

Running Head: THE FILMMAKER EXPERIENCE ENGAGING, CO-CREATING, AND  
BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH THEIR AUDIENCES

“We Couldn’t Do This Without You”: The Filmmaker Experience Engaging, Co-Creating, and  
Building Community with Their Audiences

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“You have to live spherically - in many directions. Never lose your childish enthusiasm - and things will come your way.”

— Federico Fellini

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**Abstract –**

This research looks at four different case studies of filmmaker-audience collaboration using narrative and autoethnographic methods. Each separate narrative outlines the individual filmmaker's experience and provides a voice for filmmakers in the research. Analyzing the cases together, an understanding of how filmmaking with an audience differs from other types of filmmaking begins to form. I argue that the main differences in this kind of collaborative filmmaking are: (1) the idea of keeping the actual versus imagined audience in mind, (2) knowing how and when to incorporate audience feedback, and (3) the performance of a number of communications and public relations skills that would not necessarily be a part of a regular independent film project.

Keywords: Collaborative filmmaking, crowdfunding, narrative research, autoethnography, filmmaking practices, participatory culture.

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## **Pre-Production**

### **The Pitch: An Introduction**

We are experiencing a very tumultuous and exciting time for independent filmmakers. New digital technologies have changed the viewing habits and expectations of audiences, which in turn has changed distribution models and traditional sources of funding. These new technologies have contributed to the diminishing of conventional filmmaking funds and big studio deals. For example, in the spring of 2017 the Canadian Media Fund (CMF) announced their new funding structure had a 5.8 per cent budget decrease for the upcoming fiscal year, just the latest in several cuts to funding for creative media products (Ferreira, 2017). They have also provided independent filmmakers with new, and direct communication channels with their audiences. The participatory culture of media products, enabled through various online tools and platforms, have created media audiences that want to engage and connect with their media products on a deeper level. Audiences want to communicate with creators, and contribute their own creative elements and perspectives (Jenkins, 2008; Rose, 2012; Shefrin, 2004). Through collaboration with their audiences, creative producers can potentially find alternative routes to establishing resilient careers. These will help them weather the current climate of decreased grants, and other diminished opportunities in traditional funding and exhibition methods. There is a need to research the opportunities generated by new methods of connecting to audiences and how these methods impact creative careers.

Creative producers, who want to successfully sustain careers in various media industries, need to understand this shift in audience expectations. They need to focus on creating ways to enable audience participation at all levels of production, while carefully balancing and negotiating their own needs for creative control and authorship. The purpose of this narrative

research study is to understand the experience of filmmaker-audience collaboration, from the filmmaker's perspective. This perspective has been gained through the filmmakers' own narratives, and by observing their online communication with audience members.

### **The Filmmakers**

The following four filmmakers are the primary participants in this research study. Other filmmakers from previously existing research into collaborative filmmaking are also occasionally discussed.

#### Jodi Cooper – *The Woodsmen*

As an independent filmmaker myself, answers to questions about building an audience and establishing a resilient career are very important to me. My filmmaking partners and I have experienced the barriers of traditional funding gatekeepers, and we saw the potential in attempting to reach our target audience directly on a crowdfunding platform. Being well aware of the failure rates of filmmakers asking for thousands of dollars, we knew it would be no easy task to: (a) connect with a potential audience, (b) engage them with our idea, (c) provide room and opportunities for meaningful collaboration in order to attract the active audience cohort, and (d) inspire them to part with their dollars in order to see our collective vision come to fruition. Not to mention with a Kickstarter<sup>1</sup> campaign, like the one we used, it is all or nothing. Meaning we had a mere 30 days to raise our entire budget (\$12,000) or we would not collect any of the funds that had been pledged. With my educational background and research interests, a lot of the strategy for this collaborative communication fell to me. Then the whole filmmaking team

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<sup>1</sup> Kickstarter is a crowdfunding platform where creators of all kinds (artists, musicians, filmmakers, designers, engineers, etc.) can network with interested people globally to pool funding contributions to create their products. "To date, tens of thousands of creative projects — big and small — have come to life with the support of the Kickstarter community" ("About us [Kickstarter]," n.d.).

worked together to operationalize the plan across the online platform, social media, events, and news interviews that we planned and participated in as part of our fundraising efforts.

*So finally, we turned to crowdfunding. It wasn't the first choice for this project, but it sort of came around. And then, by the end of it I don't think I could see another way to have put this project together. – Jodi*

Our project *The Woodsmen* was crowdfunded on Kickstarter where “101 backers pledged CA \$14,287 to help bring this project to life” (Cooper, Cooper, Howsam, & Wight, 2017). We used the Kickstarter platform to keep our backers up-to-date. We also use the *Five Year Plan* Facebook page where we have 704 likes and 714 people following our posts as of April 2019 (Cooper, Cooper, Howsam, & Wight, n.d.)

Lucas Burnie - *Were-Wool: The Indie Creature Feature*

Lucas Burnie is a full-time independent filmmaker based around the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario. He has an Honours Degree in Film Studies from Brock University and Post-graduate Certificate in Advanced Television and Film from Sheridan College. His collaborative film project *Were-Wool: The Indie Creature Feature* sought funding on Kickstarter in the summer of 2017.

*I definitely think I would call it collaboration. I didn't set out to create a space for collaboration, but in my preparation before launching the Kickstarter campaign I was aware of the idea and importance of building an audience and engaging them in a way that would make them feel directly involved, rather than just a dollar value and a prize. I think most (if not all) successful projects have that in common. The only experience I've had with crowdfunding is on my own. It's been different than what I am used to. It sounds strange but it's sort of been restricting and freeing simultaneously. – Lucas*

Lucas' project *Were-Wool* was crowdfunded on Kickstarter where “72 backers pledged CA \$20,280 to help bring this project to life” (Birnie, 2017). Lucas is active on Kickstarter keeping his backers up-to-date. He also uses his project Facebook page where he has 108 likes and 113 people following his posts as of April 2019 (Birnie, n.d.).

Curt Jaimungal – *Better Left Unsaid*

Curt Jaimungal is a full-time independent filmmaker in Toronto, Ontario. Curt is also the founder of IndieFilmTO, a non-profit filmmaking incubator for indie filmmakers. His project *Better Left Unsaid* will be an open source documentary where his audience will have access to his unedited material in order to create their own film if they choose. Curt originally sought funding for this project in the fall of 2018.

*I'd say I'm an artist at heart, and then I'm an entrepreneur by training. The entrepreneur in me knows that you can't just make a film and hope it gets seen. This is what Indie FilmTO is about. I created the opportunity for collaboration deliberately because I want to innovate on the film form with each film I create. The more educated audiences are, by taking tools and collaborating with these tools and collaborating with each other, everyone is doing better. Because everyone is more aware of how stories work. – Curt*

Curt's project *BLU* was crowdfunded on Kickstarter where “29 backers pledged CA \$6,867 to help bring this project to life” (Jaimungal, 2018b). This project also had an Indiegogo campaign where it raised “\$7,629 CAD by 44 backers” (Jaimungal, 2018a). Curt uses the Kickstarter platform to keep his backers up-to-date. He also uses his project Facebook page where he has 79 likes and 84 people following his posts as of April 2019 (Jaimungal, n.d.).

Trevor Hanley – Trevor Production

Trevor Hanley<sup>2</sup> is a part-time independent filmmaker in Ontario. He has run two successful crowdfunding campaigns and has built an audience on social media. For his *Trevor Production* he decided not to use crowdfunding, but to continue to crowdsource some elements of his film (like actors, locations, music, etc.). He started promoting this current project on Facebook in late winter/early spring 2018.

*We post BTS [Behind the Scenes] like crazy. Photos and video. Some behind the scenes on set Livestreams had 3-6k viewers. Films shape culture, philosophy, and are the absolute greatest art form. – Trevor*

Trevor uses his production company Facebook page to keep his audience up-to-date, where he has 1320 likes and 1340 people following his posts as of April 2019 (Facebook, n.d.).

Each of the selected filmmakers had at least one previous film credit and their work had been screened by audiences. These four filmmakers happen to each be creating films in Ontario, Canada. However, they are each part of the broader national and global community of filmmakers who are creating content accessible to a wide audience.

**Location Scouting: Where We Find Ourselves as Filmmakers Today**

Filmmakers are dealing with a changing landscape. They need to adapt to new funding models and to more engaged audiences who want insider access to information behind the scenes and who want to collaborate on the films themselves. In the next section I look at how the existing literature outlines this new landscape for filmmakers, including the declining traditional

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<sup>2</sup> Trevor Hanley requested that his name, project, and production company name be kept out of the final report. Trevor Hanley is a pseudonym that will be used throughout this report. Both the pseudonym and generic production title were chosen so as not to be distracting to the reader. More on the methodology behind this in the Crewing Up section.

funding models, the new active audience, opportunities and challenges from new digital platforms, and the questions of creative authorship.

*What really led me to crowdfunding was partially seeing so many people go a certain route, the standard route, and see the success and failures, the trials and tribulations of that. – Lucas*

### **Declining Traditional Funding Models**

Studios are struggling to adapt to the new technological changes, audience segmentation, and consumer demands. Critics worry that the “studios and the agencies and exhibitors that orbit them are too sprawling, too slow-moving, and too entangled in a dizzying web of antiquated business practices and associations to respond effectively to the digital era” (Lang, 2017, para. 4). This has led to a drastic reduction in the amount of money available for new and independent filmmakers because big studios have become more risk adverse.

For independent filmmakers, especially in Canada, the long staple of government grants and funding opportunities are also dwindling. In 2012, the National Film Board of Canada was issued a \$6.7-million funding cut, which meant “less assistance to filmmakers; three to four fewer major projects per year; 73 jobs eliminated...” (Dixon, 2012, para. 3). Even more striking is the fact that these cuts came to an established national organization, one that had the previous year (2011) received two Oscar nominations (Dixon, 2012). On top of cuts, there are also outright terminations to funding sources. The industry has announced the end of long-time grant opportunities MuchFACT, BravoFACT, and BravoFACTUAL (Girard, 2017; Pinto, 2017).

*I would say that the structure of the industry makes it really hard to get traditional funding anymore. I don't even really know if there is such a thing as traditional funding anymore. More and more people are just making their films out of their own bank*

*accounts, remortgaging their homes, you hear all of these stories. The industry unfortunately it's like one of those catch 22s. They want you to have done it and have a proven model, and you can't prove a model (laughs) unless you have an opportunity to make a film. - Jodi*

These changes have left independent filmmakers with little choice but to adapt to the new technologies. Technologies that allow for direct communication with audiences and may be the key to building new business models.

*Some of my communication with my audience has been simple emails or even texts. One of the people who have helped fund it by giving a few thousand, has called, they called me beforehand and asked me about the project, and then funded it. Because they wanted to know [more about the direction of the film], obviously if they're going to invest so much money. – Curt*

Filmmakers are also discovering that through these new technologies their audiences are talking back. While direct communication with audiences might be the way forward to overcome declining funding, this new audience has expectations of contributing to the filmmaking process.

### **The New Active Audience**

Many things have been said about the rise of active, participatory audiences that have emerged with the connectivity of the online environment. They are the “people formerly known as the audience” (Rosen, 2006, para. 1). Their transition from passive observers to active contributors has led them to be termed “users,” as co-creators of media products they can even be called “producers” (Bruns, 2006, p. 276), which acknowledges their combined role of media producer and user. Their participation in everything from re-tweeting content, to making decisions about what and how content becomes a hit media product, has led to understanding the

“audience-as-pusher” (Reinhard, 2009, p. 9) or publicity partner. The new participatory audience is fan, consumer, and producer (Jenkins, 2002). They are not necessarily creating new content, although this happens as well. Rather, most of the time their involvement is about extending existing content (Bruns, 2006) through the remixing, sharing, distribution, and dialogues they have in their “pusher” role (Reinhard, 2009). Filmmakers need to learn to tap into this mindset if they want to engage with their audience.

*The main thing with that I think especially when we were crowdfunding was to give this sense that now they're a part of something bigger than just a donation. – Lucas*

The role of the audience as understood by scholars has transitioned from very passive spectatorship with the advent of film, to semi-active viewing and consuming for television, to very active and creative users with new internet technology (van Dijck, 2009). Three main motivators have been identified for these active audiences: entertainment/novelty, career/aspirational, and family/community (van Dijck, 2009, pp. 50-51). One or more of these three key areas seem to be the driving force behind each individual audience member’s desire to participate in the media they enjoy.

In this digital landscape with participatory audiences, the new role of the media creator or filmmaker is to establish a direct relationship with the audience because a successful relationship will enable a producer to have a repeat audience for future projects, which will impact the longevity of the media producer’s career (Reiss, 2010). By listening and engaging with audiences, producers will be able to craft the kinds of films that audiences want and fill a gap in the industry. I believe that knowing that the film would be exactly what audiences were hoping for, before dedicating the time to watch a film, would be valuable. This is because modern audiences are bombarded with content. This knowledge would help to lower some of the costs

identified for audiences in viewing a film, specifically around the psychological commitment involved in understanding a storyline or plot (Potter, 2009). Open dialog, and creating shared worlds and community before viewing, might help to give the reassurance to the audience that they will get exactly what they are looking for in watching the film. This open communication will also help to expand the audience, who “gravitate to those messages with the highest value, meaning those messages with the lowest costs to them personally in comparison to payoffs” (Potter, 2009, p. 77). By lowering some of the non-financial costs of films, filmmakers may be able to use these channels of communication to bypass traditional funding models or prove dedicated viewership when applying for further support. Finding stories that an audience base is drawn to and wants to see is some of the work required to increase an audiences’ commitment to a project.

*I knew that it was a story that was like a ripe fruit sitting there. Everyone wanted to see a [film on this topic]. But what we recognized was that there's demand and no supply. It's like perfect to get an audience behind it. So, I looked at it and said "Ok." – Trevor*

Giving the audience the highest value has always been part of producer-audience relationships, where audiences have influenced cultural and media products through their purchasing power all along. Theorists agree that the difference now is that audiences are more active and have better tools to organize as a collective group to wield influence (van Dijck, 2009; Jenkins, 2002; Rose, 2012). Producers create films that are held in the public sphere, which means that audiences have access to them, engage with the storylines and characters on a personal level, and feel a sense of ownership in the final creative product (Rose, 2012; Shefrin, 2004). This sense of ownership can be expressed through the desire to attain a producer’s credit through contributions to a filmmaker’s crowdfunding campaign (Trigonis, 2016). Many active

audience members show their desire for greater creative ownership of the storyline as expressed through “fan culture” practices; writing fan fiction, attending conventions, and creating ‘zines (Jenkins, 2002; Jenkins, Itō, & boyd, 2016; Reinhard, 2009). Mark Deuze (2005) suggests that filmmakers will need to learn how to tell co-created stories with their audiences in order to satisfy audiences’ participatory desires (para.18). Some of this shift is already evident in the crowdfunding boom, which has helped foster a “DIWO, or Do It With Others” (Trigonis, 2016, p. 99) mentality, that expands beyond merely raising funds to make a film. Filmmakers need to look at the processes and byproducts surrounding filmmaking, in order to create room for their audience to participate. One way that filmmakers are doing this is through crowdsourcing.

