



# 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



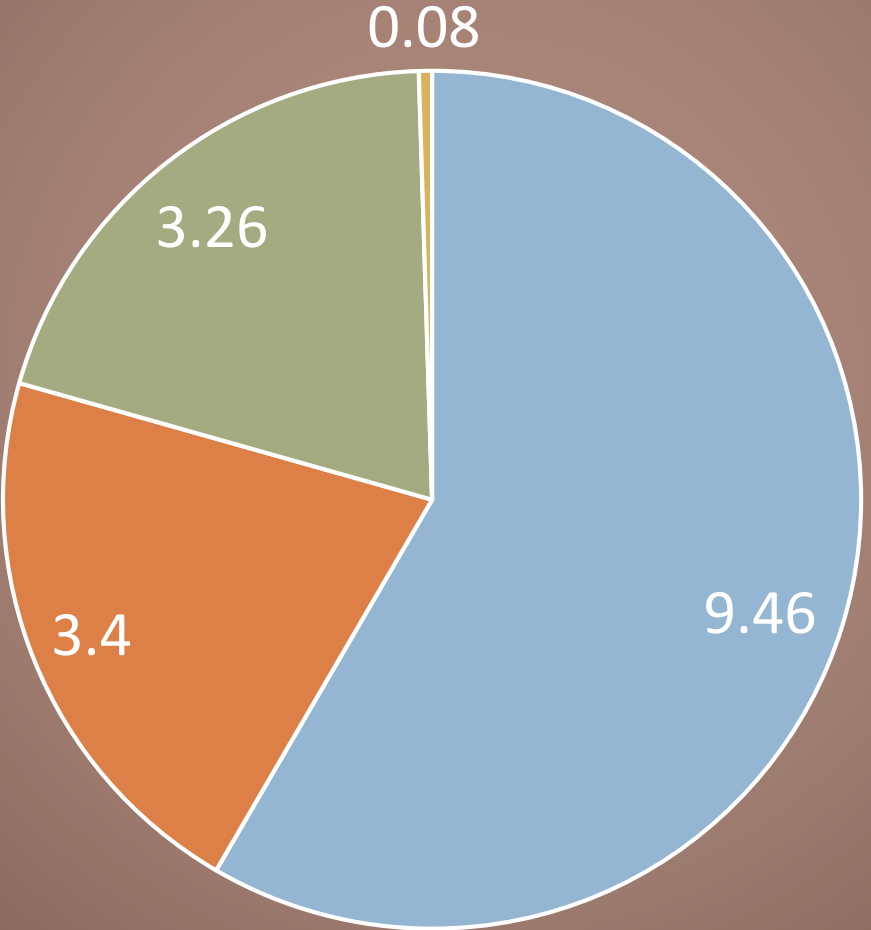
## Definition

crowd·fund·ing 'kroud, fəndiNG/ 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.

