—a step which allowed them to provide a holistic picture of the rapid urban transformation of Istanbul, and the creative freedom to follow a single migrant family from the demolition of their neighborhood to their ongoing struggle for housing rights. Mizgin Arslan, the producer of *I Flew You Stayed*, on the other hand, utilizes crowdfunding as a means towards

productive dialogue on the Kurdish issue, a matter for which traditional channels of communication have been foreclosed for some time.

Koçer suggests that the news blackout during the Gezi protests “opened up a productive space for empathy with the experience of Turkey’s Kurds, who have been subject to such a blackout for decades . . .With Gezi, however, this privileged state of ignorance was shaken, opening a reflexive space for dialogue about the Kuridsh issue, Turkish media and the state” (p.242).

Can Candan, director of *My Child* (2013) also referred to the “Gezi spirit” as he discussed the financing of the film. “How we made *My Child* is like how the Gezi movement happened. Anonymous people got around and supported this film, just like anonymous people were out in the streets to protect Gezi Park” (p. 232). Candan’s intent is to bring greater exposure to the issues raised by the film: “In Turkey, LGBT individuals are discriminated against in tremendous ways. They are also constantly the subject of prevalent hate discourse and crimes. These people and their experiences are rendered invisible in this society. . .At the same time, a group of very brave people set off saying, ‘we as parents of our LGBT kids will do something to change this.’ Parents at LISTAG (Parents of LGBTs in Istanbul) openly tell their stories. We all need to hear them” (quoted p. 237).

In December 2012, the crowdfunding campaign for *My Child* was launched on Indiegogo. At its conclusion in April 2013, the campaign raised \$18,000 of its \$40,000 goal. The campaign launched just before shooting started, and helped jumpstart the film’s budget of roughly \$200,000. According to Koçer, jumpstarting a project is critical in the Turkish cinema industry, where institutional resources for cinema production are not only more competitive, but also highly politicized. Indeed, in 2013 the Turkish Ministry of Culture added a new criterion to its selection of projects. In order to qualify for funds, applicant projects must comply with ‘the general morals of the Turkish family structure.’ From the ministry’s perspective, LGBT individuals and their families fail to meet those standards.

Though *My Child* was non-fundable by the state, and though the crowdfunding campaign did not reach its goal, Candan suggested that the campaign built a level of credibility around the project. “When we finally accumulated some money on Indiegogo, we could go and ask for money from institutions such as Amnesty International.” In fact, Amnesty international, the British Embassy and the Consulate of the the Netherlands donated between €10,000 and €25,000 to the production of *My Child*.

The campaign for *My Child* helped build an active public around the film. The influential mainstream daily paper *Hürriyet*—known for its homophobic and transphobic language—published a sequential interview with Candan and five LISTAG parents. Through this series of interviews with LISTAG and producers of *My Child*, news and discussion of the film reached an audience of 3 million people. A total of 2 years after start of production, *My Child* reached 16,000 people in movie theaters. In the same period, dozens of articles, interviews and news pieces features *My Child* and the LISTAG families appeared in newspapers. Several TV shows

hosted Candan and LISTAG families on national television.

One of the reasons that entrepreneurs choose to raise funds through a reward-based or pre-sales crowdfunding campaign is to test the 'proof of concept' for a product. Will people buy it and use it on a regular basis? With a film like *My Child*, proof of concept is found in a substantial audience for the film and the film's subjects. To use the language of the Core Concepts of media literacy, proof of concept has been achieved when the audience is willing to invest based upon the compelling rhetorical presentation of values, lifestyles and points of view.



CML's Tessa Jolls Leads International Media Literacy Workshop

The International Visitors Council of Los Angeles sponsored a half-day media literacy training by CML's Tessa Jolls at the House of Lebanon on May 11 for 22 delegates from throughout the world. The International Visitor Leadership Program, conducted by the U.S. Department of State, addressed the topic of "Media Literacy: Promoting Civil Society through New Media."