*So, we crowdsourced extras. We crowdsourced locations. We crowdsourced crash mats. That was something that we needed for one of our dangerous fight scenes, we needed crash mats. And so, Rob from the team sent out a Facebook post that said that he was looking for crash mats. Then through, like, friends of friends of friends... All of a sudden, the connection was made to a local karate dojo and we were able to borrow crash mats for the weekend. – Jodi*

Technology is playing a large role in the ability of filmmakers, and other creators, to provide spaces for audience participation in their projects. At the same time these new audience roles are saving filmmakers time and money during their production process.

### **Opportunities and Challenges from New Digital Platforms**

Using online platforms to better understand audiences and their wants before setting out to make a film is now becoming common practice. Filmmakers are releasing proof-of-concept trailers to assess potential interest in subject matter and making requests for everything from initial story research assistance, to props, locations, and special effects contributions, to final

scoring elements (Trigonis, 2016). While crowdfunding alone does not signify a fully participatory project (Telo, 2013), it is at its very base a form of audience engagement. Research shows that many of the reasons that audience members give to crowdfunding projects reflects the same patterns of motivators for other types of audience participation (van Dijck, 2009; Leibovitz, Roig Telo, & Sánchez-Navarro, 2015). The strongest of these motivators being a sense of community, with a personal connection to the filmmaker or filmmaking team directly (Leibovitz et al., 2015). This would suggest the idea that a sense of familiarity, and community, encourages audience members to participate, feel connected, and potentially contribute funding dollars to a film project. Filmmakers have turned to online crowdfunding platforms and social media sites to create this sense of personal connection, by establishing community with their audience. At the same time, they are maximizing their potential viewership internationally.

Online platforms help to create a sense of community, however many theorists suggest that online communities do not have the same level of personal connection as off-line communities (Bird, 2003; Shirky, 2009; Turkle, 1997, 2011). Elizabeth Bird (2003) studied online fan boards, where she could assess what the online space meant to members and how they felt engaged with their fan objects beyond viewership. She concluded that "electronic communities are not identical or interchangeable with more traditionally-understood, place-based communities, but they may indeed provide a 'sense of place' to their members, and fulfill some of the functions of other types of communities" (Bird, 2003, p. 57-58). Filmmakers have to work hard to ensure that they are not only meeting their audiences needs in terms of the film or cultural product created, but that they are also meeting their audience's expectations in terms of personal connection, engagement, and creative participation to provide communal benefits.

*My relationship to my audience for this project, well I'd definitely say, I mean the obvious answer is that it's collaborative. I feel that them choosing to be a part of this, you know, making that financial contribution automatically makes them a collaborator in the process of the filmmaking. I guess the relationship is just like one of just two people, you know? It's like a direct connection with them. So, it's me and them just being, like "Ok, this is what I have, this is what we've gotten so far, you know? Your \$20 donation has helped us get to this point." – Lucas*

While new technologies have made it easier to directly engage and create spaces for audience participation, this new level of collaboration places expectations on the filmmaker to incorporate audience ideas and suggestions. As the audience provides feedback and influences the final film, the lines of creative authorship can become blurred.

### **Questions of Creative Authorship**

In their article *On the Sale of Community in Crowdfunding: Questions of Power, Inclusion, and Value* researchers David Gehring and D.E. Wittkower (2015) ask questions about what the creator or filmmaker is obligated to offer a fan funder. What do filmmakers owe their audience if they are interested in building a meaningful relationship? This question is especially important when "donations are not investments, nor do they lead to partial ownership. ...perhaps the primary appeal in donating to these projects lies not the promise of any particular material return for their donation, but the feeling of participation in the creative process" (Gehring & Wittkower, 2015, p. 65). This requires that filmmakers look at the various stages in the creative process, to decide how and where to open up areas of participation for audience involvement. This may require filmmakers to reconsider the intended final product that they had originally envisioned when setting out to make the film.

The idea of participation might not always mean artistic input, but for the Veronica Mars fan funded film it became clear that backers wanted and expected an authoritative say in the process right through to distribution. "If we help fund it, we get a seat at the table..." (Riechers, 2014, para. 2), said one backer on the online comment board. Having dedicated fans who were demanding a say caused some real creative internal debate for filmmaker/director Rob Thomas:

I had some desire, as a filmmaker, to take Veronica in a slightly new direction and do something adventurous with her. Or, there's the "give the people what they want" version. And I think partly because it's crowd-sourced, I'm going with the "give the people what they want" version... but it was a creative debate I had with myself, and I finally made the decision..., "Let's not piss people off who all donated. Let's give them the stuff that I think that they want in the movie." (Sepinwall, 2015, para. 37)

Author Bethan Jones (2013) sees this mostly as a positive sign that filmmakers feel accountable to their fan funders, but also asks what happens to the story when filmmakers change their creative vision to give their audience what they want (para. 3.9). Does something potentially get lost in the artistic process? There is the risk that the public does not necessarily know what they want. Will pandering to audience desires hinder the ability to have films that challenge our perspectives as a society? And finally, what is the impact of this process on the filmmaker themselves? Besides the work of filmmaking itself, what else has now been included in the practices of collaborative filmmakers?

*I think the thing that a lot of people don't realize, there's a huge time commitment to developing a well thought out Kickstarter page, you know? There is a lot of time and effort that goes into organizing things, and you want to have graphics, you want to have*

*images, you wanna have your pitch video. I'm not sure I'd be able to do it all by myself again, because that was pretty taxing. - Lucas*

The focus of most existing research looks at audience engagement from two perspectives, the first being fan agency and the second the potential for fan exploitation that this element of participatory culture has unlocked. However, questions of what audience participation means for the filmmaker's own creative process, claims of authorship, and potential for overall social impact have not yet been fully addressed.

This research fills a gap in current research by looking at the impacts of participatory audiences on filmmakers. It begins to provide filmmakers with a voice to discuss their roles, experiences, processes used to engage audiences, and their thoughts on the overall social impact. It also looks at how filmmakers communicate about collaboration with their audiences, how these participatory relationships are maintained over time, and what the professional costs and benefits are, as seen by the filmmakers themselves.

### **Crewing Up: Research Methods and Identifying Participants**

The purpose of this narrative research study is to understand the experience of filmmaker-audience collaboration, from the filmmaker's perspective. It focuses on the filmmaker's own descriptions of these experiences, while paying attention to the public communication at various stages of production. In this section, we will look at how the research design came together in order to support the goal of understanding the filmmaker experience. This will include the discussion of the research focus and questions, the research methods, identification of research subjects and the difficulty in securing participants, and an outline of the participant survey.

### **Research Focus and Questions.**

This research project used the following as guiding foci:

- Focus on the experience of filmmakers, as they pursue active, collaborative relationships with their audiences through various stages of production.
- Explore the nature of these relationships, as observable via online platforms and through filmmaker narratives.
- Discover themes of best practices in stories of filmmaker-audience collaboration.

The main research question for this research project was:

- What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers?

The sub-questions for this research project were:

- Why and how do filmmakers build/maintain relationships with their audience?
- How/do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship? Could this have broader cultural implications?
- What do filmmakers' narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmmaker and audience?

I had identified a number of key concepts from the literature that might play a key role in the experiences of participatory filmmakers. Henry Jenkins' (2016) definition of participatory culture outlines a community that adopts democratic methods for recognizing a diverse, plurality of voices. The contributors recognize that they are "capable of making decisions, collectively and individually" (Jenkins et al., 2016, p. 2). This led me to design questions that would probe how my filmmaker participants developed their own methods to recognize their audiences' voices and encourage decision making contributions. Awareness of the declining funding models

was used to help understand some of the contributing factors that might have led each participant to collaborative filmmaking.

*When I moved back here it was kinda like starting all over. We didn't have the equipment again, we didn't have a crew, we didn't have start-up capital, we didn't have any of that. And so, I stopped and I thought about it and I was like "What if we took the same concept and we scaled it down?" And we did crowdsourced funding, but the things that they got for their contribution had real value. I was like, "Either I've got to stop making films, cause we're starting from scratch, or we've got to find a way to build fast." – Trevor*

Using a qualitative line of questioning, I focused on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ in the filmmakers’ narratives of experience.

## **Research Methods**

Narrative research focuses on stories told by the participants to the researcher. This creates a partnership for analysis in which the researcher looks for themes that can be identified in the stories (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 1993). This creates the “strong *collaborative* feature of narrative research as the story emerges through the interaction or dialogue of the researcher and the participant(s)” (Creswell, 2013, p. 71). Using a collaborative approach to study collaboration seemed like a natural fit, blending the experience of more than one filmmaker to attain a more comprehensive perspective, using my own experiences as a framework for reference.

I used a case study approach to help me create boundaries for my research, rather than looking at a complete life narrative of my filmmaker participants. For this study each case was one film project for each filmmaker, where a specific level of participation or collaboration could be identified. A case study approach allows for the ability to combine multiple methods, such as “interviews, participant observation, and field studies” (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). I used

interviews (Appendix 1), biographical questionnaires (Appendix 2), and online observation (Appendix 3) to probe the narratives of each filmmaker to better understand their experience and the practices at use for each film as case study. Using autoethnographic methods, I examined my own experience and treated *The Woodsmen* as one of the four case studies in this project. I incorporated similar data collection methods for myself and organized a comparable interview setting so that I could experience a bit of what my other participants had.

*The emotional experience has been mostly positive, I would say. Its been really exciting to have the feedback and just to see everybody get involved. I almost didn't want to do a crowdfunding campaign because I thought it was this big impossible thing. Nobody would see our vision and want to help us make it. And seeing the exact opposite come true was pretty cool and exciting, to see "Wow, these people are excited about the project." – Jodi*

Observation and intensive interviews were important data collected for analysis. Particular interest was placed in analyzing the communication at each of the four stages of production: (a) pre-production, or initial story formation and research, (b) production, or the actual filming, (c) post production, or the editing and scoring, and (c) distribution, or the final viewing of the film.

This weaving together of methods helped to mitigate the drawbacks of any one of these research methods alone. These multiple methods also helped to provide a richness in data despite the inability to collect filmmaker self-reflection journals. I had intended to use this as an additional method of data collection, but it was removed in response to my participants worries regarding the overall commitment that my project entailed. This will be further described below.

### **Identification of Research Subjects**

For this research project, I interviewed and observed the collaborative communication of independent filmmakers, rather than those connected to larger media organizations. W. James Potter (2009) defines mass media organizations as “groups of people with specialized sets of skills that work together to construct and distribute messages, so as to attract particular audiences and condition them for repeat exposures” (p. 56). I would define independent filmmakers as having the same skills and many of the same goals of larger film organizations. However, most independent filmmakers fulfill all or most of the roles in the production process on their own, where a large organization would have multiple people to work on the various elements of production and audience engagement.

I engaged with four independent film projects in this study, including my own. I was interested in studying the person who was most responsible for the overall creative outcome of the film (such as the director, or writer) and the main spokesperson for the film (the person who is communicating the most with the audience or community). I had anticipated that this might be two different individuals, considering the workload of each role. For each of my identified film case studies, these two roles were either filled by the same person, or the filmmaker interviewed had a significant role to play in each.

*We tried a couple, like two different people we tried as like a social media manager type of role. But I don't know... It's really difficult the further removed you are from the project. It's difficult to have your finger on that pulse. It's tough enough to have your finger on the pulse of your audience online, but if you don't already have it on the project connecting those two is almost impossible. And so, it mostly it ends up being myself, or*

*you know, one of our core crew people that ends up doing all of the social media stuff.* –

Trevor

In order to identify potential filmmakers for this research, I set the parameter that the filmmakers would be actively engaged in audience collaboration projects at the time of my research or have been engaged in these activities within the previous 12 months. This would ensure that their experiences were fresh in their memories, so that they could speak to their processes and their own understanding of events fairly easily. The small sample was designed to focus on the in-depth, detailed stories, experiences, and observations of these particular filmmakers. The lived experience of these filmmakers is the focus, to create an illustrative combined narrative on the experience and to give filmmakers an authentic voice in the study of audience engagement. In attempting to blend autoethnographic and traditional narrative research, I have treated myself as equal to my other participants by filling out the same survey and asking myself the same interview questions (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Crawley, 2012). Following Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis' (2016) suggestion that one "might weave your story, as a researcher with related experience, in and out of others' tales" (p. 187), my own narrative has been analyzed and included in the same way as my other participants stories.

I used crowdfunding platforms, like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, to evaluate potential projects and identify potential participants to contact. My understanding of what constitutes as a participatory project is aligned with Antoni Roig Telo's (2013): "I define participatory creation as opening some decision-making processes to a loose collective of participants who gain recognition as practitioners through their engagement in a creative practice" (p. 2314). Telo's (2013) framework for identifying participatory projects, outlines that crowdfunding alone does not constitute a project with audience participation. He outlines conditions of participation, that

emphasize the allocation of space within a project for “negotiation and debate, decision making, transparency processes, and mutual recognition” (p. 2329). Both the idea of creating space for audience decision making, and the conditions of negotiation, transparency, and recognition (Telo, 2013) were used as markers for identifying and labeling a film project participatory.

Telo’s (2013) table of “Conditions of Participatory Creative Projects” (presented as Table 1 below), outlines his “Necessary conditions,” “Ideal conditions,” and “Related conditions” for creative participation (p. 2317). I focused on these characteristics and conditions as a framework to evaluate projects on crowdfunding platforms. I created my own template using this framework to identify participatory projects (Appendix 4). My template focused on the necessary conditions, and also included some of the related conditions, such as crowdfunding, crowdsourcing, and open licensing. Sifting through the crowdfunding platforms, I tracked how each project met the necessary and ideal conditions in the corresponding focal areas of: Unrestricted membership, Self-selection of participants, Distribution of control (decision-making processes), Spaces of negotiation, Transparency, and Mutual recognition.

***Table 1. Conditions of Participatory Creative Projects***

Necessary conditions	Ideal conditions	Related conditions
Unrestricted membership	Creative communities	Crowdfunding (money)
Self-selection of participants	Mutual support networks among participants	Crowdsourcing (labor, tasks)
Distribution of control (decision-making processes)	Creative contribution to significant parts	Open licensing and mixing
Spaces of negotiation	Explicit collaboration conditions with project promoters	Sense of belonging
Transparency	Ownership	Multimodal experience
Mutual Recognition	Differentiated cultural products	

Instrumental productivity

Embedded forms of re-  
appropriation

Continuity over time

Table 1. From "Participatory film production as media practice," by Telo, A. R., 2013, *International Journal of Communication*, 7(0), p. 2317. Reprinted using Creative Commons license CC-BY-NC-ND.

