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

* It’s surprising, but the sheer number of playmakers who have sought funding via Kickstarter for proposed plays is more than double the next highest category, music. They must have found Kickstarter was an efficient way to raise capital for paying actors, purchasing props, and funding other production activities. However, it looks like over a third have failed in terms of funding goal or been cancelled so there is risk. I was familiar with Kickstarter prior to this activity but did not realize the breadth of categories using the platform to raise funds.
* The technology category has the highest percentage of cancelled campaigns. This may indicate the risky, complex, and very competitive market for consumer technologies. An entrepreneur may start with an idea but find midway through it is not feasible.
* The count of states by year is telling. The number of campaigns peaked in 2015 then took a dive in 2016 to 2017. This may reflect an early enthusiasm in the market for crowdfunded ventures which gave way to a crowdfunding hangover. Or, it’s possible Kickstarter changed some requirements for potential campaigns meaning fewer made it through.

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

* Kickstarter hasn’t been around long, so we don’t have an extensive data set to determine if there is periodicity of some kind over time. Does campaign volume ebb and flow from year to year? In addition, the first few years were very early in the adoption cycle for Kickstarter, so are not indicative of what a steady-state might look like. Also, it would be helpful to know the “seriousness” of the campaign prior to listing on Kickstarter. For instance, how much pre-work is required to show that the submitter of a campaign is truly intent on reach the goal of the campaign? Have they raised any funds privately? Do they have to put up any of their own capital from the get-go? Do they have a prototype? We don’t know so we can’t draw conclusions about one’s chances of success given their pre-Kickstarter position. Kickstarter campaigns also often provide an inspiration promo video of some kind and blog about progress. What is the activity of the campaign space on the site? Is it actively updated or left idle for long periods of time? Some data on campaign traffic would be interesting.

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

* It would be interesting to see the number of backers per campaign per year. This might give an idea of how Kickstarter’s popularity has grown or decreased over time among those funding the campaigns. Even more interesting would be backer data that provides unique IDs for each backer. We would then know growth of new backers and how many are returning to pledge funds again with new campaigns. It would provide additional context around the growth of Kickstarter and its effectiveness at retaining customers. Likewise, it would be interesting to see data on returning campaigners. The data might show if there are successful serial campaigners and what the common thread might be for meeting a campaign goal. We could do the same for total funds pledged. We could also see which projects were the most popular based on total funds pledged and number of backers. It looks like 2013 was a year with at least two very popular campaigns gaining more than 20k backers each. Since 2013, we haven’t seen such popular campaigns (see worksheet “BackersCount”). We might also chart the timeline of the campaign. Does it correlate at all with success?