Monira A. Y. Tsewang, Chief of the Kingdom of Bhutan's InfoComm and Media Development Division, Department of Information and Media in the Ministry of Information and Communications of the Kingdom of Bhutan, organized a five-day "train the trainer" seminar conducted by Carolyn Wilson, Faculty of Education at Western University, London, Ontario, Canada and CML's Tessa Jolls in Paro, Bhutan, May 16-20.



Voices of Media Literacy

Want to read all 22 interviews from CML's Voices of Media Literacy project? Dr. Victor C. Strasburger is the most recent contributor to this important history. Read about the media literacy pioneers [here](#).



About Us...

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents.

The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communication that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

Resources for Media Literacy

A Short Introduction to Crowdfunding Types

While reward-based sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo dominate the imaginations of rock musicians and film makers, crowdfunding comes in at least a few different varieties.

Often called peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunded debt is a part of the larger revolution in “FinTech” (the combination of software and the Internet that has been disintermediating the traditional finance sector). Where banks typically serve as intermediaries, taking deposits from savers and issuing loans to borrowers, peer-to-peer lending platforms connect those with money directly to those who need it, allowing savers to earn more and borrowers to pay less by cutting out the middleman. Increasingly, peer-to-peer lending does not involve crowds. Instead loans are transacted on a truly peer-to-peer basis, with one individual making a loan to another. On other platforms such as Lending Club, Kiva, Zopa and Prosper, groups of individuals issue loans, with each investor funding a fragment of the overall loan. From 2009 to 2015, the volume of crowdfunded debt approached \$25 billion, easily surpassing other types of crowdfunding in the same period (see chart, Fleming and Sorenson, p. 9).

Equity-based sites, such as AngelList and CircleUp, offer a platform on which one can sell shares of a company. The history of such sites is brief and somewhat rocky. The *Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act* was signed into law in 2012, but it wasn't until October 2015 that Title III of the JOBS Act amended a section of the Securities Act of 1933 to allow for solicitation and advertising to unaccredited investors in a limited offering. Issuers are limited to an aggregate total of \$1 million in funds raised in any 12-month period, while prospective investors with an annual income or net worth under \$100,000 are limited to the greater of \$2,000 or 5 percent of their annual income or net worth. While angel investors have been around for some time, the history of equity crowdfunding platforms has yet to be written.

Charitable giving has taken some interesting turns on platforms like CrowdRise, where funders sometimes goad each other into greater levels of giving for the organizations of their choosing. Though it is not often spoken of, patronage is certainly part of the crowdfunding landscape, most notably in the field of journalism, where wealthy individuals and private foundations have been sources of funding for the last several decades. Perry Chen, one of Kickstarter's founders, writes, “The kind of system Kickstarter uses has been used for hundreds of years. Unlike Medici-style patronage, where the richest people in town give large amounts of money, Kickstarter's system relies on the general public for funding projects, and rewards those backers. Beethoven, Mozart, Walt Whitman and other artists like them were known to use this technique for first-run books and concertos” (quoted in Davidson and Poor, “The Barriers Facing Artists' Use of Crowdfunding Platforms,” p. 301).

Resources for Crowdfunding and Media Literacy

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Recommended Resources:

New Media & Society 17.2 (February 2015)

The entire issue is devoted to crowdfunding, and covers a wide array of topics, such as: crowdfunding as an avenue for video gamers to provide extensive feedback on games and customer experience; maintaining norms of autonomy and objectivity in crowd-funded journalism; crowdfunding civic projects; the disadvantages of introversion for fundraisers and the emotional labor of "surface acting" to keep funders satisfied.

