Reconnecting to the Citizen: Crowdfunding Research

Cynthia Bellas, MsEd. & Bio Regulatory Affairs, Chief Strategic Officer, IRB Advisors
Cortney Leach, MPA, MLIS Research Development Manager, U. Washington Information School
Summary

30,000 ft. view – Cindy

In the weeds: benefits and challenges – Cortney

Connecting to the citizen

A working vocabulary in science crowdfunding sites – Cindy (Experiment.com, USEED, Consano, Thinkable, RocketHub, Fundly, Indiegogo, SciFund Challenge, and Walacea)

Some lessons learned

Operational and policy considerations for universities

Conclusions and discussion
crowd·fund·ingˈkroudˌfəndiNG/ noun

the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

“musicians, filmmakers, and artists have successfully raised funds and fostered awareness through crowdfunding”
The 16.2 Billion Dollar Gorilla in the Room

- North America: 9.46
- Asia: 3.4
- Europe: 3.26
- South America, Oceania and Africa: 0.08
Business and Entrepreneurship

- Music and Recording Arts: 0.736 Billion US $, 4.54%
- Real Estate: 1.01 Billion US $, 6.25%
- Films and Performing Arts: 1.97 Billion US $, 12.13%
- Social Causes: 3.06 Billion US $, 18.9%
- Business and Entrepreneurship: 6.7 Billion US $, 41.3%

Billions US $ and Percentage
Astonishing Numbers

![Graph showing growth in US $ billions from 2012 to 2015.]

- 2012: $2.7 billion
- 2013: $6.1 billion
- 2014: $16.2 billion
- 2015: $34.4 billion
Why?

Percentage Success

Year NSF NIH
2012 24 17.6
2013 22 16.8
2014 23 18.1
2015 24 18.3

NSF NIH
Profile of Crowdfunding Donor

- Typical donor is between age 35 and 54
- 51% is female, middle class, educated
- Mother typically making medical decisions and philanthropic decisions
- Follows the philanthropy model rather than typical science funding
- Typical project raises about $12,000
Sponsored Research

FY 2015: 4,981 awards; $1.3B in grants and contracts

Crowdfunding

USEED: 30 projects, 2,981 donors, 3,185 gifts: $277,642
Experiment.com: 27 projects; 1,658 donors: $177,408
Consano: 3 projects; 190 gifts: $31,146
Why? Small investments can make a big difference

How do spammers harvest your e-mail address?

By Jeff Huang
Backed by Ben Chestnut, Alex Vaschillo, Mike Longwell, Anukul Voonaraghavan, Audrey Roy, Dustin Chang, Dan Knox, Thibault Labarre, Kristy Katzenmoyer, Bo Lu, and 5 other backers

$5,191 Raised
576% Funded on 5/31/12
Successfully Funded

Announcing the 2012-2013 Facebook Fellowship Winners

By Alex Hollander on Friday, February 17, 2012 at 8:02am

Brown CS News

Jeff Huang Wins An NSF CAREER Award For Modeling User Touch And Motion Behaviors For Adaptive Interfaces In Mobile Devices

Posted by Jesse Polhemus on March 1, 2016

When we’re balancing a tablet on our stomach to read in bed instead of holding a smart phone in one hand while pushing a stroller, why shouldn’t the user interface be context-specific and ability-specific?

Even a few years ago, asking this question would have been unthinkable or at least highly optimistic, but the pervasiveness of today’s mobile devices requires an answer. Assistant Professor Jeff Huang of Brown University’s Department of Computer Science is eager to provide it, and he’s just won a National Science Foundation NSF CAREER Award for his work on...
Why? Translate energy into outcomes

BiliCam: Join Us in Helping Babies and Families

GIZMODO

HUFFPOST PARENTS
Why? An exercise in citizen engagement

As you know, funds for NSF awards come from American taxpayers. Our elected officials want to be sure the money is put to good purpose. The public wants to know what we discover and why it is important. There has never been a more pressing time for Earth scientists to communicate their work to a broad audience.
Benefits: More than the money

- Seed funding = proof of concept, preliminary data = more competitive proposals
- Test the market: who cares about this?
- Increase visibility for research agendas and engage stakeholders and raise research funds at the same time
- Increase capacity of researchers to communicate and engage the public: “Your crowdfunding campaign is actually a crash course in the skills that you will need as a researcher in the 21st century.” (Jonathan O’Donnell, RMIT University)
Challenges and risks

- Faculty tenure and advancement
- It’s work, and a new type of work
- Reaching your audience
- Institutional brand
- Platforms: what do they charge (percentage, flat fee, set-up, institutional costs)? All or nothing targets? Terms and conditions, including IP?
- Institutional financial policies, regulatory and ethical oversight
- Does this change or compromise science?
Does this Compromise Scientific Research?