While Telo provides "necessary" conditions for participation, he also leaves room for negotiation, discussing the "gray area where projects that could in essence count as participatory become identifiable despite the near absence of some necessary conditions [such as the distribution of creative control, especially]" (2013, p. 2317). In my own framework for identifying participatory projects, I expanded on Telo's (2013) definition to add some additional landscape to the definition of "decision-making processes" (p. 2317) to include any way for the audience to contribute to the final film.

*All of a sudden there were a lot of voices that we wanted to listen to. And maybe we would have wanted to listen to them anyway but being a crowdfunding project we really wanted to bring in the community and have everybody feel like it was their film. So, that really added a whole level of listening and acting on what they were saying. If we were beholden to the studio, we wouldn't have maybe had that luxury to be able to listen to the people who were actually watching the film. Through crowdfunding we had the luxury of being able to relinquish some control back to the audience. – Jodi*

A contribution could be in the form of editing segments in an opensource format, receiving significant credit for their feedback, being able to audition, send in photos, build sets, help with locations, etc. Some of these contributions were identified as meaningful and necessary by the filmmakers themselves. Lucas, Trevor, and I incorporated audience feedback that we felt

made our final films better and relied on audience assistance in gathering all of the necessary elements during the filming process. Curt hoped that his project collaboration would be seen as meaningful by his audience, providing rare footage that they could use freely in their own projects. Each of the four identified film projects, gave their audiences the ability to contribute in some way to the final film.

*Better Left Unsaid:* On his Kickstarter page, Curt discussed how his audience would be able to cut their own version of the film and be their own documentarian: “we will release our interview footage under the Creative Commons CC BY-SA 3.0 license within 8 months of shooting. This way, others can cut their own version of this documentary if they like” (Jaimungal, 2018b). Curt had also incorporated audience feedback which changed how he approached his topic and took recommendations for interview subjects.

*Trevor Production:* On his Facebook page, Trevor announced that he “will be livestreaming tomorrow afternoon on Facebook with a *Trevor Production* update, casting info, answering your questions, and big announcements” (Facebook, n.d.) This was his invitation to his audience to take part in a real time discussion about how each audience member could get involved through their open call for auditions, helping to build sets and find locations, and through a “Golden Ticket” available in select DVD sales that would award one audience member with the chance to play a character in the upcoming film.

*The Woodsmen:* For our project, we invited our audience to participate by sending in their photos for missing posters that would be used in various scenes in the film. We also had an open call for extras, asked for help finding locations, props, and other items that all contributed to the final film. When we needed help from our audience and requested their contributions for our film we would post to Kickstarter and our social media, such as “Heelp! We are looking to borrow a

1980s-ish Ford Bronco-Like vehicle for a day in October. Only needs to drive a few feet in the film. Doesn't have to be a Bronco but something in this style. Send pics if you think you can help. Thank you!” (Cooper et al., n.d.).

*Were-Wool*: On his Kickstarter page, Lucas discussed how every backer would receive a film credit for their contributions. There were options for audience members to be a character on set, and the production allowed for all audience members to participate in the film through an open call across social media for extras. “Have you and/or someone you know ever wanted to have a cameo in a criminally low-budget Indie Canadian Horror film? Wow! What a coincidence. We are looking for people just like you/them to take part in what could be a terribly exciting day of shooting” (Birnie, n.d.).

Once potential filmmakers and film projects had been identified, I followed up with a preliminary email introducing my research project, outlining my request for their participation and commitment. I customized each email opening to the specific film project, in order to show my genuine interest in their work and hoping that “personalized requests will receive larger and more committed responses from potential participants” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 107). This email also briefly outlined my own crowdfunding experience, situating me as a member of their community of practice. It also included a personal quote from the ‘Head Film & Creative Campaign Strategist’ at crowdfunding site Indiegogo, John T. Trigonis. Trigonis (2016) is also the author of *Crowdfunding for Filmmakers: The Way to a Successful Film Campaign*. Trigonis (2017) was kind enough to review a short outline of my research and write me a statement of support for my project. My hope was that by sharing my own success, the outline of the research, and John’s quote I could attract filmmakers who would be committed to the entire process and could see value in its intended goals. Despite my confidence that I would be able to

attract dedicated and likeminded filmmakers, I ran into a number of challenges in getting participants to commit to this project.

### **Difficulties in Finding Participants**

Many challenges to observing the filmmaker decision making process have been outlined by media scholars, and especially the issue of access (Jones & Alony, 2011; Mahon, 2000). Media producers are highly mobile and do not necessarily make decisions in a visible, documentable way, which means that researchers may also need a high level of mobility to travel to multiple sites and need to be able to recognize the subtle signs of decision making (Mahon, 2000). I hoped that using crowdfunding platforms as sites of filmmaker-audience collaboration activities, would make the observation of media producers much more attainable.

I found it difficult to find projects that met my participatory criteria. I discovered that many projects were only using crowdfunding platforms as a way to secure funding but were not looking for any further collaboration with their audience. On top of this, as I was qualifying projects I realized I wanted to speak with filmmakers who had successfully funded their projects and were at least a little ways into production, if not completed production entirely. This was so that they would have more experiences working with their audience during the filmmaking process to discuss. However, I discovered that it was hard to find these recently successful projects on crowdfunding platforms. While I could filter for successfully funded projects on both Kickstarter and Indiegogo, I could not filter results by my parameters (by year, location, audience rewards, etc.). I discovered that each site tended to show successfully funded projects dating back a number of years, rather than my own parameters of the previous 12 months. While I did find a few of projects to contact through this random review of current crowdfunding

projects, the lack of filtering ability led me to contact a couple of projects that I had become aware of during our own crowdfunding campaign.

I had anticipated some level of difficulty in finding participatory projects and created a contingency plan to contact the Canadian Media Fund (CMF) to ask for any media producers that they were aware of who were working on participatory projects. During our own crowdfunding for *The Woodsmen* the CMF contacted us to promote our project on their new crowdfunding campaign promotion webpage. However, after contacting the CMF I discovered that this webpage for promoting crowdfunding projects is now defunct. I found an old hyperlink to the webpage in their communication to *Five Year Plan* and then used the Wayback Machine (Internet archive website) to review the projects that had been promoted on that site the year before. A few of these fit my parameters for participatory projects within the timeframe that I had identified.

The process of identification included the use of crowdfunding sites, the Wayback Machine, asking other filmmakers for recommendations, and contacting projects that I myself had supported prior to starting this research project. In the end, I qualified seven potential projects, besides my own, and emailed them to see if they would like to participate in my research. I found it more difficult than expected to secure participants. One of the projects that I qualified did not respond at all. A few responded with interest but had concern over the commitment. One of the qualified projects had just been picked up for distribution. The filmmakers were traveling around the world for festivals, and also very busy with their other employment obligations. I had anticipated that the commitment required of my participants might be a deterring factor in attracting them, especially the self-reflection journaling component. I did my best to select self-reflection exercises that were easy to understand and

would not be too time consuming. I did not want to risk anyone dropping out of the project because they were daunted by the amount of information I was looking for. It became clear that despite these considerations, the self-reflective journaling was becoming a barrier to participation for my potential participants. This was when the decision was made to scale back some of the requirements of participation to make the project more feasible for busy independent filmmakers. The participant self-reflection journal item was removed, leaving only the short survey and one in-depth interview. This change resulted in one immediate response and a signed consent letter. I believe this change helped to secure the next two participants as well.

Creswell (2014) states that researchers need to develop a rapport, build trust, and protect the participants in their studies. The consent forms made it clear that each of the filmmakers were free to leave the project at any time if they no longer wished to participate. It also outlined that, for this project, there was minimal risk to participants in terms of their physical and psychological safety. However, due to the secretive nature of various media industries, it may have jeopardized careers to have names, project titles, and/or production companies published. On the other hand, I could foresee reasons why creative media producers would want to be credited for their work in filmmaker-audience relationship generating practices and want to have full names and titles made public. Both options were given to my participants, with the ability to change their minds at any point prior to the final publication. For these reasons, I was prepared to offer full confidentiality if requested.

Two of the three confirmed participants decided that they wanted to have their real names and projects identified in this thesis. However, one of my participants wanted to be open and discuss budget items that he did not want published. His main concern was that I would divulge some of the revenue numbers he had been giving me. Despite never using specific figures,

budget does receive some discussion. I also believe it is important to talk about the budget in terms of the fact that his production company had created enough revenue from their last crowdfunded project to forgo crowdfunding with their current project.

*I was kind of reluctant to even go back to that same orchard because I didn't want people to feel like we would take it for granted that they would support the project financially. -*

Trevor

Originally, I was going to create my own pseudonym, however I found myself trying to mash up filmmaker names that I already knew, which might be strange and distracting to the reader. I decided to use a random name generated by an online generator (<https://www.behindthename.com/random/>) which came up with the name Trevor Hanley. I did a cursory Google search and did not find anything that could be distracting to a reader, such as making a connection to an existing person by that name. Throughout the project this filmmaker is referred to as Trevor Hanley and any reference to his films use the title *Trevor Production*.

For my own discussion of *The Woodsmen*, modified participant consent forms were created for each of the other three members of our filmmaking collective – *Five Year Plan* (Appendix 5). This was because as I reflected on my own experience in the making of this project it was impossible to make sure that their own very important contributions did not bleed into my narrative. In autoethnography there are many questions around what “autoethnographers have a right to say and what we owe those we write about” (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 142). As there are no hard and fast guidelines, each researcher needs to ask them self what they are comfortable with and also review the requirements of their individual University Research Ethics Board (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). For my project the UREB was concerned that there might be potential conflict of interest, which led to clarification on how my key collaborators’

involvement will be discussed in the autoethnographic component of the research. Their participation will only be in my own reflections about their roles in our filmmaking process. This also resulted in a specific informed consent letter for these key collaborators, which acknowledged that they were aware that our experience was being reflected on in my research and that they might be identifiable in their roles as key contributors.

*I'm constantly saying "we" because I don't feel like "I" have a relationship, it's more like 5 Year Plan has a relationship with our audience. – Jodi*

After the official consent (Appendix 6) to participate was signed by each participant, I followed up with a basic biography and filmography questionnaire for each filmmaker to complete.

### **Participant Surveys**

The questionnaires provided general background information on the participants, and their history within the film industry (Appendix 2). It also covered basic demographic elements by asking questions about their age, educational background, film projects that they have been involved in, and their experience with various types of funding models. The questionnaire also asked for social media links, which provided opportunities to analyze online sites, like crowdfunding platforms and other social media, as part of the filmmakers' working environment. I requested that the questionnaires be submitted to me 1-2 weeks prior to our interviews, to give me time to review the answers and adapt my interview questions as necessary.

At the end of each of my preliminary questionnaires I asked my participants for any recommendations of filmmakers that they know who were actively working on participatory projects. The hope was to create a snowball sample, to help identify more participants. This method of participant recruitment was necessary since I faced difficulties in identifying potential

participants on crowdfunding platforms. I had planned for some difficulties and included this final question in my survey, anticipating high limitations of access to the kind of information for which I was looking. Filmmakers do not necessarily publish their contact information or accept unsolicited contacts. This snowball sample technique led me to contact Trevor, as a recommendation from another filmmaker who did not become a participant.

Once participant surveys were collected, I was ready to delve into each participant's experience with collaborative filmmaking through the interview process.

## **Production**

### **Roll Camera: Interviewing the Participants**

In order to understand the experience of filmmaker-audience collaboration, from the filmmaker's perspective each participants' own narrative was captured. This section discusses how the interview questions were further developed, how the interviews were conducted and transcribed, and the online observation process.

### **In-Depth Interview Questions**

Intensive interviews were scheduled once all four participants, including myself, were in place. I had drafted interview questions as a guide, designed to be flexible and open to change to allow for the qualitative approach of exploring while maintaining a "flexible structure" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). I was aware that the survey responses may spark some additional questions or thoughts that I would like to cover in our interviews. I will discuss the process I followed for my own interview in a later section on my autoethnographic methods.

In his communication, Curt had provided me with a link to some of his YouTube videos describing the kinds of things that he does with IndieFilmTO. This included a series Curt had

created on Crowdfunding, which I watched prior to setting up our interview. In Module 1, he discusses the idea of making your audience feel like an “insider” in terms of what you are offering backers (Jaimungal, 2017). In my qualification process, I had been reviewing each project in order to see how they treated their audience and what invitation was given to participate in the filmmaking process. Often this meant careful attention paid to the project’s crowdfunding rewards to determine if it met my requirements for opportunities of collaboration. However, in watching Curt’s video I realized that I was not directly asking filmmakers about their process to develop these rewards. To address this gap, I added a question about their considerations when developing rewards to my interview questions.

*We talked a lot about not just, you know, the typical rewards, but what kinds of rewards a) directly speak to the film, what makes sense for our film, and b) what kinds of rewards actually get the audience involved somehow. So, what we decided on was the missing posters. People could purchase a missing poster at 2 different levels. One was to have it in the credits and one was to actually have it in the film itself. And we placed that at the, sort of the, sweet spot of rewards, you know? The \$20 to \$30 level. Because we thought that that would be a really cool way to get people involved and feel like they are part of the film. It also really made sense to the storyline, we needed a lot of missing posters and this was a cool way to do it. - Jodi*

While completing my own autoethnographic journaling and scouring crowdfunding platforms to qualify potential projects, I thought a lot about what attracted me to each project. Some of what attracted me to qualify a potential project were the various rewards offered, and the various invitations to collaboration that were evident in these. Some projects offered the opportunity to spend a day on set as a character in the film, others offered the chance to watch a

beta version of the final edit and provide feedback, and many projects offered exclusive access to behind the scenes social media groups where the audience and filmmakers could interact. While reviewing the various film projects, I also realized that I found elements of what Telo (2013) describes as “transparency” or the “explicit collaboration conditions with project promoters” (p. 2317) in many of the project pitch videos. The pitch video is where the filmmaker outlines their invitation to the audience and explains their project. A good pitch video should do this in a direct way, where the audience sees who the filmmaker is and feels like they are building a connection with them (Trigonis, 2016). “A mistake many crowdfunders make is not starring in their own campaign videos. The truth is you *must* be in your video... there are not too many people out there who will give money to a photograph or a movie trailer, let alone a ghost...” (Trigonis, 2016, p. 64). I realized that I too was judging the potential project by the pitch videos, however I had not yet included any questions around why the filmmakers made these videos the way they did. I adapted my interview and added a question about the pitch video process.

