1. **Given the provided data, what are three conclusions we can draw about Kickstarter campaigns?**

First, we can conclude that being showcased by the website (my interpretation of the spotlight variable) is a strong predictor of success for any kickstarter project. In fact, among projects (i.e. projects that were either successful or unsuccessful, not “live” or “canceled”) the probability that the project was featured in Spotlight is 1 – a perfect fit.

Table 1. Successful and Unsuccessful Projects by Spotlight Status

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Row Labels** | **Spotlight = False** | **Spotlight = True** | **(blank)** | **Grand Total** |
| Other Outcomes | 1929 | 0 | 0 | 1929 |
| Succeeded | 0 | 2185 | 0 | 2185 |

Second, we can conclude that Kickstarter is primarily an English-language phenomenon. The country filter on the pivot table “Pivot\_Project Status by Cat” leads to the notable conclusion that the vast majority of the projects surveyed took place in the United States and the United Kingdom. A deeper dive into this observation provides emphasis.

Table 2. Project Status by Main Language of Originating Country

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Language** | **canceled** | **failed** | **live** | **successful** | **(blank)** | **Grand Total** | **% Success** |
| English | 319 | 1416 | 43 | 2111 | 0 | 3889 | 54% |
| Not English | 30 | 114 | 7 | 74 | 0 | 225 | 33% |

Not only are projects from countries where English is a primary language far and away more numerous than those from non-English speaking countries[[1]](#footnote-1) but there are notable differences in success rate as well. 54% of projects from English-speaking countries that were resolved (i.e. succeeded or failed) were successful. 33% of resolved projects from non-English speaking countries were successful. A chi square test reveals that this is significant at the .05 confidence level. It is interesting that this is without controlling in any way for the possibility that the projects from non-English speaking countries were still posted in English.

Third, the assigned pivot table of Kickstarter project outcomes by month shows an interesting tendency in the number of projects on the site to rise in the (Northern Hemisphere) summer and decrease in the wintertime. While there are mild monthly fluctuations in failed and canceled projects (plus or minus 25 or so) the main fluctuations are in the number of successful projects, which spike at about 250 in May and then bottom out at slightly more than 100 in December. The conclusion we can draw from this chart is that success rates for projects are highest in the early summer and lowest around December (probably not coincidentally around the time of the holiday season).

Chart 1: Number of Canceled, Successful, and Unsuccessful Projects by Calendar Month

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

One limitation of this dataset is that we do not know how it was produced or what it represents. According to Kickstarter there have been more than 460,000 projects launched over its lifetime[[2]](#footnote-2). Wikipedia states that some 200,000 of those were launched by February 2015[[3]](#footnote-3). While the 4114 projects included in this dataset represents an acceptable sample size, we do not know whether the projects were randomly chosen or chosen base on some metric. Put simply, if the projects were not randomly chosen, the conclusions gleaned about Kickstarter projects at large may or may not be accurate. I am especially suspicious that this dataset is not randomly chosen considering the perfect statistical correlation between Spotlight projects and success. Statistics quoted in Wikipedia would seem to confirm the suspicion that this does not reflect reality[[4]](#footnote-4).

Given that the dataset does represent a sample of the larger universe of Kickstarter projects, it is notable that theater projects are represented so disproportionately in the dataset. Kickstarter statistics confirm that theater projects represent a fairly small portion of Kickstarter’s total projects (roughly 2.5%)[[5]](#footnote-5), while in the dataset, theater projects represent more than 33%. This further validates the suspicion that the sample is not representative, and could affect many of the conclusions we might make about our data – specifically, trends that are only true of theater projects could look like they are true of any project because so much of our data comes from theater.

The lack of a key for certain data points can be considered a limitation. For example, in section one above I was forced to admit to my assumption that the “spotlight” variable indicated that the project had been featured on Kickstarter’s main / landing page (what is now called “Featured Project”). There is an alternative explanation, which is that it is one of the set of projects listed as “recommended”, slightly less prominently but still on the landing page. What exactly is meant by “spotlight” is unclear.

Comparing funding values would be easier if the data included a standard currency amount such as adjusted US dollars. Getting something like a typical funding request would require converting, say, Swedish kroner into US Dollars, and doing so at the exchange rate for each separate year (as exchange rates vary over time).

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

Project State by Year, which shows Kickstarter projects trending upwards from the launch of the site in 2009 on to about 2015, followed by an interesting drawdown from 2015 onwards.

Chart 2. Project State by Year

Category by country allows us to look at the breakdown of projects in each country by category of project. Some interesting national trends are observed especially for countries whose numbers of projects could be considered statistically significant such as Canada, the UK, and the US. For example, theater projects (which were discussed under question 2 as being disproportionately represented in the dataset) represent more than 50% of the UK’s total portfolio of Kickstarter projects while representing less than a third of US projects.

Chart 3. Category by Country

One way to evaluate success rates is to look at the percent funding for successful versus unsuccessful projects. Here it is done for all countries with more than ten projects total. We see that the typical failed project in all countries gains virtually no traction, being funded by under 10%. Successful projects are much more variable. Successful Danish projects exceed their funding request by only about 15%, while just across the border, the typical German successful project garners nearly 350% of the requested amount.

Table 3. Percent Funding for Successful and Unsuccessful Projects by Country

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Failed** | | | | **Successful** | | | |
| **Country** | **Number of Projects** | **Average of goal** | **Average of pledged** | **% Funded** | **Count of id** | **Average of goal2** | **Average of pledged3** | **% Funded4** |
| Australia | 41 | 199,632.12 | 5,003.93 | 3% | 19 | 18,449.68 | 26,583.24 | 144% |
| Canada | 64 | 26,412.03 | 2,232.91 | 8% | 64 | 6,962.89 | 9,708.40 | 139% |
| Denmark | 6 | 64,000.00 | 1,600.83 | 3% | 4 | 39,750.00 | 45,805.50 | 115% |
| France | 10 | 24,069.00 | 1,819.30 | 8% | 10 | 2,594.00 | 3,238.77 | 125% |
| Germany | 27 | 45,857.78 | 1,148.52 | 3% | 23 | 23,386.96 | 81,685.16 | 349% |
| Ireland | 4 | 51,875.00 | 65.50 | 0% | 8 | 12,806.25 | 17,400.15 | 136% |
| Italy | 19 | 52,152.63 | 2,456.37 | 5% | 7 | 17,411.43 | 39,031.98 | 224% |
| Netherlands | 14 | 134,253.57 | 5,512.29 | 4% | 2 | 28,500.00 | 33,589.00 | 118% |
| Spain | 9 | 973,357.67 | 3,620.78 | 0% | 11 | 17,145.45 | 42,703.82 | 249% |
| Sweden | 9 | 1,276,432.11 | 18,031.67 | 1% | 7 | 32,928.57 | 40,571.22 | 123% |
| United Kingdom | 205 | 12,678.95 | 979.27 | 8% | 366 | 4,032.88 | 8,875.17 | 220% |
| United States | 1097 | 48,912.99 | 1,522.75 | 3% | 1651 | 10,553.78 | 19,327.92 | 183% |
| Grand Total | 1530 | 60,556.39 | 1,855.53 | 3% | 2185 | 9,866.99 | 18,579.28 | 188% |

1. **Bonus**

1. English speaking is defined as countries where English is spoken at home by the majority of the population, so nominally English-speaking countries like Hong Kong and Singapore are excluded [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.kickstarter.com/help/stats> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kickstarter> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.kickstarter.com/help/stats> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)