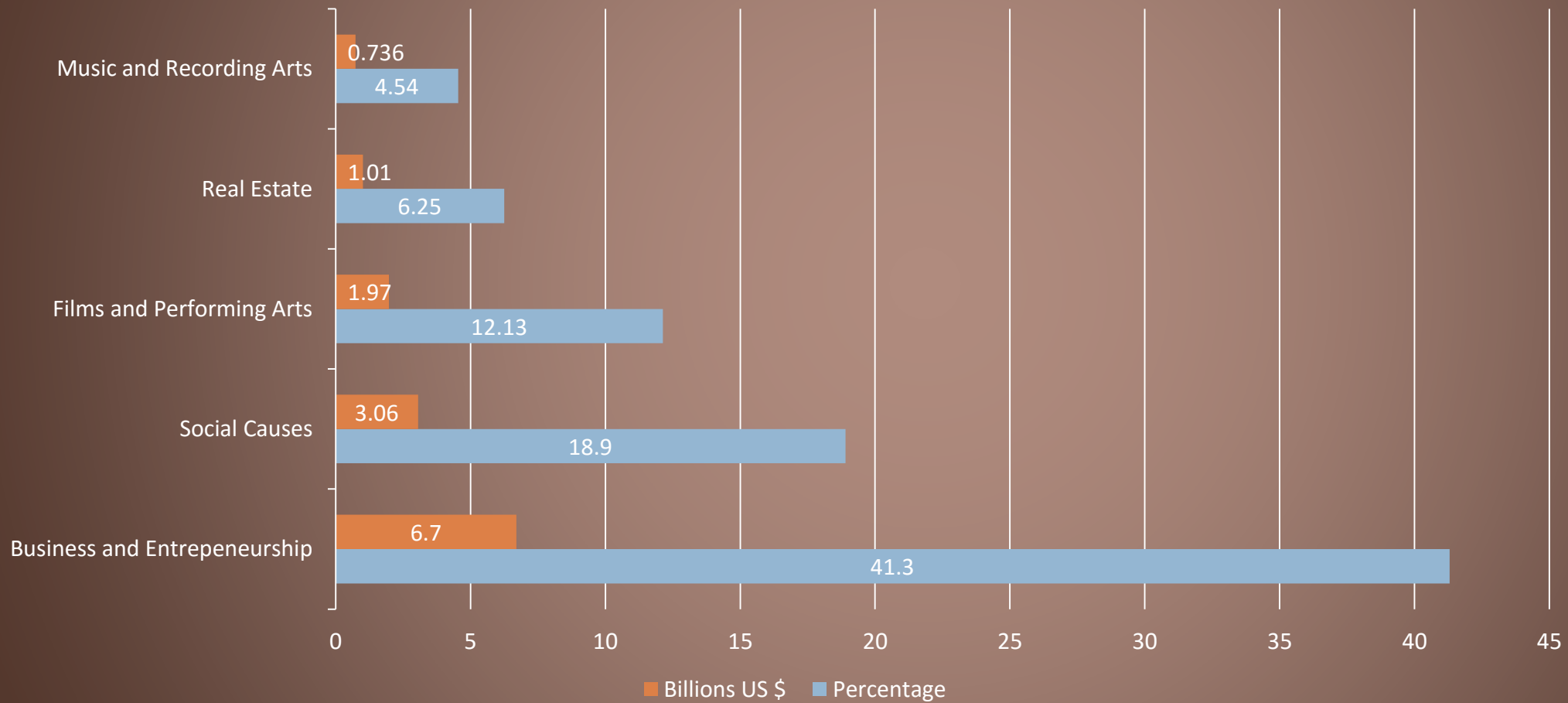
“musicians, filmmakers, and artists have successfully raised funds and fostered awareness through crowdfunding”