*I think seeing the person talking about their idea really helps solidify someone's belief in that [proposed product]. If that makes any sense? But the other thing, putting me in the video was like if this fails, then at least it's all on my shoulders and nobody else is kind of responsible for it. I think it'd be weird not be front and centre in something like that.*

*Because I've seen a few where that wasn't it and I always thought that was just strange, you know? Like, if it's your idea, whether or not you're the director, even if you're just the producer, whoever's in charge should kind of make it known to the people that are looking at the video. - Lucas*

I continued to be flexible with my interview questions and made a few alterations for subsequent interviews after completing each previous interview. This was especially true for

Trevor's interview, which came last. Through Curt's interview, I discovered that one of the topics I really wanted to discuss with the filmmakers was the idea of art and if they felt like they were creating art through their collaborative work.

*So, I feel like there's true art. It's rare first of all. True art to me is... It's not knowing what the answer is going to look like. Yeah, you don't know what the story's gonna look like when you're starting it. You're just going to explore, so you have a question or a problem in your mind that you're exploring and then you try to build up both sides as best you can. - Curt*

After hearing Curt talk about art in filmmaking, I wanted to be sure that I asked Trevor directly if he felt he was creating art through collaboration with his audience. I thought that I may need to go back and ask Lucas for his thoughts on this question, since it had not been explicitly asked in his interview. However, as I was conducting my transcription and coding of the interviews and surveys into NVivo I discovered that I did have reflections from Lucas regarding his perspective of film as an artform, from his survey responses.

The final interview question list included approximately ten questions plus follow-up probes (Appendix 1). Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman (2016) suggest that “the richness of an interview is heavily dependent on these follow-up questions (p. 150). I also included a wrap up question, to ask if there is anything else they would like to discuss or mention that had not previously been covered, which I feel gave the interviewee the opportunity to fully express themselves. This question shows genuine interest, satisfying the need that narrative inquiry has “a great deal of openness and trust between participant and researcher... a mutual and sincere collaboration...” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 157).

In order to facilitate the interviews and be respectful of each filmmaker's busy schedule I offered to drive to a location that was convenient to them or to conduct the interviews via an online platform like Skype. Fortunately, I was able to be flexible enough with my timelines and could secure dates with each of my participants to conduct all interviews in person. I drove between two and five hours to each interview and back. Each of my filmmakers were located in Ontario. It was interesting to find these filmmakers actively collaborating with their audiences independently of each other yet located so close to each other. Especially interesting, was that fact that both Trevor and I were located in rural settings quite a distance away from any hub or city known for its filmmaking.

*It really seemed like filmmaking was so far removed from Ontario, right? Like, if you're in New York, or if you're in LA you can make films, but there's nothing like that [here], I knew no one with a camera [when starting out]. - Trevor*

I met two filmmakers at their own homes. Curt's interview was held in a meeting space available in his building. Trevor's interview was conducted in the front room of his family home. For Lucas' interview we met at a public library that was easily accessible for both of us. My own interview happened in my living room and will be outlined in further detail when I discuss my autoethnographic methods in the Director's Notes section. Each interview was recorded on an H6 Zoom recorder, that I was lucky enough to be able to borrow from local production company, Vantage Point Media House, and saved to a digital SD card. This made the transferring of interview files quite simple when it came time to transcribe them.

### **Transcribing Interviews**

I found transcribing interviews a nice immersive way to familiarize myself with the data. During the actual interviews I had been concerned with the process of active listening; listening

to know when I should interject, listening to know which of my interview questions had been answered so as not to ask a question that had already been responded to, and taking notes about setting, gesturing, and inflection that I actually found I missed quite a lot of the actual content of what was being said. This highlights a problem in single interview projects, in a larger research project I would welcome the ability to return to my participants after transcribing the interview to flesh out areas that may not have received as much coverage in just one interview. Re-listening to the interviews without the distraction of having the interviewee directly in front of me helped me focus on what was being said and I was able to identify more themes of common ground than I had during the original interviews.

From the literature review I had created interview questions which pointed to themes of involvement with various funding models, filmmaking practices, especially ideal practices versus actual actions, public relations theories, the idea of cultural capital, and each filmmaker's overall narrative of experience. As I transcribed the interviews, I would add additional themes to NVivo that I discovered from what was being said by the filmmakers themselves. The most significant of these would be the feelings of significant workload, and the extra skills that filmmakers need in order to run successful collaboration projects.

*We really had a lot of discussion about making the audience feel like we were bringing them on board to make something together, showcasing the fact that they could be Slender Valley citizens, and then just talking passionately about the project. I would say more than the average [film project], a crowdfunding project requires you to be really on the ball with self-marketing and being self-aware as to what aspects of your project are gonna inspire your audience's imagination and what aspects they're going to want to get*

*involved with. So, you have to be really aware of that ahead of time so you can be plugging that and creating those spaces. – Jodi*

I found transcribing interviews much harder than I had expected. As I went through the dialog, I realized how natural speech patterns do not necessarily flow in an organized way, nor do they indicate where punctuation would go. Often, I would be transcribing in run-on sentences. I needed to go back over the transcripts multiple times to refine passages, especially those I wished to use as narrative descriptions in my findings. I want to ensure that I am being true to my participants meaning and to present them in the best possible light. I was very aware that if I were to place a comma in the wrong spot, or have a sentence that appears to go on too long it could impact both the meaning and the reader's impression of my participants in a way that would not be the case if they were to just hear the spoken answer for themselves.

I recognize that I am nervous to present my filmmaker participants in ways that do them justice and acknowledges the hard work they have put into their projects. I want to be able to showcase our differences from a neutral perspective, in a way that does not make one method seem better than another. I also want to be able to talk about our similarities, without making it seem like these are the only acceptable experiences for certain parts of the collaboration process. In order to achieve this, I have kept my narrative sections long so that the filmmakers' own words can describe their methods and their reasons for using each method. For these passages of narrative, I have taken some liberties to edit down the pauses, hesitations, ums, and repeated words. In other instances, I have taken a heavier hand at editing in order to get to the heart of the narrative (Riessman, 1993, p. 51), by taking out sections where a response may have detoured or re-covered ground before finally answering the question. Following Bochner and Ellis' (2016) directions, "we must continually consider how to balance what we owe our readers and academic

colleagues in terms of telling a 'true' story, and what we owe participants and the groups they represent in terms of loyalty, friendship, and confidentiality" (p.140). I used care to maintain the original sense of each passage, revisiting the original transcripts many times to ensure that the meaning of the quote had not been altered in any way.

I was also glad for the careful notes I had taken when watching my participants during their interviews. I found that all three of my participants did a lot of talking with their hands and on more than one occasion I realized that the actual audio of what they were saying was not clear without the "visual cues we rely on to interpret another's meaning" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 209).

*So, I'd say it's always emotional. I mean it's a little bit of this, right? [Creates a large wavy line motion with hand, like a rollercoaster]. Filmmaking is very much about the highs and lows. And you've got to weather both. You gotta kinda be down the middle, right? – Trevor*

When a filmmaker points to an image on the wall, pretends to text on their phone, or indicates the highs and lows of their experience using only hand motions, it is important to have captured these cues in order to properly portray what they were saying. These nuances of body language are important for this kind of in-person dialog and I am glad to have met each of my filmmaker's personally to have benefited from this. This helped me understand their individual personalities a little better while reviewing their survey responses and online dialog with their audiences.

### **Online Observation**

Interviews alone suffer from the effects of self-reporting, "what people say may not be what they do, have done, and would do in the future" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 78). To combat this and

get a more complete understanding of their experience, I requested links to their social media channels in my participant questionnaires. In observing online communication there were several specific ethical considerations to be addressed. Should comments and posts, issued in a public online community that is for anyone to view, require consent to study? Requesting that the filmmaker or myself make a public post announcing my research and observation could seriously jeopardize the candid nature of audience posts and change the very make-up of the filmmaker-audience relationship that I wanted to study. Sheizaf Rafaelli and Fay Sudweeks (1996) argued that “public discourse on Computer Mediated Communication is just that: public... Such study is more akin to the study of tombstone epitaphs, graffiti, or letters to the editor. Personal? Yes. Private? No...” (p. 121). However, people can behave differently online than in person and online comments can have negative consequences for the commenters. In an interview, researcher and author of *The ‘Battle of Stokes Croft’ on YouTube: The Development of an Ethical Stance for the Study of Online Comments*, Paul J Reilly (2016) states that researchers should “...consider the public benefit of potentially shaming online participants ... Researchers should be empowered to make informed ethical decisions rather than compelled to follow one-size fits all approaches towards the collection, analysis and presentation of social media data” (Todd, para. 15).

I do not wish to shame any audience members or put them on the spot for any dissenting comments that may have caused the filmmakers issues. I adopted an approach following Reilly’s (2016) ethical stance by anonymizing “the dataset through the removal of usernames and the paraphrasing of comments” (para. 13). I do not feel that this in any way hinders my research because my main focus is on the filmmakers’ experience and only uses audience comments to identify a level of participation in the project and provide some context for the experience.

Having met each of my participants in person I was able to identify elements of their humor and speech patterns in their online posts. Having journaled about my own experiences, using autoethnographic techniques, of the production process helped me to remember the context of various posts and why they happened when they did.

### **Director's Notes: Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is a type of narrative research, "that utilizes the researchers' autobiographical data to analyze and interpret their cultural assumptions" (Chang, 2008, p. 9). Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams and Arthur Bochner (2010) define autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (para. 1). Autoethnography as a method recognizes myself as part of the subject group that I wish to study. This is significant because it helps place my motives and potential for subjectivity right up front, as I identify myself as part of the community of practice that I am studying. This section looks at the autoethnographic methods I used in collecting data from *The Woodsmen*, the project studied in this research that I was a part of.

I started my autoethnography by writing about my experience during the end of the crowdfunding phase and through the production to final screening stages of *The Woodsmen*. However, I struggled with keeping on top of these notes while actually performing the activities of audience collaboration. During my research process I went back over my own experience using autoethnographic journaling methods. Ellis (2000) calls this "...retrospective field notes on your life," and suggests that autoethnographers include "all the details you can recall. I find it helpful to organize my writing chronologically first, using the main events to structure the tale" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p.751).

*I was not excited about the idea of crowdfunding at first. Rob, one of our filmmaking partners, had to bring up the idea multiple times before I would even seriously consider it. In our conversations we talked about some of the additional complications that crowdfunding adds to a project. Besides making a film, which is a feat in and of itself, crowdfunding requires you to take on a whole other full-time workload. First there's planning the campaign, then fulfilling rewards, keeping everyone updated, and being accountable to the backers the whole time. On top of all that, crowdfunding is not a guarantee. In fact, the success rates for first time filmmakers are low. What I didn't say out loud to anyone, and why I was reluctant to consider this plan, was that I wasn't sure that I could handle our project not being successful. What would it mean to fail so publicly? I'm really afraid of failure. To the point of inaction. It's stupid, but sometimes I'd rather just not do something altogether so that it doesn't get the opportunity to fail. On the other hand, I'd been studying active participatory audiences and filmmaking as part of my course work. I had learned that audiences really like to get involved in stories that they care about and support projects they want to see. If our audience wanted to see our film, then maybe they'd help us make it? Finally, I agreed that this might be our shot at making the film, and we'd never know until we try. – Jodi*

When conducting my own autoethnographic exercises I tried to recall vivid details of each scene I was describing from my experience. I wanted to present myself authentically and this required showing my vulnerability, which in turn would allow my readers to respond vulnerably, “and that’s what you want, vulnerable readers” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 752). My hope is that my own reflections will ring true to my readers and resonate with their own experiences. Ellis and Bochner (2016) suggest that generalizability "takes on a different meaning

in autoethnography than in traditional social science research. The question we ask is: how does a particular story depicting a specific context - a story like mine - manage to acquire something akin to universal significance? The answer is through resonance" (p. 237). Through this shared vulnerability I hope that my reader can connect to the experiences of myself and my filmmaker participants, even if they are in a different field from the experiences of my readers.

Identifying as an internal member of a community of practice is an important characteristic required for autoethnography and choosing myself as one of my own research subjects. David Hayano (1979) writes that autoethnographers need to "possess the qualities of often permanent self-identification with a group and full internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are a part" (p.100). My own membership as a filmmaker is recognized by myself and by the letters of support that I have attained from other filmmakers. Tess Girard (2017) of Fifth Town Films, an accomplished NFB filmmaker and Canadian Screen Award nominee proves this for me: as "a filmmaker herself, Ms. Cooper's history in producing, production, financing, and distribution will lend a particularly valuable, practical perspective to her research which can only be understood through experience..." (Girard, 2017, para. 3). This answers questions, asked by both ethnography and autoethnography, of "voice and its authenticity. Who speaks on behalf of whom... Who represents whose life, and how..." (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 3). As a filmmaker with experience in the phenomenon I am studying, I represent a group of which I am a part.

*It's a bit of an emotional rollercoaster. First there was the excitement of actually being successful in the crowdfunding campaign, they actually gave us money. We even beat our first goal and had some of our extended stretch goals met. Then there was a whole new wave of excitement in seeing the audience and whole community get involved when we*

*had our screening here locally. But then there are some detractors. Like the guilt that I feel at the reward levels that haven't been met yet. Just feeling like I dropped the ball that way, in terms of keeping people updated and fulfilling rewards. I mean, overall the film is complete and that was the main goal. But I still want to finish off all these little things that just keep tugging away at me, like loose threads or something. – Jodi*

To collect my autoethnographic data I have adapted journaling and writing exercises from guidelines given in *Autoethnography As Method* (Chang, 2008) and *Collaborative Autoethnography* (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013). These exercises were developed specifically to acknowledge the limitations of memories, and to prepare the researcher to expect rough outlines rather than exact details, by prompting to recall and record memories as they surface (Chang et al., 2013, p. 75).

For my research it was important that I treat myself and the case study of *The Woodsmen* as I treated each of my other participants and use the same methods on myself as my participants (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Crawley, 2012). In order to conduct the self-interview portion, I recorded myself and had my husband ask me the questions so that I would complete the exercise in one sitting and experience a little bit of what my participants had experienced as an interviewee. I noticed that even though I had been working with the questions and thinking about the experience for a few months, I still had difficulty answering the questions in an interview setting. I often felt like I was put on the spot and had trouble formulating my responses. This helped me to get a sense of the level of discomfort that some of my participants may have felt when being interviewed. I also repeated myself often, because I found myself steering the answer in the direction I knew future questions would cover. This made me aware that this steering of

questions could also have happened with each of my participants, because they all had the questions prior to our interviews for review.