“Putting together a proposal that is attractive to the public does not have to be as scientifically robust as putting an application in to a panel of experts.”
“We don’t judge campaigns based on content, as long as the project is legal and tasteful, it has a shot.”
“There has been a lot of focus on trying to encourage more young people into science, but actually that is not the problem. There are a lot of people who want to do research, it is getting funded that is the issue.”

Natalie Jonk, Founder, Walacea
“If crowdfunding does become an appreciable part of the mix down the road then we might see more scientists deliberately thinking up projects that would have a direct public appeal.”

“But equally it might change how the public sees science. Scientists might become better at explaining the value of research that’s happening anyway, and non-scientists might become better at tuning in to it.”
Not so fast Dr. Kipping...

Help us find the first exomoon
by David Kipping

Help us find the first exomoon

PLEDGED
$12,247
BACKERS
219
MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR FUNDING
$10,000

This project was successful!
I do not think there is any thrill that can go through the human heart like that felt by the inventor as he sees some creation of the brain unfolding to success... such emotions make a man forget food, sleep, friends, love, everything.

(Nikola Tesla)
Avo is a unique self-cleaning fish tank. It requires no filter cleaning or water changes making fish keeping simple and beautiful.

- Created by
  - Susan Shelley / Noux
- 591 backers pledged £99,678 to help bring this project to life.
Unsuccessful Crowdfunding Project

- **Health and growth status amongst Cape Verdean families**
  - Biological anthropology
  - $199 raised of $10,000 goal
- **About the Researcher**
  - Ana Lucia Andre PhD candidate
    - [Loughborough University](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/)
    - School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences
  - Ines Varela-Silva, BSc, MSc, PhD, FHEA
    - [Loughborough University](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/)
- **Read Ana & Ines's Story**
- **Project Timeline: Start:** April 2014
Project = Success
Help fund the next wave of scientific research

Start an Experiment | Browse Projects

“This solution helps close the gap for potential and promising, but unfunded projects.”

Bill Gates
Let’s crowdfunding together.

Higher Education and USEED are partnering to unlock the potential of crowdfunding.
directly support innovative medical research that matters to you
CULTIVATE SCIENCE & INNOVATION THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU
RocketHub and A&E

Creative Studio by Ovation TV
Crowdfunding designed for artists

Featured Projects

- DUCK DYNASTY
- Extra Credits

RocketHub, NY, by A&E PROJECT STARTUP
Raise Money For Anything
Fundly is fast, easy and has no raise requirements.

START FOR FREE WITH FACEBOOK
Or use your email.
Ecuador Earthquake Relief Fundraisers
Together, we can help rebuild Ecuador. Support these relief fundraisers today.
SciFund Challenge

New SciFund paper! How do you succeed at science crowdfunding? Build an audience!

SciFund Challenge is a nonprofit that empowers scientists to shrink the gap between science and society. We train scientists how to connect to the public, back scientists in their outreach, and crowdfund to support research. The goal? A more science engaged world.
Could cannabis fight cancer in glioma patients? This clinical trial plans to investigate...
Operational and Policy Considerations

- What should a policy include? Contact Cynthia!
- Does institutional involvement create valuable endorsement, and what are the liabilities and risks, including ethical matters?
- Who controls marketing and campaigning?
- Managing expectations and returns. Should funding be restricted to small-scale feasibility studies?
- Should all funding pass via the University rather than directly to the PI? Should we charge overhead?
- Agreement of Terms and Conditions, including IP. Financial issues, such as income
- How do you know if it’s working? Institutional data considerations.
Crowdfunding offers some interesting possibilities!

Part of a faculty development, research promotion/engagement strategy?

Part of a diversified funding portfolio?

Reputational and ethical issues?

Publicly appealing projects may not reflect where research is needed.

Best for smaller projects?

Where does this sit in a university?
QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION WELCOMED

“There are no stupid questions, so let’s also agree there are no stupid answers.”