Call for Papers: New Media & Society special issue on crowdfunding.

Edited by Lucy Bennett, Bertha Chin and Bethan Jones

The concept of crowdfunding, where grassroots creative projects are funded by the masses through websites such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo has been steadily gaining attention in the last few years. The 2013 success of the Veronica Mars movie campaign, along with the successful crowdfunding projects spearheaded by musicians like Amanda Palmer and, most recently, actor Zach Braff, has raised much discussion surrounding the rich and powerful possibilities of this method of funding. However, the practice has also invited much criticism, not just of Kickstarter but also of crowdfunding in general. Among some of the most common accusations levelled at crowdfunding are: it is used by media conglomerates to exploit fans; successful artists using the scheme take money away from genuine independent producers who actually need it; and the time and money spent on delivering perks to donors detracts from the time and money invested in the actual project. However, others have argued that the existence of crowdfunding affords media scholars new ways of examining the role of the audience in television and film production, that fan agency needs to be more widely considered in discussions of fan exploitation, and that ‘fan-ancing’ is leading to a new business model for the financing of artistic projects that is free from studio or network intervention.

This special issue seeks to examine and unravel the debates around crowdfunding and thus brings together contributors from a range of academic disciplines. We are seeking papers that offer a wide range of perspectives on the processes of crowdfunding projects, from analyses of the crowdfunded projects themselves, to the interaction between producers and audiences, and to the role that Kickstarter plays in discussions around fan agency and exploitation. Thus, we invite proposals on, but not limited to, the following topics surrounding crowdfunding:

- Case studies of crowdfunding campaigns
- Fandom
- Unsuccessful crowdfunding efforts
- The role of the internet and social media in crowdfunding
- Producer/funder relationships
- Crowd funding in the music, film, television and games industries
- Anti-fandom
- The role of auteurs and cult names/media in attracting backers
- Fan exploitation and labour
- Rewards and producer accountability

Please send 400 word abstract proposals, along with a short author biography, by 20th June 2013. Please email these, along with any other enquiries, to bennettlucy@gmail.com, bertha.chin@gmail.com and bethanyjones@hotmail.com.

Final, selected, articles will be due during January 2014.