

Research Summary

Topic

Crowdfunding for K-12 Schools

Research Method

Competitive Review

Description & Collection Method

In order to compare competitive tools for crowdfunding for education, 4 web sites were visited and analysed for what tools they offered and how effective they were for educational purposes. The analysis first started by listing a variety of general observations made on first visiting the site and then focusing on specific details. Then, the web site was observed from the view of the potential user for clarity and ease of use. Finally, information to answer specific research questions was collected.

Research Questions

The main questions asked about the tools were:

- Do they charge fees?
- What is the focus of theme of the site?
- Who is the target audience?
- Is there a category for or focus on education?
 - If so, what tools do they offer that cater to schools?
- What differentiates the sites?
- How easy is it to start a campaign?
- How likely do the campaigns look to get funded?

Competitor Descriptions

A review of the findings of each tool is as follows:

	Charge fees	Education Focus?	Strengths	Weaknesses	Tools to connect to communities
GoFundMe	Yes	Category	Not too many restrictions. No deadlines. Ease of use.	No community connections. Fees.	No

Kickstarter	Yes	No, focused on creative projects.	Theme of everyone getting a chance.	No education support. No money if goal not reached.	No
IncitED	Yes	Yes	Various education-focused categories. Flexible fees.	No community connection.	No
USeed	No fees	Yes. College level. Community projects through schools	School profiles & application process are good for legitimacy.	Application process may be restrictive.	Easily connect to school web site

Other Tools for Future Research

Indiegogo

Upstart

AdoptAClassroom

UniSprout

DonorsChoose

Findings Overview

Many of the sites viewed relied mostly on the campaign runner's own network in order to raise their necessary funds. They did not provide any tools that directly allowed local communities to connect with one another in order to support each other. Many of the sites also had high focuses on making money and catering fee schedules to fit people's needs. The school profiles may provide good sources in which to build trust and a sense of legitimacy. They also might provide a platform to build tools for community connections on. Campaigns on sites like USeed seemed to have a high likelihood of getting funded, but on other sites many non-funded campaigns seem to disappear from view and you only see new and highly funded ones. Schools may need help to build networks in order to help bring in views and potential donations.