No fewer than three articles discuss executive producer Rob Thomas' crowdfunding of a *Veronica Mars* movie after the television series had been cancelled. Working through theories of fan production by Jenkins and others, the articles grapple with the question of whether fans have (or should have) some means of appropriating the content and culture of their favorite media through their participation in the crowdfunding campaign, or whether they're essentially powerless to do so. Perhaps the most interesting of these is Matt Hills' article, which spends some time unpacking the implications of Rob Thomas positioning himself on the project site as a snarky fan commenting on the side, even as he takes the role of an executive with plenty of "above the line" clout to make final decisions on the film and crowd campaign.

Vargas, Frank, Jennifer Dasari, and Michael Vargas. "Understanding Crowdfunding: The SEC's New Crowdfunding rules and the Universe of Public Fundraising." *Business Law Today* December 2015. Web.

Good brief on changes in SEC rules regarding crowdfunding.

Rich, Jason. *The Crowdfunding Services Handbook: Raising the Money You Need to Fund Your Business, Project, or Invention*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2014. Decent book on the nuts and bolts of crowdfunding. Be careful, though. If you followed every one of Rich's recommendations for attracting potential funders to your site, you'd easily spend \$10,000 and work another 40 hours a week in addition to your day job.

Adler, Ben. "Let the People Pay." *Columbia Journalism Review* 53.4 (Nov.-Dec.2014): 19-21. Good food for discussion. There's a certain amount of moral outrage when larger players take to the crowdfunding stage. In this case, the *Huffington Post* decided to crowdfund a one-year fellowship for Mariah Stewart to cover the aftermath of Michael Brown's slaying in Ferguson, MO. Alex Koppelman, U.S. news editor for *The Guardian* tweeted: "FYI, everyone, I'm crowdfunding my lunch today. I can totally afford to buy it myself, but I'd rather that you pay for it."

Baucus, Melissa, and Cheryl R. Mitteness. "Crowdfrauding: Avoiding Ponzi Entrepreneurs When Investing in New Ventures." *Business Horizons* 59.1 (Jan.-Feb. 2016): 37-50. It's a good idea to have a conversation on the financial risks of crowdfunding. In one of our cited articles, Ethan Mollick and Alicia Robb argue in favor of the wisdom of crowds: "The crowd does not simply select projects: there seems to be strong evidence that the crowd does a good job performing due diligence on projects. Despite a lack of official oversight or controls, successfully funded fraudulent projects are rare. The amount of money pledged to projects that ultimately seem to have no probability of being delivered accounts for less than 0.1 percent of all pledged funds. This is not because of regulation, but rather because the crowd, collectively, is wise in spotting fraud. This is the principle of Linus' Law (named by Eric Raymond after Linus Torvald, the inventor of Linux): that any given problem is trivial to somebody with the right experience" (p.76).

Baucus and Mitteness, on the other hand, point out that, structurally speaking, crowdfunding campaigns aren't all that different from Ponzi schemes, with some of the same vulnerabilities to fraud. And they take readers on a historical tour of money lost by otherwise savvy investors over the last few decades—by investors who failed to ask pertinent questions, failed to conduct due diligence, and allowed themselves to be wowed by claims about the financial health of businesses that were fronts for Ponzi schemes.

Balnaves, Mark. "The Australian Finance Sector and Social Media: Towards a History of the New Banking." *Media International Australia* 143 (May 2012): 133-145. Balnaves reminds readers that crowdfunding of debt has its roots in the mutual societies of 18th century Britain; that the "mutuals" in Britain weathered the recent financial crisis in a way that traditional banks did not; that self-managed "mum & dad" superfunds in Australia now control \$418 billion in retirement savings; and that the current move towards peer-to-peer lending is a threat to the banking system that may be difficult for banks to remedy with appeals to the value and reputation of a brand. Entertaining and lucid throughout.

Byrnes, et al., "To Crowdfund Research, Scientists Must Build an Audience for Their Work." *PLoS ONE* 9.12 (10 December, 2014): 1-29.

While the article tends to focus on the need for scientists to try something they may be uncomfortable with, or that scientists need to build bigger and better networks to build a following for their work, what's most telling about this article is that some of the more successful scientists in this crowdfunding challenge simply did well in communicating the nature of their

work and its importance.