# The 16.2 Billion Dollar Gorilla in the Room



■ North America ■ Asia ■ Europe ■ South America, Oceania and Africa

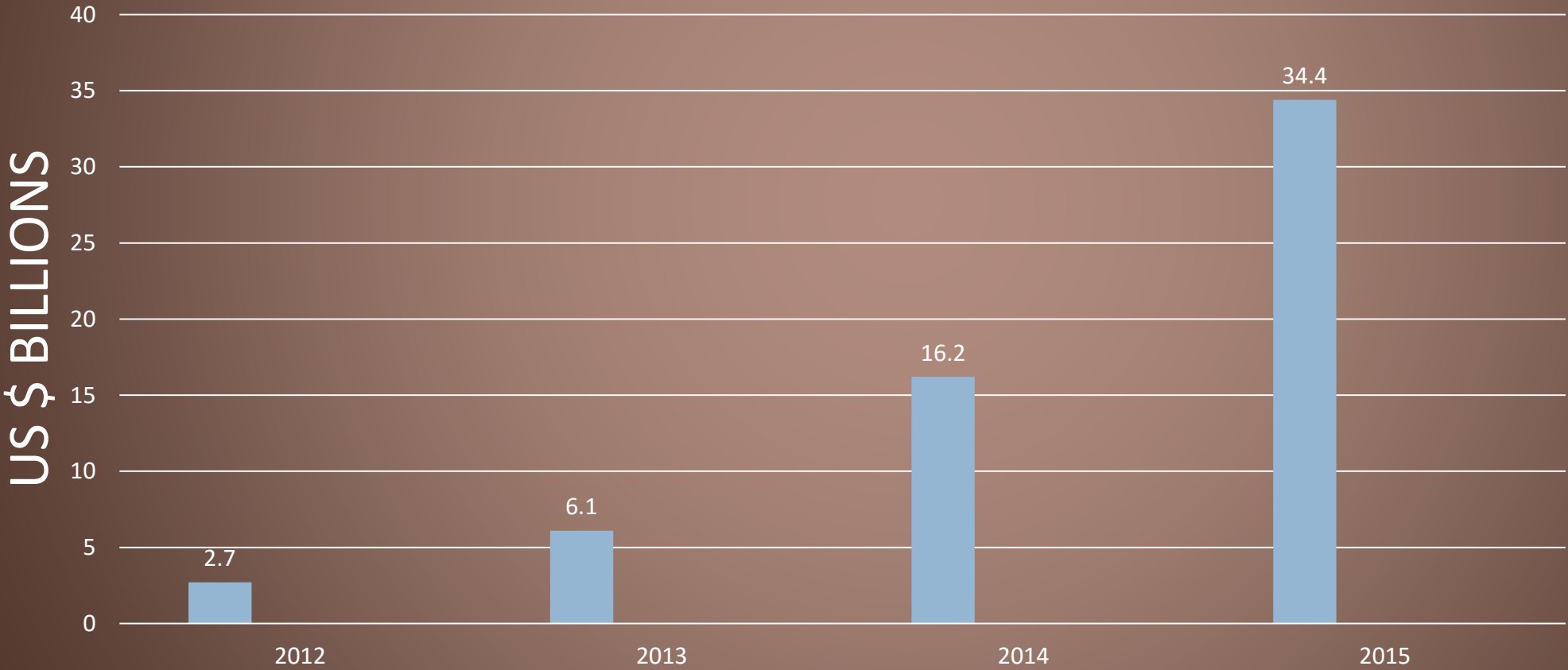
# Business and Entrepreneurship



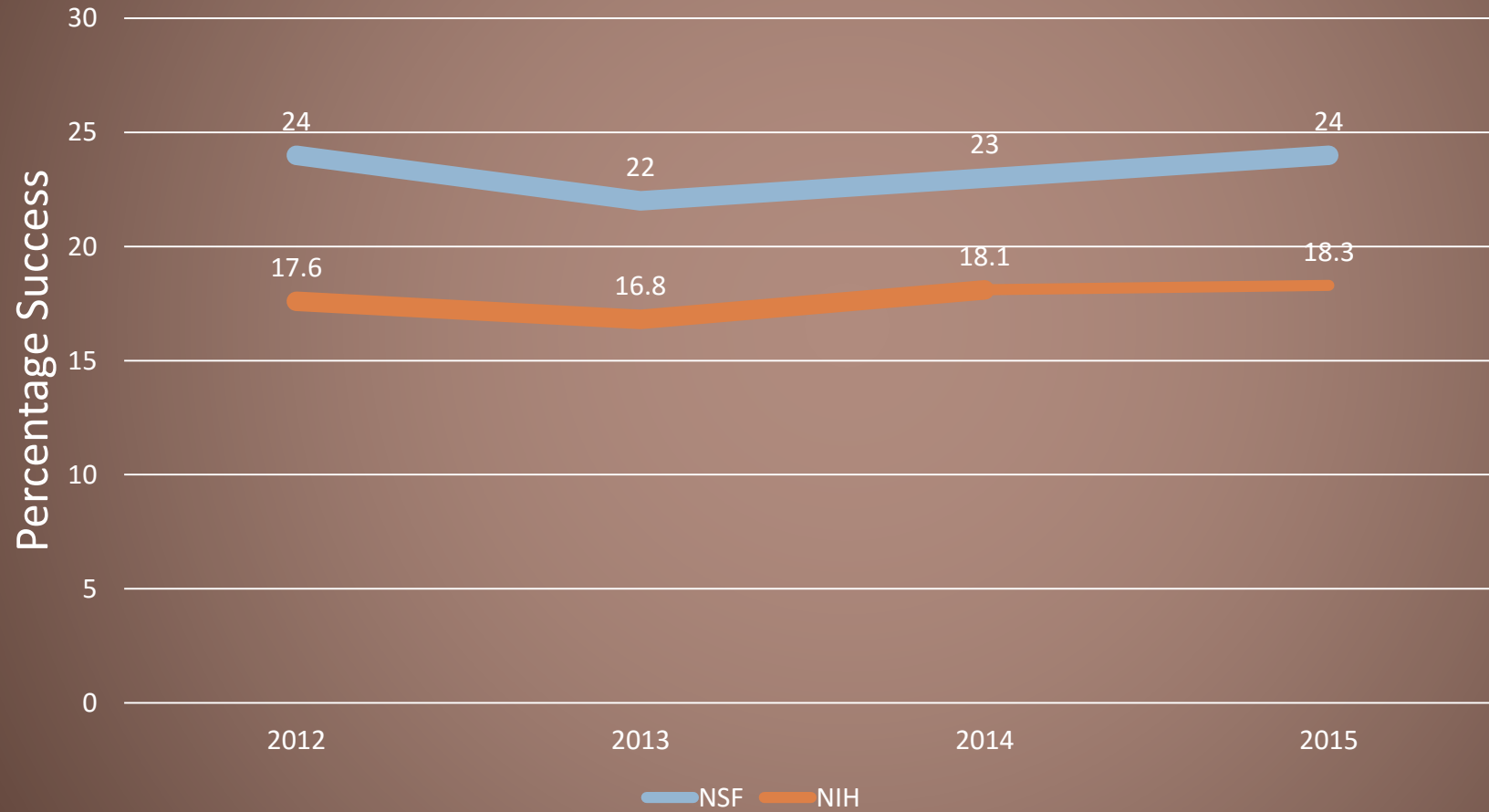
# Astonishing Numbers



Growth



# Why?







## 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



# @ University of Washington

## 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 Veeraraghavan, Audrey Roy, Dustin Chang, Dan Knox, Thibaut Labarre, Kristy Katzenmeyer, Bo Lu, and 5 other backers



**\$5,191**

Raised

**576%**

Funded on 5/31/12

Successfully Funded

? How does this work?

University of Washington Computer Science Social Science Tax Deductible

## 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

**NBC NEWS** HOME TOP VIDEOS ONGOING: ISIS TERROR PARIS TERROR

U.S. WORLD LOCAL POLITICS HEALTH TECH SCIENCE POP CULTURE BUSINESS INVESTIGATIONS

## Jaundice Detection On Your Phone



Seattle, Washington

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [c](#)


NBC NEWS CHANNEL

A new app, still under development, aims to help parents detect jaundice in infants using a special color target, and regular cell phone photos. KING's Michael Konopasek reports.