Autoethnography has its own issues and challenges. The researcher needs to be fully "reflective about their own personal and political background, which shapes how they 're-story' the account" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Jeffery Nealon and Susan S. Giroux (2012) write that "if we avoided encountering the reflexive or critical questions of 'theory'," then we also "avoid asking 'where do opinions come from?'" which can be a problem because everything is then taken as a self-evident fact (p.5). For myself, I take a postmodern, constructivist view of reality in that I do not believe in one positivist truth. I also try not to take a morally or ethically relativist stance, but rather feel that reality is based on various historical, cultural, and economic factors. I understand that people with different backgrounds in these areas can experience very different realities (Holtzhausen, 2000). Therefore, it is very important to focus on the meanings and realities experienced by the filmmakers in this study.

*So, on the question of how we engage with the audience, well there's a spectrum. I mean, it's like a family dinner, right? You've got some that are extremely supportive [about 10%]. You've got your 80% in the middle; they sit there, they watch it, they like it, or they don't. They don't say too much about it. And then you've got these other 10%, that it's just like hate and poison that they spew at you. So, from production, through till about a month after the screenings, some weeks we would get dozens of messages and emails. Some weeks like hundreds, that were either almost like fan mail or like hate mail. But, very, very little in-between. So, what do you do with that? Don't pay attention to either one really, just do your thing. But the 80% in the middle, they're the ones that you're looking for to see "Are they enjoying it? What do they like? What don't they like? Where*

*are the strengths? Where are the weaknesses? How do we make it better next time?" –*

Trevor

I have outlined my own ideological perspective and worldview above to help situate my own interpretation of events moving forward and to be open about my own particular interests in the topic. Stefinee Pinnegar and J. Gary Daynes (2007) suggest that narrative research requires the asking of important questions about power, authority, and community: "Who owns the story? Who can tell it?... Whose version is convincing? What happens when narratives compete?" (p. 30). I have allowed for filmmaker participants to claim some kind of authorship over their own stories by publishing their names and film titles if they elect to be made public. I have outlined above how my own background provides me with access to the community that I am speaking for. Despite looking for some common themes across experiences, my post-positivist worldview has served me in maintaining that each filmmaker's narrative remains unique. I focused on staying open to competing perspectives when coding and analyzing the data.

### **Watching Dailies: Organizing the Data**

In order to scrutinize and really understand the experience of filmmaker-audience collaboration, the data captured needed to be looked at from different perspectives. This section describes how the interview data was coded for themes arising from the existing literature and from the interviews themselves. These themes were first organized based on the natural flow that resulted from the general pattern of the interview questions, and then was re-organized to satisfy the overarching research questions. This section also looks at the process used to gather and analyze the social media data, from each filmmakers' visible and permanent record of their communication with their audience.

## **Coding**

For the coding process I used NVivo 12 Plus and imported each of the full interview transcripts, the questionnaires, interview observations, and social media observations. The coding process began during my transcribing of the interviews. I started with themes from the literature review. There were a few key concepts that formed my understanding of the factors that might influence the practices and experiences of participatory filmmakers. Henry Jenkins' (2016) defines participatory culture as "one which embraces the values of diversity and democracy... one which assumes that we are capable of making decisions, collectively and individually..." (p. 2) led me to design questions that would focus on how each participant allowed for diversity in their audiences' contributions. Another important concept was Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) idea of "symbolic power" as "diverse forms of capital which are not reducible to economic capital" (p. 7). Filmmakers who crowdfund and collaborate with their audiences do not offer shares or economic stake in return, and yet there is an expectation of shared ownership. I needed to use theories of other forms of capital to explore this further. Recognizing that when a filmmaker wishes to collaborate with their audience they are forming 'relationships with the public', I had used John Ledingham's (2003) idea of mutual benefit as a sensitizing concept during my interviews.

These themes of participatory culture, symbolic and cultural capital, and relationship management had been used as sensitizing concepts when drafting the interview questions. I now added them as nodes to start organizing my data. I then added additional themes that were revealed during the interviewing and transcribing process, somewhat organically creating themes out of what seemed to be common points of experience among my participants. For data analysis, I coded my own asking of the research questions as part of the passages. This

inclusivity in coding reflects an understanding of narrative expressed by theorists who suggest bringing "the interviewer into the analysis by including his or her guiding questions, nonlexical utterances, and other signs of puzzlement and understanding, showing how meaning is interactionally accomplished" (Paget, 1983; Riessman, 1993, p. 20). I did, however, worry how this might impact some of my analysis of common words or phrases. Many of my questions had key words or phrases already in them, so leaving them in the coded themes would impact the overall impression of how often these terms came up during the interviews. However, this was not overly concerning. I only used word count and frequency analysis to guide my reflections and not as actual results in and of themselves.

While the drafting of the interview questions was guided by my overarching research questions, I let the nodes come together differently, based on the core themes that had emerged from the literature and then based on the relationships between themes that seemed to come out of the interviews themselves. I did not consult my research questions at first during this process. There were certain passages in my interviews that would make sense for multiple themes. When a participant would talk about setting up their crowdfunding campaign and discuss the amount of time, information, and research required to create the campaign, I might code these passages in several ways. Thereby putting the same passage in multiples nodes, corresponding to their practices, emotional responses, etc. (Appendix 7).

*I don't think that I would do [crowdfunding] again if the only benefit was that it's helping to build the production. I can give them that content free and build it in another way. Sell 'em a DVD, you know, or something else. But, as far as the kind of campaign that has a variety of perks, not just merchandise, I would be cautious. I would be cautious before I*

*did the credits, or the "Be an actor," or those ones again. Just because it had so much work attached to it. - Trevor*

One of the things that came up in my coding was the idea that some of the characteristics that are shared amongst my participants (including myself) may not be specific to collaborative or crowdfunding filmmaking. Rather, they might just be characteristics common of indie filmmakers in general. For example, many of my participants indicated that their initial draw to filmmaking was founded in a passion for storytelling. Therefore, I have tried to look at each theme and indicate how it specifically relates to this form of collaborative filmmaking relationships.

The information submitted on the participant questionnaires, was for the most part coded the same way as the interview transcripts. This is especially true of the large passage answers, for which I did not differentiate or separate in the nodes from the participant's in-person interview answers. Some of the demographic elements from the questionnaires have been used in the filmmaker participant introductions. These surveys are also where they provided the links to access and observe their social media channels.

The next step in the data coding was to go back to my original research questions. I created a new parent node for each research question and organized the themes by which data would best speak to each question (Appendix 8). I found myself breaking up previous parent and child nodes that had seemed to go hand in hand while I was originally coding. Now that I was answering specific questions, I could see that some of the themes under the parent node of "Emotions" would work for describing the filmmakers' overall experience and answering the question of "What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers?" However, this was not always an easy and clean process. During the original coding process, the idea of

authorship seemed to fit naturally under emotions because the filmmakers talked about their own sense of authorship in relation to the emotions that they felt. In this next phase however, it moved to the new parent node to answer the question “How/do these relationships impact the filmmaker’s creative process and sense of authorship?” rather than staying with the other nodes that focused on emotions and were used to describe the filmmakers overall experience. The child nodes from “Interactions with Audience” were split. Most of these moved into satisfying the question of “What do filmmaker’s narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmmaker and audience?” While others were used to describe the overall experience.

*This film [The Woodsmen] really made me look at the whole project more from a marketing stance, then a traditional [indie film] project. I mean, certainly more than our previous indie film Mercy anyway. Mercy was just a passion project and when it was done, we basically said “We'll see what we do with it, see if anyone wants to watch it” kind of thing. For The Woodsmen, it was always about “How do we communicate this? And how do we get people excited? And what can we do to get people involved?” Right from the very beginning. – Jodi*

This second process of coding led to a couple of theme nodes not being included in the overall five question structure. The first was the theme of “Defining moments to become a filmmaker” and its child node of “Storytelling importance” (Appendix 9). I felt that while this theme provided some important contextual background information on each filmmaker, it was not a theme on its own that pertained specifically to this research. The issues discussed here are not necessarily different from those discussed by any independent filmmaker and are not specific enough to collaborative filmmaking. However, some elements from this node were used in the

filmmaker introduction section. Similarly, the idea of “Storytelling importance” is not a theme associated specifically with collaborative filmmaking and is usually important to filmmakers of all kinds.

Another theme that was left on its own after re-organizing was the parent node of “Skills” and all of its child nodes. The way this section came together was a bit of a surprise finding. I did not want to break these nodes up, even though some of these elements describe the filmmakers overall experience and some point to best practices. I feel strongly that there is something important about seeing these all together in this grouping. The narratives of skills as presented by the filmmakers are very important to the overall experience of this type of filmmaking. I will discuss these in a later concluding section.

Finally, I debated weaving the themes answering the research question regarding broader cultural implications throughout the project. These themes were often brought up in relation to other elements of their process by the filmmakers. Instead, these were left in a cohesive grouping and will also be discussed in a later concluding section.

### **Analysis Approach**

My focus for this research is on the narrative content, what my participants talked about as being important to their experience, rather than the form of their stories themselves (how they lay things out as beginning, middle, and end). I do look at their sequencing of events to determine some of the factors that led them to collaborative filmmaking. However, I am not looking at the overall format of the story itself. Theorists Amia Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach, & Tamar Zilber (1998) identify four different types of narrative analysis: Holistic-Content, Holistic-Form, Categorical-Content, and Categorical-Form (p. 13). Following these models of analysis, I can identify that I used a “categorical-content” approach to draw conclusions, which is

“more familiar as ‘content analysis.’” Categories of the studied topic are defined, and separate utterances of the text are extracted, classified, and gathered into these categories/groups” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 13). Content analysis is usually statistical. However, it can also be evocative, where “the contents collected in each category can be used descriptively to formulate a picture of the content universe in certain groups of people or cultures” (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 114). I worked through both methods in my analysis. Nevertheless, the second and alternate method fits best with my means of defining trustworthiness. Through persuasiveness, trust can be found where claims are supported through the participant filmmakers’ own accounts.

For this research, I intend to demonstrate validity and reliability through trustworthiness. "Validation, the process through which we make claims for the trustworthiness of our interpretations, is the critical issue. 'Trustworthiness' not 'truth' is a key semantic difference: The latter assumes an objective reality, whereas the former moves the process into the social world" (Riessman, 1993, p. 65). I have chosen to use persuasiveness as a benchmark for determining trustworthiness. Persuasiveness places emphasis on the analysis answering questions such as, is the interpretation plausible, “reasonable and convincing?” (Riessman, 1993, p. 65). My claims are supported with participants’ own accounts and alternative interpretations are considered (Riessman, 1993). For these research findings, I use large sections of quotes from the interview transcripts to show the participants’ stories and narrative in their own words. This ensures that the story or narrative secures a “prominent position" (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 186) in the research. However, persuasiveness does have its drawbacks because “the most persuasive interpretation of a narrative text at one historical moment may not be later,” suggesting that these texts have “unstable meanings” (Riessman, 1993, pp. 65-66). I am okay with this lack of stability

because I am looking to describe the experience for the collaborative filmmaker now because these collaborative filmmaking practices are still relatively new. I recognize that the experience of even these specific individual filmmakers may not be the same next time they engage their audience in a participatory project.

I also used the more traditional content analysis approach, where “sentences in each category can be counted, tabulated, ordered by frequency, or subjected to various statistical computations” (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 114) to focus my reflections. For each question I ran a content analysis query for word frequency, looking for the 50 most frequent words with a minimum of five characters with exact matches. Word exclusions were selected to remove fragments of general speech (Appendix 10). I created word images (wordels) and lists from each set of terms. Next, I printed these word lists out and cross referenced to see which words were represented in each question’s list (Appendix 11). I highlighted the words in pink if they were on every list. I cross referenced for which words were represented in four or more question lists and highlighted these green. I repeated the process for which words were represented in up to three lists and highlighted them yellow. Finally, the words that were purely unique to each question were left unhighlighted. Then, I focused specifically on the words that were unique to each question and those that were shared with few other questions (the white and yellow highlights). This process helped me to see which words my participants used most frequently in their responses that had been coded to each individual research question. I could then reflect on the significance of the frequency, to see patterns in what they were saying, and observe overlaps in their narratives. This process also helped me to identify gaps in the passages that I had selected, but more often than not this process confirmed that I had already covered each significant topic in the previous discussion passages.

This stage of coding also helped me to better understand the social media posts I was analyzing, by indicating which themes and key words I should look for in these online communications.

### **Social Media Analysis**

In the survey questionnaires that I sent out to each participant I asked for their social media channels to review the communication with their audience members. Facebook and the actual crowdfunding page were the two platforms that each participant used the most. I conducted a preliminary review of the social media communication by each participant in late November and early December 2018.

I placed every Facebook post into an excel spreadsheet for each participant's project, separating them into production stage (Funding, Pre-Production, Production, Post Production, Distribution) and giving each stage its own tab in the spreadsheet. Breaking the posts down in this way helped me see the frequency of posts at each stage. I have not included the full social media spreadsheets as appendices here, because of commitment to ensuring Trevor and his production team remain unrecognizable. I will share some select findings that have been anonymized and generic post frequency information in later analysis sections. For each social media site spreadsheet, I carefully tracked the post date, content, and audience engagement/interactions (likes, shares, and comments) in separate columns. I wrote out any comments to see what kind of conversations were sparked and if there were any interesting points. To track the audience comments I was careful to make the posts anonymous symbolizing each comment start with C: (to mean presumed audience comment) and each filmmaker participant comment with P: (to mean project owner's comment). I created a separate tab for the update posts that took place on the crowdfunding platform itself. I used the same columns to

track the post date, content, and interactions. I then added a new column on each tab for my own thoughts and reactions.

After conducting my analysis of the filmmaker interviews, I went back to the social media review and analysis in April 2019 to update any additional posts since my last review and tweak my own “thoughts” column. I discovered that there had not been many updates since December for Lucas, Curt, and my own project. This finding reflects these filmmakers’ own thoughts that they wished they were able to keep on top of this communication more.

*I've been somewhat scant in emailing them and collaborating with them because I've been so ensconced in the research for this documentary. In other words, I'm being an artist too much and not an entrepreneur. If I was more of an entrepreneur, I would be talking with them on a regular basis. A part of me is also a little bit nervous, because it's like when you're fighting with your spouse, and then you haven't talked because you're fighting, and then it becomes a little bit more awkward. Who's gonna break the silence? There's a little bit of that.... but I'll get over that. – Curt*

The finding of infrequent social media posts after my initial data collection held true for projects except for Trevor’s, which had a number of posts January through the end of February for their screenings and festival announcements.

I also created a final tally spreadsheet to track the total number of posts and engagements in each phase of production (funding through to distribution). I have added these breakdowns to my findings for research question 3, “How do these relationships impact the filmmaker’s creative process and sense of authorship?” and specifically to the sections where I discuss the impact at each stage of production.

