Homework 1 Questions

1. What are three conclusions we can make about Kickstarter campaigns given the provided data?

Looking at the first pivot chart that compares general categories to the state of Kickstarter campaigns, theater stands out as having the greatest number of successful campaigns, with music and film & video following. Theater campaigns also failed most frequently, which suggests it is probably one of the most popular categories on Kickstarter. In addition, USA data appears to be a good microcosm of the total data, most likely because the largest share of the data is taken from US campaigns.

Moving to the second pivot chart, plays greatly stand out as having the largest number of both successful and failed Kickstarter campaigns, which is not surprising given the observations mentioned previously on the theater category. Campaigns on plays appear to be the most submitted sub-category.

Lastly, the third pivot chart shows that a greater proportion of Kickstarter campaigns are successful compared to either failed or cancelled campaigns. The failed and cancelled state categories seem to stay pretty consistent over time, but successful campaigns start to decline slightly. Finally, each year sees an increase in the total number of Kickstarter campaigns launched, meaning campaigning on Kickstarter has gotten more popular over time.

1. What are some of the limitations of this dataset?

Many of the characteristics of each campaign is assigned somewhat arbitrarily. For example, a campaign is determined as either successful or failed depending on an initial goal amount, but there does not appear to be any kind of regulation on this amount. Some campaigns have goal amounts listed as little as $1, which is not representative of a true campaign and makes success appear too easy and predictable.

Similarly, the length of a campaign seems to be arbitrarily determined as well. This makes it impossible to compare two different campaigns, especially if one campaign is much longer or shorter than the other.

Finally, generally speaking, more data is always preferred, especially if taken over a greater time period.

1. What are some other possible tables/graphs that we could create?

A quick glance suggests that one of the greatest predictors of success is based on whether a campaign was spotlighted (TRUE/FALSE in column “M”). In fact, using a filter or chart reveals that every single campaign that was spotlighted did succeed in reaching its initial goal.

It would also be interesting to compare how the duration of a campaign, as measured from the launch date to the deadline, correlates with either success or failure.

Similarly, a chart that compares the average donation size with a campaign’s category can show which categories get the largest donations on average. This can further be divided by sub-category, country, etc.