**GIZMODO**

**HUFFPOST PARENTS**

## BiliCam: Join Us in Helping Babies and Families



**\$4,400.00**  
Raised of \$25,000

Double

Now through Safe...  
donation will be do...  
support of the...  
Foundation. They h...  
for dollar, any do...  
'BiliCam: Join Us...  
Families', up to \$50...

**BiliCam** @bilicamapp · 6 Jan 2015

Thank you to [@engineer4change](#) for including us on their "ten of the year's promising technologies for global development!"



**10 Promising Global Development Technologies - ...**

The open-source movement has been making good design accessible and the crowd has funded dozens of global development technologies. These are our top ...

[engineeringforchange.org](#)

# Why? An exercise in citizen engagement

NSF Div. of Earth Sciences *EAR to the Ground* Newsletter, Winter 2015

## UPDATE FROM THE DIVISION DIRECTOR



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?

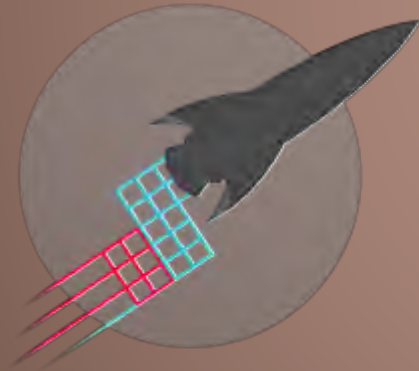


“Putting together a proposal that is *attractive* to the public does not have to be as scientifically robust as putting an application in to a panel of experts.”



## Does this Compromise Scientific Research?

“We don’t judge campaigns based on content, as long as the project is legal and tasteful, it has a shot.”