In order to code the social media analysis spreadsheets in NVivo, I converted each tab to a PDF (I started out with a tab for each stage of production – Funding, Pre-Production, Production, Post Production, and Distribution. There was also a separate spreadsheet tab for Crowdfunding Platform Communication, which was listed chronologically and not separated by production stage.). These PDFs could then be coded the same as my other research materials. I went through each social media communication and if it matched an existing code, I created a new node with the same name adding “Social Media -” to it. When including social media posts in my findings chapters, I decided to place them in tables to keep the formatting differentiated from the quotes that came directly from the filmmakers in interviews and surveys.

Immersing myself in the data required me to look at the narratives as a whole and important frequent words on their own to better understand the themes of these filmmakers’ experiences. The online and in-person communication helped deepen this understanding. Organizing my data, first based on the narrative flow and then based on the original research questions, I was able to begin outlining my findings.

### **Post Production**

#### **Off-Line Edit: The Filmmaker Experience - Findings and Analysis**

For this project, I took a practice theory perspective of films and film production. I observed the relational actions of film as a cultural product, and the developmental production stages as social processes and activities (Couldry, 2004). Viewing media creation and reception as connected social actions enabled this research project to focus on the experiences that filmmakers have when they attempt to build collaborative relationships with their audiences. Particularly the experiences around decision making and communicating with their audiences. I

adopted Heewon Chang's (2008) theory of culture as "as a product of interactions between self and others in a community of practice" (p. 23). This concept of culture balances the idea of individual agency and the societal influence on that individual, and the influence by the community of which they are a part. The larger community of practice is the shared understandings, norms, and culture that comes from film viewing – encompassing both filmmakers and audiences. The more narrowly focused community of practice that is filmmaking encompasses the community of filmmakers alone. This section will discuss the filmmaker's experience of their audience relationships, and how they built and maintain these relationships.

### **Research Question 1 - What is the Story of Collaborative Audience Relationships for Filmmakers?**

The following themes discuss what the story of collaborative audience relationships is for my filmmaker participants. Figure 1 is a visual representation of the key words used by the filmmakers and coded to this research question. While the word 'People' is prominent in responses for each research question, I feel that it is significant in understanding the answer to this question about the overall experience for filmmakers when collaborating with their audiences. It is important that in answering this question no specific group of people, such as crew or audience, has the primary position. Filmmaking, even the lowest of budget indie film, requires the efforts of multiple people. In this section, Curt, Lucas, Trevor, and I discuss working with crews on projects where the audience was invited to collaborate and projects where the audience was not invited to collaborate. Each filmmaker discussed that they felt that every film was a collaboration between crew members, therefore the idea of collaboration in film was not new. However, what is different in projects where the audience is invited to collaborate is that the line between production crew and audience begins to blur. Audience becomes crew by

contributing to the production decision making (Birnie, 2017; Cooper et al., 2017; Hanley, 2018, Jaimungal, 2018b), and crew becomes audience by contributing to the crowdfunding (Birnie, 2017; Cooper et al., 2017).



Figure 1 – Wordle for Research Question 1 Findings

Some of the smaller words specific to the responses to this question are indicative of the themes discussed in this section. Words like ‘excitement’ and ‘guilt’, which are only found on this wordle (Figure 1, above) will be discussed in greater detail within the theme of emotions experienced by the filmmakers. This section will also look at the themes of creating films as passion projects, and filmmaker interactions with their audiences. However, this section will start the exploration of the filmmaker’s experience by discussing what drew them to crowdfunding, which often comes after they have explored other avenues for funding.

### Trying Other Ways to Get Funding

For my research participants crowdfunding was not necessarily their first choice for funding their projects. Many of them expressed that they attempted a collaborative project out of necessity after surveying the funding situation. Many independent filmmakers in Canada are

feeling the impacts of funding cuts to organizations like the Canadian Media Fund (“Canada Media Fund - CMF Announces 2017-2018 program budget, guidelines and deadlines,” n.d.), the National Film Board (Dixon, 2012), and the cancelation of MuchFACT, BravoFACT, and BravoFACTUAL (T. Girard, personal communication, November 2017; Pinto, 2017). Most of my research participants came to crowdfunding in their own way, after seeing or experiencing the successes and failures of traditional funding routes.

*There's [funding] avenues that indie filmmakers go to all the time, but it is, you know, a gamble. - Lucas*

Several of the filmmakers (Trevor, Lucas, and myself) describe a lack of other options and a disheartening frustration with other sources of funding, that lead to trying crowdfunding. This sense of disillusionment with the traditional funding sources is a defining factor for these indie filmmakers that decided to pursue collaborative filmmaking.

*We tried other avenues of funding for a feature film version of The Woodsmen. We brought Vantage Point [another production company] onboard. They paid for the custom Bigfoot costume, which was amazing and then that sparked some interest from an investor. It seemed to be moving along, and then all of a sudden all of that fell through. So, crowdfunding came back up as an option. I think when we decided to go for crowdfunding was basically the same instant we decided to make it a short film, so we rewrote the project. I think we wanted to test the waters of crowdfunding, but we didn't want to test the waters on a feature film, where we'd need to be asking for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Especially with an audience that we were just kind of building, just kind of meeting, and had no history or real relationship with yet. So, at that same time we moved to a short project so that we could drastically reduce the budget. – Jodi*

An inability to secure funding through grants or studio investments was discussed as a common precursor to trying crowdfunding for the first time. However, these four filmmakers did not expect to get rich off of their collaborative projects. In fact, Trevor, Lucas, and I all discussed volunteering or putting in extra time on our own projects because we were passionate about seeing the work completed.

### **Doing Most of The Work Yourself – A Passion Project**

Theorist Emma Keltie (2017) suggests that fan and audience funded projects put “the economic burden of developing and producing work onto the consumers of content” (p. 53). While this may be true for some large media companies who have experimented with crowdfunding, my participants did not describe an experience where they had offloaded the cost of creating their films onto their audience. As with most indie film projects, my participants found themselves committing a lot of their own time and energy into bringing the films to life without any financial gain.

*There's no way that I could make those [films] if I was doing it for a living because the amount of hours that go into it are not justified financially. When you sit down and look at the production value, we had a budget of X amount but most professionals that I've talked to put the production value somewhere between 3 and 6 times higher than the actual dollar amount that went into the production. So, where's the rest of it, right? Well it's sweat equity. – Trevor*

Even though crowdfunding filmmakers ask their audiences to help fund their films, all of the participants indicated that the amounts crowdfunded did not cover all of the costs and that there were items they paid for out of pocket. Trevor and Curt had to cover the cost of purchasing

camera equipment themselves, expenses outside of the budget of their current projects. Most projects also relied on volunteer crews for support on set.

*The keys [important crew], most of them were volunteer. The actors were paid, but yeah.*

*We [key crew] all put in some of our own money into the project. – Lucas*

The theme of spending unpaid time on a project is not unique to indie filmmakers that pursue audience collaboration projects. Take the first short film I was involved in, *Mercy*, for example. *Mercy* was an indie project that we took on and did most of the work ourselves for free. While we were volunteering our own time, we also did not feel like we needed to please anyone but ourselves during the production. In fact, we rarely thought of our audience other than just a simple "I hope they like it" when it is all done. All the activities we took part in were directly related to the making of the film itself, with little to no marketing or communicating about our process to anyone. We just picked up a camera and started making a film. We created a Facebook page only after *Mercy* was finished and only then did we start to reach out to a potential audience.

Whereas for *The Woodsmen*, the volunteering of time went beyond the actual practice of making a film. We were constantly thinking of our audience, and began the outreach process before ever picking up a camera. Marketing and communicating about what we were doing became a huge part of the process and proved to be a large amount of work. This resonates with my participants who discussed their tendency to keep the audience in mind all the time for their collaborative projects.

*Since starting the project, I have technically become a full-time filmmaker but that may change in the near-future, simply due to the financial strain of film production. We're getting started on that final leg. Now I'm able to delegate, you know? We originally had*

*somebody lined up to edit and then other jobs have come in, higher paying, so I kinda had to do that myself. Which you know, I wasn't against, but I found how draining that was. If I had to do the rest of it myself, it probably wouldn't be good for my sanity (laughs). – Lucas*

Lucas was not the only filmmaker that alluded collaborative filmmaking had been taking both a mental and emotional toll. Through my autoethnographic journaling I had anticipated this, discovering both highs and lows in my own experience. Therefore, I asked each filmmaker what their emotional experience had been.

### **The Emotions Experienced**

The participants each discussed experiencing a wide range of emotions while working on their collaborative projects and interacting with their audience members. These emotions ranged from being excited when they realized that the audience had helped them reach their funding goals, to nervous about following through with what they had set out to do, to being uncomfortable and frustrated by some of their interactions with the audience. Most of the emotional milestones came at the end of production phases, such as the end of funding, the end of shooting, the end of post production, and, for those whose projects were complete, the final screening of the film with their audiences. Many of my participants also expressed the realization at the end of their funding process that the actual work of creating the film was still to come. I asked Lucas what he felt were the most emotionally impactful moments in his experience so far.

*The end of funding, honestly, the most unexpected thing was just getting the funding.*

*Reaching our goal and realizing it. There was no more shocking moment than getting text messages from people being like "Congratulations." It was kind of like a cross between happiness and gratitude of, "Oh we did it" and also like "Oh shit, now we've gotta follow*

*through." And then the end of production was another one because that was like such a milestone, you know? I had brought all these guys, and this cast and crew along on this six month drag, dragging through the mud, and then to reach the end of that was a big one. – Lucas*

Some of this sense of shock in accomplishing their funding goal and realization that now the work of making the film would really start, is evident in the social media posts created by the filmmakers:

**Table 2. Funding Social Media Posts**

Film	Post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook Post	“Well folks, because we live in an awesome community, we have reached 56% of our funding goal in THE FIRST DAY!” – Filmmaker post
<i>Better Left Unsaid</i> , Kickstarter Update	“Over 110% funded in 2 days! The support has been overwhelming and it's fantastic to see that the nuances of the psychology behind what is going on with the current political sphere is important to you too!” – Filmmaker post
<i>Were-Wool</i> , Kickstarter update	“1 week down, 3 to go. Ho-lee sheep ! We've just rocketed past 20% after our first full week.” – Filmmaker post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook Post	“This is just the beginning. Thank you all so much for helping us bring this film to life. Time for the hard work!” – Filmmaker post
<i>Were-Wool</i> , Facebook post	“Having reached nearly 85% of our funding goal with a little over a week left in our campaign we want to once again

extend our thanks to all of our supporters thus far, your generosity has blown all of our expectations out of the water. It's been a hard road but the real work is just beginning.” –  
Filmmaker post

In the above posts (Table 2) we can see how the use of all caps and explanation points in *The Woodsmen*, *Better Left Unsaid*, and *Were-Wool's* posts announcing funding milestones shows the excitement felt by the filmmakers and their wanting to share that with their audiences. *The Woodsmen*, and *Were-Wool's* posts at the end of their funding period show their realization that the actual work of making the film is still ahead of them and their wanting to share this acknowledgement of accountability with their audience.

Each of my participants discussed feeling a sense of responsibility to their audience. They talked about using the final film as a way to give back to their audience and confirm the audience's faith in the project.

*Obviously, you want to have the best film possible for any audience. But once your audience has seen that you've crowdfunded thousands of dollars, you feel like the expectation goes up on their part. It was always about, like, "How do we communicate this, and how do we get people excited, and what can we do to get people involved." And then the big question "Are we following through?" And, because they're [the audience] always in my head, the expectations go up in my head for what they're going to want. So, I would say there was cost financially because we put in way more money ourselves than we intended. Because the audience is always in your head, you're more likely to just dive*

*in and be like “Okay well, they got us this far. Now let’s just, you know, put in whatever we have to financially ourselves, to take it to the home stretch.” – Jodi*

A sense of obligation can also create stress and guilt for the filmmaker, especially around what they feel is the filmmaker’s responsibility to keep their audience informed and deliver on their promises. This sense of guilt was often seen when I asked each filmmaker about their experiences around communication routines and fulfilling the elements set out in their crowdfunding campaigns. Lucas described some of the gaps in his audience updates and how this made him feel.

*And then, between October to about December there were three months of nothing. I mean I feel kind of bad as we're getting into post, you know, the updates are getting fewer and further between. And even then, we're not able to show as much because things aren't finished. So, I feel like, in a sense, that I need to give them a little more but they're kind of understanding and supportive of the whole process. It essentially is just the fact that they were kind enough to give me something of theirs and the guilt just stems from the fact that it's taken me this long and I still don't have something to give back to them, you know? It really is just me being, like, so grateful and excited that they gave me something that the guilt just stems from, like "Well, I feel like now I've got to deliver. Now I've really got to bring them something back just to return the favour in a big way." Yeah.*

– Lucas

This sense of guilt stemming from gaps in communication was felt by Curt, Lucas and myself. It is also evident in the social media updates created by my filmmaker participants, particularly in posts starting with an indication of a previous extended absence. This recognition, by the filmmakers, of a lack of communication served as acknowledgement to the audience of a breach

in the proposed conditions of collaborative filmmaking, namely the promise to keep them updated during the production.

**Table 3. Gaps as Evident in Social Media Posts**

Film	Post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Kickstarter update	“Hey! Remember us? Well we know it's been a while but as you can see things are really taking shape...” – Filmmaker post
<i>Were-Wool</i> , Kickstarter update	“Long Time No See Salutations generous backers. I know, I know, it's been a while and in typical overdue-update fashion let me start out by apologizing for the lack of communication on our end since the start of the new year...” – Filmmaker post

The posts above (Table 3) illustrate how both Lucas and I attempted to use self-deprecating humor to re-engage with our audiences after prolonged absences in communication. This type of filmmaker and audience interaction was more about a one-sided flow of information, intended to keep the audience aware of where the filmmakers were in each stage of production. My four participants discussed a variety of interactions with their audience, where dialog and two-way information flow would occur.

**Digital and Real-World Interactions with the Audience**

Media research shows that audiences want individualized and personal experiences when interacting with filmmakers (Deuze, 2005). Public relations studies show that when individuals feel they have a relationship, they are willing to reciprocate with personal dedication to the organization, exhibited in their behaviours (Bruning & Galloway, 2003). Elana Shefrin (2004)

describes how a film can engender this type of relationship because fans identify with the filmmaker personally. Each filmmaker participant felt that they had a specific relationship with their audience. Trevor talks about giving some of his audience members the opportunity to come to set and one even played a character.

