CultureCase

# Crowdfunding a regular income for cultural projects



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## Summary

This paper explores the behaviour of creators and patrons on the crowdfunding site Patreon. The researchers took data from the first 18 months of the site (2013-15) and found a number of patterns which reveal the best strategies for creatives to generate an income. The campaigns that get the most sustained income are those that communicate a detailed case for support, those using images rather than just text. Setting goals and releasing ‘thank you videos’ were also associated with funding success. Patreon offers creatives the means to ask for sustained subscriptions or pledges. The site makes it easy for patrons to cancel their pledge packages. Although on average the number of new donors tends to outnumber the number of cancelled pledges, patrons are likely to cancel their subscriptions if they feel that creators’ promises have not been kept.

## Crowdfunding through Patreon and similar sites can be a viable alternative to putting out sponsored or advertiser-funded content

Although the vast majority of campaigns during the first 18 months of Patreon received zero pledges, it was a mechanism for some creators to establish a sustainable income stream. The study found that of those who did attract pledges ‘the top 1 per cent of creators (about 250) crowdfund a monthly income of at least $2,500. The top 5 per cent, or about 1,200 creators, receive more than $750 monthly. Thus, a substantial number of creators receive a steady revenue stream via Patreon, presumably big enough to focus their time and energy, at least partly, on their creative work’.

# The picture of pledge behaviour at Patreon matches that seen at other crowdfunding sites

It is likely that the available income (and number of successfully funded creatives) at Patreon and other sites has increased since this study was concluded. More research would reveal how best to maximise revenue from crowdfunding as it becomes more familiar to artists and the public.

## Keywords

**income** **crowdfunding**

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