ROCKETHUB

*An EFactor Group Company*

## Opportunity

“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



## Transforming the PI and the Public

“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.”



# Citizen Interest





Not so fast Dr. Kipping...

# Help us find the first exomoon

by [David Kipping](#)



0 DAYS LEFT



PLEGGED

\$12,247

BACKERS

219

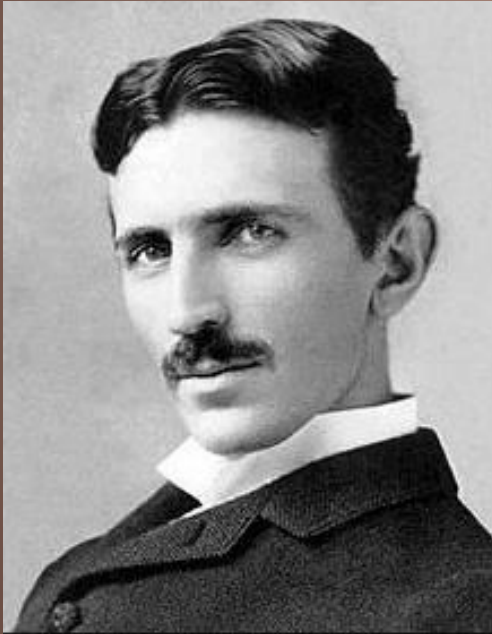
MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR FUNDING

\$10,000

122%

This project was successful!

## It's the Passion that Counts



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)

# Successful Crowdfunding Project

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.
- <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/avo/avo-the-self-cleaning-tropical-fish-tank/description>





# 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](#)  
School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences

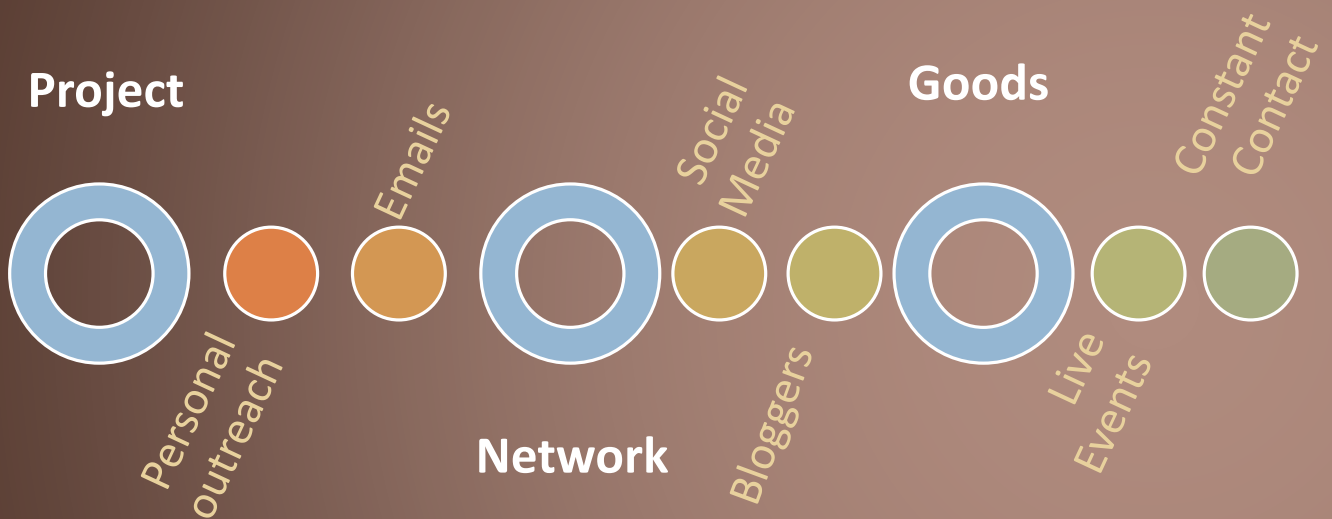
- **Ines Varela-Silva, BSc, MSc, PhD, FHEA**  
[Loughborough University](#)

- Read Ana & Ines's Story

- **Project Timeline: Start: April 2014**

- <https://www.consano.org/projects/39-health-and-growth-status-amongst-cape-verdean-families>





= Success


# Experiment.com (formerly Microryza)

[Experiment.com](https://Experiment.com)

**experiment**  [How it Works](#) [Sign up or Login](#)

## 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*



USEED

USEED

USEED

[WHY CROWDFUNDING](#) [SOLUTIONS](#) [EXPLORE USEED](#) [BLOG](#) [CONTACT US](#)

# Let's crowdfund together.

Higher Education and USEED are partnering to unlock the potential of crowdfunding.