*She was all excited about it and it was like "Alright, well, we can work with this." We only planned to have her in one scene, and she had never acted before, but she did so well we were like "You wanna do more? We've got these two other characters that we could just build it into yours and make it the same character for all three." And she said "Absolutely, I'd love to." So, she's in the film, she speaks, she's great. She had a great time. – Trevor*

Each filmmaker had both real world and digital interactions with their audience members. All four projects had created opportunities for audience members to come to set and experience the filmmaking process. Lucas had a day where his audience could come and be extras in the film. This was about 9 months after completing the funding process, and he remembers being encouraged that his audience was still enthusiastic about the project.

*So yeah, that experience was great. It was great to have some people coming out, for the basic thing of putting a face to a name. And then, also, seeing that the enthusiasm is still kinda there. It was great to see them be that excited still after all that time. – Lucas*

Curt also talks about his audience being excited on their visits to set.

*It was just them hanging around, helping out with the camera. I think they're so excited to be there. I asked them, like "What would you like? What would you add?" and they're response is "No that's good. You did good." So, they're a bit shy unless it's digital, in email form. Then their true feelings come out. – Curt*

Both Curt and Trevor discussed how their audience members were not shy to provide negative feedback through the digital platforms set up for two-way communication. Audience members' "true feelings" could either be posted for everyone to engage with, on the crowdfunding or social media platforms, or they could be emailed directly for the filmmakers' consideration. Each of the four filmmakers had set up their online platforms and provided personal contact information to encourage this kind of discussion. This active solicitation of both positive and negative feedback was one of the ways that filmmakers build and maintain their relationship with their audience members.

**Research Question 2 - Why and How Do Filmmakers Build and Maintain Relationships with their Audience?**

The following themes discuss why and how filmmakers build and maintain audience relationships. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the key words used by the filmmakers and coded to this research question. While the word 'audience' occurs in responses for each research question, I feel that it is significant in understanding the answer to the question about building and maintaining relationships because this discussion revolved around how the audience was at the heart of many of the decisions and practices for this kind of filmmaking.



because having a solid audience base can assist with securing traditional and non-traditional funding.

*I think there are two reasons that we did it. One, because we didn't have any other option. Besides kind of borrowing a massive amount of money and then the amount of risk is just too high starting off. And two, we recognized the opportunity to build an audience. And when I say build an audience, what I mean is to gather one of those tribes that are behind it, pushing it, because they feel connected to it, because they're part of it in a way. Not everybody can act, not everybody can edit, and not everybody owns a classic car or costumes, but crowdfunding is something that anyone who wanted to be involved could be involved in. And so, to a degree, it was like fruit that was on the tree that we knew was available when we needed it, but it could only be harvested once, right? And so we did. – Trevor*

Trevor continued to work with his audience after his initial crowdfunded film and to create opportunities for interaction through live screenings and live Q&As with cast and crew. Through the sale of tickets and DVDs he's managed to create a revenue stream and is now just finishing a project that was funded through the income generated. While he was excited to no longer be reliant on raising funds this way, he was realizing that there were some drawbacks to electing to forgo a crowdfunding campaign. I asked Trevor if he felt that choosing to not crowdfund for this project was affecting his ability to engage and grow his audience base.

*Yeah, so I mean that's the downside, right? I feel like that has impeded our ability to build an audience in a way. And so, we've had to be strategic in how we market and promote it. – Trevor*

In order to be deliberate when promoting and marketing their films, each filmmaker needs to be very knowledgeable about their audience and the expectations that they have. These expectations can be based on the genre of the project and the individual tastes of each filmmaker's particular audience base.

### **Knowing Your Audience and Your Film's Market**

Collaborative filmmakers that use crowdfunding and crowdsourcing techniques show a keen awareness of their audience's interests and the market for their film. Research has shown that "crowdfunding can lower the risk for creators, not only by distributing the initial investment between creators and fans, but also by providing a mechanism that ensures that the production becomes popular and therefore more likely to be commercially successful" (Leibovitz et al., 2015, p. 19). Many of the filmmakers used their crowdfunding process to test the waters and see if there was interest in their films before filming.

*There are certain genres which I think are better suited to crowdfunding, certain types of films. There is a very vibrant horror community online on social media. We had already connected with some of these groups because of our previous film, Mercy. So, when we launched our crowdfunding campaign, we contacted all of the reviewers who had watched Mercy to ask if they'd review the Kickstarter page. – Jodi*

The internet provides a direct line of communication to audience members who are interested in niche genres that may not attract mainstream crowds, and therefore do not attract conventional funders. These audiences are excited by independent filmmaker content if they tell stories that are different from Hollywood's "tyranny of lowest-common-denominator fare" (Anderson, 2004, para.7). Even though these stories may be unconventional, they still belong to genres with very specific rules that audiences expect media producers to follow (Jackson,

Nielsen, & Hsu, 2011). In *The Woodsmen's* genre of old school horror, we anticipated our audience would expect limited use of CGI, gory death scenes, and some campy low budget aspects. We let these genre rules and the expectations of an imaginary audience influence some of our decisions in writing the script, before we ever opened up a dialog with our real audience.

As John Jackson, Greg Nielson, and Yon Hsu (2011) write:

media content is influenced not only by the story genre but also by who the media producers, writers, directors, and creative formations think their audiences are, what kinds of publics they belong to, or in other words, an implied audience which may or may not overlap with the real audience. (Jackson, Nielsen, & Hsu, 2011, p. x).

Through direct communication, filmmakers can get a better understanding of their audience and learn more about their fan base. Merging the expectations of the imaginary audience and the real audience helped Lucas determine the boundaries for his project.

*Knowing that the idea that I had, specifically a horror parody movie, there's a fan base for that. Because the Internet is not just crowdfunding, there's all those little subgroups, you know? I briefly talked about this with my sound mixer the other day, because he was talking about making sure, for festival submissions he's like "Oh you wanna make sure that you're up against movies that had similar budgets. You don't want to be up against a million-dollar VFX based production." But, you know, my response to that was "I don't think that a horror film with a bunch of visual effects shots, would go over really well in this certain community [the practical effects, old-school horror community]." There are certain sub-cultures, or sub-sets of a community, that are drawn to certain things and I think some of those things would do extremely well in a crowdfunding world. I think genre films are the ones that will get you better traction, because it's something that*

*people can be both familiar with but there's room to mess around, you know? With something like a fantasy movie, or a horror movie, or a sci-fi movie, you're able to creatively interpret the world, if that makes any sense? - Lucas*

Crafting films and media products to fit audience desires and fill a gap in the industry is valuable to audiences that are bombarded with content. Audiences face various costs when committing to viewing a film; everything from psychological commitment in understanding a storyline or plot, to time spent, to actual financial expenditures (Potter, 2009). If an audience member could know that a film would be exactly what they were hoping for, before dedicating the time to watch, this could lower some of the costs identified in committing to viewing the film (Potter, 2009). Through open dialog, filmmakers can mitigate the impact of some of these costs, by assuring the audience that they will get exactly what they are looking for. Helping the audience feel that they are watching something “with the lowest costs to them personally in comparison to payoffs” (Potter, 2009, p. 77). Through open communication with their audience members, my filmmaker participants demonstrated that they were working to create a film that their viewers would want to watch.

*If someone thinks audience collaboration is unnecessary, or the audience is unnecessary in some way, talking with them and getting some feedback, then they're doing a disservice to themselves and to the audience. And, they know this because they don't want to screen films for themselves in their mom's basement. They would like it if some people saw their film. They would like it even more if other people liked it. So obviously we care about the audience. So, to say "I just care about my vision" that's wrong. Ok. I'm sorry. – Curt*

Each of the four filmmakers used communication routines to have open dialog with their audience. This communication was used to gather feedback on whether or not their project was

meeting the audiences' expectations, and for the filmmakers to show why their film would be worth the audience members taking the time to watch.

### **Communication Routines**

Communication for collaborative filmmaking is not just something that starts when the filmmaking is over, and the marketing of the film begins. Shefrin (2004) suggests that filmmakers now need to include audiences at all stages of production to fulfill the audience's "desire to be 'consumer affiliates' in the cinematic production process" (p. 262). This is something that collaborator filmmakers are already doing, as they keep their audiences updated throughout each stage of the production process. Some of these communication routines are deliberate and planned in advance, while others developed more organically based on the needs of the production.

*I let my primary backers know what I'm up to when I pass, or am about to pass, a major milestone. Especially early on, when we were doing the crowdfunding. It was kind of like every couple weeks we'd hit a goal, and we'd be like "Ok, like, let's talk about where we're at now." But I have found that if I've fallen into a routine it has been kind of like once a stage is complete or we hit a milestone of some kind then I'll let everybody know what's going on. I wish I was a little more on the ball with letting them know. But at the same time, I feel like I'd rather get a substantive amount of information across than every week be like "Hey guys, I trimmed four frames." (Laughs). - Lucas*

The collaborative filmmakers in this research used social media and the channels provided through the crowdfunding platforms to engage their audience and keep them informed from before pre-production through to the end of the final film's screening dates.

*We used Facebook heavily. We used it for collaboration through a behind-the-scenes group of our cast and crew. We used it for marketing, through a fan page with over 8k followers. We used it for direct sales, linking our Eventbrite events to Facebook Events. We used it for promotion, posting the trailer had more than 250k views. We used it for recruiting including music contest, casting, etc. We used it for primary communication with many independent theatres during distribution planning. – Trevor*

Audience interactions on the Facebook posts for the screenings of the two completed projects, *The Woodsmen* and *Trevor's Production*, show how filmmaker updates were received. The sold-out events show how highly anticipated the final films were.

**Table 4. Screenings Social Media Posts**

Film	Post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook Post	200 tickets have already been booked in the first 16 hours.  Don't wait until the last minute. Click the link below and reserve your FREE tickets for this event. You won't regret it!  – Filmmaker post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook Post	We're officially sold out! We can't wait to see you all at the premiere June 22nd! – Filmmaker post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook Audience Response	C: Congratulations  C: LOVE IT!!!!!!  C: That's awesome!!!  C: Congrats!  C: Well done! Congratulations!

<p><i>Trevor Production, Facebook</i> Post</p>	<p>That time we ... kicked it off for a sold-out crowd of 1200...</p>
<p><i>Trevor Production, Facebook</i> Audience Response</p>	<p>C: Was an awesome night. So proud of you *****. C: was a great evening... thanks ***** C: Are you performing ... in February? C: Nice job *****! C: Amazing *****! C: Amazing C: Good job C: Nice job!</p>

I will note below in my discussion of the audiences’ impact on the process of filmmaking that the distribution phase of the above two projects was the highest in terms of audience engagements in likes and shares. Each project took about 12 months from the first social media post announcing the project to the final screening post. The success of these two projects’ communication routines can be seen in their ability to not only maintain audience engagement over that period without audience interest in the final film dwindling, but actually build and increase the engagement at the end. In the next section I will look closer at the efforts required to maintain an engaged audience before there is a final product to share.

**Colour Correction: The Audience’s Impact on Process – Findings/Analysis**

Filmmaking can be a long process. Film data researcher Steven Follows (2018) states that for the Hollywood model, “the average production was announced 871 days before it was eventually in cinemas” (para. 10). For most productions there is not a lot of communication with

the audience during the period between first announcement and the few months of hype and marketing just before the film is released for screenings. During the 600-700 hundred days of silence, these Hollywood filmmakers are focusing on the practices, processes, and requirements of the filmmaking itself. Some of the practices of filmmaking focus on the art and others focus on the business side of the industry. According to Trevor, a filmmaker has to focus on art, craft and business.

*It's three things, it's art, it's a craft, and it's a business. And if a filmmaker is missing any one of those three, they will fail. Straight up, they're gonna fail. Everyone thinks that because they have the art, that they've got what they need. Those are the people that are making "steaming piles of art." In other words, art without the craft. You watch a film and the sound is bad, audiences will not forgive. They'll forgive bad picture before they forgive bad sound, right? What's wrong? Well, that side of the craft wasn't in place. So, you need the art and you need the craft. If you've got the art, you can hire the craft, if you've got the finance behind it. But you can only do that once, and you lose your shirt because you don't have the business behind it. You've gotta have all three. If you lose the art, nobody wants to watch it because there's no soul. So, you can't lose the art, and that's what none of us want to lose anyway. – Trevor*

This section looks at how each filmmaker experienced their audiences' impact on the practices of filmmaking. Most indie films also require a number of years to see through to completion, and similar to the Hollywood model, communication is sparse prior to the final release marketing. This marketing communication and any announcements there might be before that would primarily be of the one-way information delivery kind. The collaborative filmmaker must learn to balance their communication practices with their filmmaking practices, and my

four participants expressed that collaboration had an impact on their production timelines. The impact of the audience was felt in various stages of production, from before pre-production all the way through to the final product, including the filmmaker's sense of who authored the final film.

### **Research Question 3 - How do these Relationships Impact the Filmmaker's Creative Process and Sense of Authorship?**

The following themes discuss the filmmaker's sense of authorship and how they experience their audiences' impact on their creative process. Figure 3 is a visual representation of the key words used by the filmmakers and coded to this research question. While the words 'people' and 'think' occur frequently in this section, I feel that their greater significance lies in assisting the understanding of other sections. For this section the word 'production' is important in the discussion of the audience's impact, because these are the stages of filmmaking (pre-production, production, and post production) during which most other filmmakers are excluding their audiences or only provide one-way information. For collaborative filmmakers, the act of encouraging two-way communication and incorporating audience feedback created a non-linear production cycle. Getting a great audience suggestion in production might require the collaborative filmmaker to return to pre-production and book a new location or actor. A suggestion during post production might require the team to go back and film extra sequences.



one in which all members feel their contributions matter (Jenkins et al., 2016). Each of my filmmaker participants expressed how they felt their audience's contributions mattered and made a difference to the final film. Curt, who is creating an open-source documentary and receiving input from his audience regarding how he approaches his interviewees, described how he would be making a different film without his audience's involvement.

*[Without the audience] I would be making my film, and it would be biased, and it would be a wreck. It would be horrible. It wouldn't be art, it would be propaganda. It wouldn't be successful, because first of all it's propaganda. So, that's not going to spread as much as art. Right now, I have an audience because I'm collaborating with them. They'll feel a sense of ownership through the critiques that they have and they will get snippets of how the film is going before anyone else, so they'll see "here's the first cut" or "here's the half of the first cut" and "how do you like the tone?" [Without the audience] it would be different on many... on every level. – Curt*

Each filmmaker created their own space for audience collaboration, by requesting feedback, and asking for production assistance in the form of gathering props, locations, and even actors. The filmmakers were grateful for the financial contributions of their audience, which enabled them to make a film, but they also expressed how their creative input helped to make the final films richer and more diverse. For *The Woodsmen* we encouraged feedback on our film pitch, on various cuts of the poster and trailer, and screened the final cut with select test audiences.