Goodman, Michelle. "Money for the Masses." *Entrepreneur* 41.6 (June 2013): 32+. Web. 10 June 2016.

Goodman follows the small group of entrepreneurs and investors who spent a year or more of their careers lobbying Congress and the SEC to finalize rules for crowdfunded ventures.

Chafkin, Mark. "Kickstarter Can Fund Your Dreams." *Fast Company* 174 (April 2013): 92+. Web. 10 June 2016.

Interesting article about the vision driving the Kickstarter founders.

Mandelbaum, Robb, and John Hersey. "Here Comes Everybody." *INC.* 36.4 (May 2014): 110-120. Decent overview.

Bartlett, Myke. "From Grassroots to Moon Nazis: How Fan Support Kickstarted a Ten Million Dollar Movie." *Metro* 173 (2012): 38-40.

Never mind the cheesy premise or execution of a film about Nazis invading from the dark side of the moon. The article includes this quote: "The film industry should take heart from the online support *Iron Sky* has received. Its success—and the fact that it was made at all—reverses the deeply held assumption that people expect the Internet to constantly provide them with free entertainment" (40).

Med!aLit Moments

Story Selling on Kickstarter

Starting a Kickstarter page may be the contemporary equivalent to buying a lottery ticket. Both hinge on dreams of making money quickly, and by chance. But, as Jason Best, Principal of Crowdfund Capital Advisors in San Francisco points out: “Crowdfunding is not an easy way to raise money. It’s a new way to do a difficult thing, which is raising money for a business. It enables you to more efficiently raise the money and shorten the time it takes to do so. But it takes a lot planning, a lot of preparation, and careful execution of your plan” (Assenova et al., “The Present and Future of Crowdfunding,” p. 125).

In this MediaLit Moment, your high school students will have the chance to imagine themselves in the position of the entrepreneur who wishes to raise funds on a crowdfunding platform, and learn the basics of creating a project page that’s likely to drive traffic to the site.

Ask students to evaluate the effectiveness of a sampling of Kickstarter project pages

Grade Level: 9-12

Key Question #5 for Producers: Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Core Concept #5: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Key Question #3 for Producers: Is my message engaging and compelling for my target audience?

Core Concept #3: Different people experience the same message differently.

Key Question #4 for Producers: Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles and points of view in my content?

Core Concept #4: Media have embedded values and points of view.

Materials: Computer with high speed internet access, LCD projector and screen.

Activity: This MediaLit Moment activity requires a little teacher preparation. Visit the Kickstarter home page, then look for the FAQ page, which will provide directions for establishing a Kickstarter account. There’s no need to worry about starting a project. Creating a minimal profile page is enough to establish your Kickstarter account. Next, search the site for the Kickstarter Creator Handbook. Read the section titled “Telling Your Story.” This focuses largely on putting together the project video. Next, spend a little time browsing successful and unsuccessful projects. Each time you open the Kickstarter main page, you’ll see showcases of successful projects, or projects in progress that are doing well. A site search for “unsuccessful projects” or “unfunded projects” should yield several failed campaigns.

For the activity itself, browse a few successful and unsuccessful project pages with your students, and ask relevant questions. Project videos are the first priority. These are essentially three minute elevator speeches which answer those **Key Questions for Producers:** Is it engaging and compelling? What is the project creator hoping to accomplish, why is it important, and what are the benefits for prospective funders? And, what’s inspiring the project creator to take the risk of creating the campaign? Ask students to evaluate the pages they’ve visited. If you have any time to spare, you might also want to take a look at the different features of the project page. How many backers are there for the campaign? Has the project creator been a backer for other campaigns on Kickstarter? Have backers posted any comments? Has the

project creator posted any updates? Generally, the more active the site, the more successful the project is likely to be.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, ©2002-2016, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.com>.