LEARN  
MORE

LET'S  
TALK

# Consano



[how it works](#) | [my basket](#) | [log in](#) | [gifts](#)



[DONATE](#)

[Consano](#)



— directly support innovative medical research that matters to you —

# Thinkable



## Thinkable

thinkable

DISCOVER LOGIN OR SIGNUP

CULTIVATE SCIENCE & INNOVATION  
THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

SEE HOW IT WORKS



# RocketHub and A&E

Partnership: Ovation TV & RocketHub Team Up [Find Out More](#)

**ROCKETHUB**  
An EFactor Group Company

Success School Our Movement News Join Login

## Creative Studio by Ovation TV

Crowdfunding designed for artists

**OVATION** **CREATIVE**  
studio [Find Out More](#)

### Featured Projects

- DUCK DYNASTY** *Espira*
- Satellite
- EXTRA CREDITS™**  
click to play  
Extra Credits

RocketHub, NY, by  
A&E PROJECT  
STARTUP



Fundly

Fundly



[Benefits](#)

[How it Works](#)

[Fundraising Ideas](#)

[Blog](#)

[Search](#)

[SIGN IN](#)

[START YOUR CAMPAIGN](#)

# Raise Money For Anything

Fundly is fast, easy and has no raise requirements.

[f START FOR FREE WITH FACEBOOK](#)

Or use your [email](#) .



Feedback & Support

# Indiegogo

## Indiegogo

The image shows a screenshot of the Indiegogo website. At the top left is the **INDIEGOGO** logo in pink. To its right are navigation links for [Explore](#) and [How it works](#), followed by a search bar with a magnifying glass icon. On the top right, there is a pink button labeled **START A CAMPAIGN**, and links for [Sign Up](#) and [Log In](#).

The main banner features a large background image of a city at night with mountains in the distance. On the left side of the banner is a vertical strip showing a grid of various fundraising campaign thumbnails. The central text in the banner reads: **Ecuador Earthquake Relief Fundraisers**, followed by the subtext: "Together, we can help rebuild Ecuador. Support these relief fundraisers today." A white button with the text **VIEW COLLECTION** is positioned at the bottom right of the banner area. On the right side of the banner, there is a smaller image showing a person sitting at a desk with a laptop and papers.

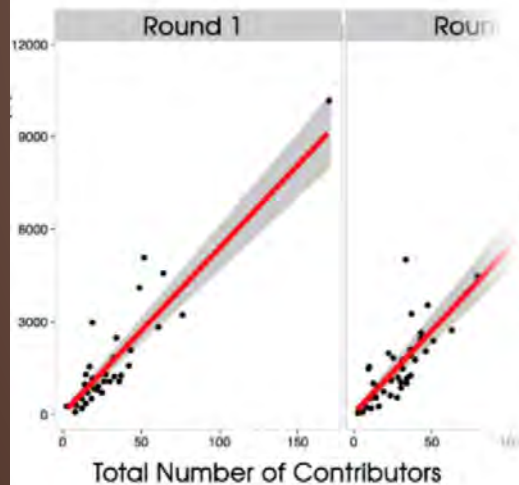


# SciFund Challenge



Search the site ...

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [BLOG](#) [#SCIFUND UNIVERSITY](#) [#SCIFUND CROWDFUNDING RESOURCES](#)



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



## WHO WE ARE

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.

## E-MAIL LIST

[SciFund Challenge](#)

Walacea

Walacea

[CROWDFUND SCIENCE WITH US](#)

[OUR BLOG](#)

**WALACEA**  
back science you believe in

[ABOUT US](#)

[LOGIN/REGISTER](#)



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.



## Conclusions

- 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 & Answers

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION  
WELCOMED



"There are no stupid questions, so let's also  
agree there are no stupid answers."