*I think this is one of the reasons that getting the audience involved in the creative process can be very rewarding, because you're adding so many perspectives and making a product that's so much more than any one person could make alone. With this project I*

*was way more concerned with “What are people gonna think? How are they going to react to that?” So, I would say like it did impact the creative process and it's not really positive or negative. I don't think the film would be what it is without the fact that they were always there when we were making decisions. I think I already said it would be a different film without the audience. They wouldn't have been in our heads. But beyond that, like, there would have been no money, which means no film at all, like no... no cast, no food for the crew, no nothing. – Jodi*

My filmmaking partners and I tend to create films with endings that leave room for interpretation; we like each audience member to be able to bring their own understanding of the film to each viewing rather than make one specific perspective explicit. We did this for our first film *Mercy* as well and really enjoyed the audience theories that emerged with each screening. Some of the theories, suggesting psychic abilities and dream sequences, we had predicted. However, other theories including the manifestation of inner demons and apprenticeship of a killer, we had not thought about until the audience brought them forward. For *The Woodsmen* we wanted to have an ending that encouraged the audience to use their imaginations when interpreting the plot, but we also wanted to explore some of the interpretations that we had not expected. After one test screening, an audience member had an interesting theory that we had not considered before. We decided we wanted to encourage this theory, without making it the only possible interpretation, so we added a few new elements to the beginning of the film that could lead viewers to this new understanding. This audience member brought something new to my own understanding of a story that I had co-written and been working on for over a year, and without this understanding the final film would have been different. Lucas also discussed test screenings with small audience groups to check their reactions and incorporate suggestions.

*We are still in the midst of post production, but what I've found quite useful has been putting together small test audiences to get their feedback on whether or not things make sense, if there are any blatant issues with continuity, narrative flow, etc. - Lucas*

Trevor even made changes to his film after the final cut, based on audience reactions at his large sold out screening events.

*Most of the time, a film will open in hundreds or thousands of screens, and all at the same time. We didn't. We opened in a city. The next weekend it's in a different city. The next weekend it's in a different city. The first eight screenings, I was watching it, experiencing it, looking at the reactions, and then going back and making fine tuning tweaks to the edit, to the sound, to the presentation, to the way that we open the show, everything. So, re-exporting it, rebuilding out the DCP, swapping it out with the theatres, for the first 8 shows. Because I was hearing from the audience, and seeing what they were experiencing, and finding ways to improve it. – Trevor*

Test screenings are a common tool for filmmakers of all kinds. Large Hollywood productions pay to have test audiences view their films. Having access to a dedicated group of audience members, beyond family and friends, who will watch a filmmaker's film and provide good constructive feedback is a valuable resource to have for an indie filmmaker who cannot afford to pay for these services. Another way to create spaces for audience participation and engagement is through crowdsourcing, or asking the audience to contribute non-financial items, such as special skills, props, vehicles, locations, etc.

### **Crowdsourcing**

All of my filmmaker participants used crowdsourcing as a way of extending their production team. It can be costly for a small production to hire a location scout, cast dozens of

extras, or spend time hunting for props. The ability to mobilize audience members to fill these roles categorically increases the production value of an independent film. Curt utilized his audience for research assistance, asking for interviewee recommendations and research question suggestions. For *The Woodsmen* we put calls out to our audience to help us find locations, vehicles, and even asked for assistance in locating niche items like crashmats, which saved us costly rental fees. Trevor was very excited about how he engaged his audience through crowdsourcing and their ability to positively impact his production by assisting in this way.

*We do a lot of things through crowdsourcing, like, props, locations... We crowdsource that stuff like crazy. This is like a new discovery. Just the last year or so, we've figured out we can post almost anything now. Cause, we've got a bit of a fan base, right? And, and they'll share and talk about it, because it's interesting. As long as it's a small, specific ask, people will help you. And so, we started doing like "Here's a picture, we're looking for a location like this, do you have anything?" You can get a message out to 2000 people (snaps fingers) like that. Get 'em all looking for that needle in the haystack. – Trevor*

Location scouting is often a time-consuming part of the pre-production phase of filmmaking, where a dedicated crew travels around the vicinity of the production looking for locations that match the needs of the story. Once a potential location has been identified, the location manager needs to negotiate the use of the location. By organizing his local audience members to suggest locations that they themselves were agreeing to provide access to, Trevor was able to save days or even months of work in identifying and securing locations. Similarly, Lucas saved his production money by tapping into his audience for his extra casting needs. Extras are background actors who help to fill out a scene. Indie films are often careful to limit the requirement of extras in their storylines because bringing extra bodies to set, even if they are not

professional actors, is usually very expensive. By encouraging his audience members to travel to his production for an onset experience, Lucas was able to gather the number of background actors that he needed for one of his large scenes.

*I knew all along that we could have backers be extras in the film, both because we had a scene calling for a number of extras but also that is sort of the most obvious way to have an audience engage and participate in the process in a way that is beneficial to both parties. You get the scene/sequence you need, and they get to see what you're doing and that their investment isn't going to waste. – Lucas*

Organization-publics relationship management theory puts importance on the exchange of two relational processes “information flow and resource flow” (Ledingham, 2003, p. 187). In other words, a relationship needs to be a give-and-take with the audience, with information and resources flowing in both directions (Reiss, 2011). Information delivery alone cannot be equated with dialogue and neither can the sharing of pre-created content (Kennedy & Sommerfeldt, 2015). Crowdsourcing provides an element of transformation, a way for audiences to have influence and contribute real value. Filmmakers crowdsourcing with their audience can resemble a participatory culture, one where all members feel their contributions matter (Jenkins et al., 2016). By crowdsourcing elements for their films, the filmmakers are inviting participatory audiences to have a meaningful impact on the film. Each of the filmmaker participants in my research indicated that they used crowdsourcing at various stages. This “DIWO, or Do It With Others” (Trigonis, 2016, p. 99) approach saved the filmmakers’ time and money by having their audience contribute to their various production needs.

Telo's (2013) framework for identifying participatory projects, outlines that crowdfunding alone does not constitute a project with audience participation. However, crowdfunding can be one way to crowdsource an audience.

*Victor [my filmmaking partner and husband] actually put it really nicely when he said, "Regardless of whether you feel like you're crowdsourcing not, even if you just think your crowdfunding, you're kind of always crowdsourcing. Because any funders you get through crowdfunding become audience members. They become a really dedicated audience and so you've actually crowdsourced an audience. So even if you don't need the money necessarily, crowdfunding still a real benefit because when people put their hard-earned cash forward, they become a dedicated audience. A far more dedicated audience than you can get any other way." - Jodi*

Collaborating in this way with an audience enables audience members to provide production value and fulfil roles normally occupied by cast and crew. Collaborative filmmakers need to consider these contributions and determine how best to provide credit and recognition for their participatory audiences.

### **Importance of Credit and Ownership for the Audience**

Keltie (2017) acknowledges the importance of participatory audiences "for privately owned media companies that, in effect, rely on the labour power of consumer-producers for the very existence of their business models" (p.6). We have seen that this is also true for independent filmmakers who would not be able to make their projects without the contributions of their audience members. However, Keltie (2017) worries that media companies misuse their audiences by appropriating this free labour. She argues that "audiences may misrecognize the extent of their cultural capital in the act of participation" (p. 11). Credit and ownership are both

important parts of any creative endeavour. Each of my participants felt that it was imperative that they recognize the individual contributions of their audience members, on a case by case basis if the contribution went above and beyond the financing of the film. Lucas, Curt, and my own production each promised a name credit at the end of their films to every backer that contributed funding. Lucas described his decision to offer this credit as something that he himself would be looking for if he was backing a production.

*It was sort of like the more backers we got, the more support we were getting. That's when I was starting to realize like "Ok, this isn't, you know, totally me anymore." So, in that sense, I want to make sure they're credited because it would make me feel good if I was credited. – Lucas*

The other side of the argument regarding the listing of crowdfunding backer names in the end credits is evident in Trevor's case. His previously crowdfunded projects did not offer end credit recognition at every backer level. Trevor had very specific and strategic reasons for not wanting to offer this credit to everyone; he wanted to keep the idea of artistic credit reserved for crew members who worked on the film or backers who came on board at a level that would earn them a producer credit. He felt that keeping these credits exclusive would preserve the integrity of the credit.

*That one's tricky because if you price it so high that there's not enough interest, obviously it does you no good. But, if you price it low then the perception to your crew, that are earning that credit through sweat equity, is "Is that all I'm worth?" You know? "I could have stayed home and not spent two weeks out in the cold, and for \$1000 got the same credit?" So, what we started doing was only having it for specific credits and keeping the*

*price high enough that when crew looked at it, they understood the value to the production.* – Trevor

Beyond recognition in the final credits, I asked each filmmaker if they felt that the audience should feel a sense of ownership in the cultural capital of the final film. Pierre Bourdieu (1993) defines cultural capital as a social relationship within an exchange system. One of the three forms of cultural capital is “a form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips a social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artifacts” (p. 7). Through insider information of the production process and seeing behind the scenes of how the film came together, audience members are able to build empathy with the filmmakers and appreciate the final product on a new level. The other form of capital relevant to cultural production is symbolic capital, “accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honor and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge... and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 7). This type of capital could then be gained through a sense of ownership, that comes through insider knowledge of the project, which leads bragging rights and recognition as members of an exclusive group. Each of my four participants described their audience as having bragging rights over the production.

*It was a way of giving back and saying, like, “We couldn't do this without you, so we want you to really actually be a part of it. Not just hand over your money.” I think that the audience should have a sense of ownership and I hope they do. In terms of being able to say, like “Hey, I helped make that and not only did I contribute funding but that there's an image of me in the film. I think a huge part of that cultural capital is to be able to say, “I knew that was going to be cool. I knew that was going to get finished. I knew that was going to be a thing, so I jumped on board before it was a thing.” – Jodi*

Fostering the audience's sense of ownership and encouraging their bragging rights over the production is unique to collaborative filmmaking. Achieving these feelings of connection and ownership for their audience requires filmmakers to leave room for negotiation in both their processes and in their own sense of ownership over the final film.

### **Audience Impacts on the Creative Process and the Filmmaker's Sense of Ownership**

Each of the filmmakers discussed the differences of collaborative filmmaking and what impacts audience participation had on their process. Lucas and I both discussed how our audiences changed our own sense of ownership in the film. Rather than diminishing our own sense of authorship, collaborating with our audience expanded our idea of ownership.

*I think in a way it has [had an impact on my sense of ownership]. I think I'll always be able to tout that it was my idea, you know? There are certain things that I have ownership over, in regards to the actual production of the film. I was able to organize this thing, we were able to shoot it over the course of a couple months, and the film is still cohesive. So, there are things that I have ownership over. But, in terms of the actual product... I do think that my perception of who it belongs to is different than it was going into the whole thing. Because, like I said, that sort of realization came to me as we were wrapping up the crowdfunding campaign. It was kind of like "Oh, ok. This isn't just my goofy idea anymore, this is a real thing now." And I would hope that they [the audience] have the same thought about it. That they feel a sense of ownership over the movie. -*

Lucas

Through collaboration, filmmakers have the ability to explore audience ideas that can make their final films better and experience creativity as a communal activity, rather than an individual one. Creating in collaboration changes the production process, as filmmakers receive

and incorporate audience feedback. What was originally a linear progression, from pre-production through to distribution, becomes less sequential. A good audience suggestion in post production, may require a filmmaker to return to production or even pre-production if new scenes are required. This kind of non-linear progression through the production process can take extra time and effort on the part of the filmmaker.

### **The Impact of Collaborative Filmmaking on the Stages of Film Production**

Each participant mentioned that working with their collaborative audience affected their production schedule. While activities like crowdsourcing can reduce production times, the fostering of two-way dialog and incorporating audience feedback can increase production times.

*From a time perspective, you can always expect that whatever time you think you're going to put into it, multiply it by three when it comes to crowdsourcing. – Trevor*

A large part of this was the frequent communication with their audience members in their social media updates. These updates were intended to enable the audience to feel connected to the project, as “‘consumer affiliates’ in the cinematic production process” (Shefrin, 2004, p.262). It was important to the filmmakers that the audience received information on the progress of each project. These updates also served as points for discussion, as the audience responded to each filmmaker’s progress and provided feedback to be considered. Considerations for crafting these updates in a way that would foster audience engagement took time and effort on the part of the filmmaker.

*I would say that it did change our filmmaking process slightly. I mean certainly it created a whole new pre-production phase. There's the regular pre-production where we're prepping the script, getting everyone ready, etc. But crowdfunding and prepping the crowdfunding page, that was a whole new level. And then throughout production, you*

*know, you'd constantly be thinking "What's my next Kickstarter update to the audience? How do I let them know what's happening?" So, we did a few Facebook live events, we brought posters and postcards for our audience members to set for the entire cast and crew to sign, so there were breaks in production to get them to do that. Finding a clean dry area to do that became part of the process. It's harder than you think on an outdoor horror set to find a dry spot. – Jodi*

Collaborative filmmaking is not only about the creation of a crowdfunding campaign as an additional component of pre-production, it requires the filmmaker to look at each stage of production differently.

As part of my data gathering, I tracked each project's campaign updates over the various stages of production. All four participants used Facebook to update their audience of their progress, and three filmmakers also used the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter to update their backers. Over the lifecycle of their projects to date the filmmakers have posted the following number of times to update on Kickstarter and received the following audience engagement:

**Table 5. Crowdfunding Update Posts**

<b>Project</b>	<b># of posts</b>	<b>Post likes</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
<i>Better Left Unsaid</i>	4	0	0	June 2018 – January 2019
<i>Were-Wool</i>	22	65	2	June 2017 – December 2018
<i>The Woodsmen</i>	23	91	8	July 2017 – July 2018

It is important to remember that Trevor did not crowdfund for the specific project used as a case study in this research, therefore he did not utilize crowdfunding platform for updates. It is also important to note that Curt's project was not as far along in its development during the research

period. My research observation ended in April 2019 and Curt launched more heavily into production the following summer, which increased his audience updates. While each of the participant filmmakers used Facebook as the main site for updates to their audience, the above filmmakers also provided specific updates to their backers on the crowdfunding platforms. These specific updates were tailored for the site and were not always a simple copy and paste from their social media feeds. I will look more closely below at the work and effort of each filmmaker, in keeping on top of their Facebook discussions. Crowdfunding as part of a collaborative film project adds both a new production stage, the funding stage, and a new discussion platform for the filmmakers to keep track of.

### **Funding Stage and Campaign Building**

Most of the participants seemed to agree that it took a significant amount of time to build their successful crowdfunding campaigns, in such a way as to attract their audience members. In order to collaborate with their audiences across cultural, geographic, and other distances, these filmmakers needed to create narratives that their audiences could imagine and identify with. This enables potential audience members to imagine what the final film would look like, in order to see the importance in getting it made. Symbolic Convergence Theory provides an important framework to explain how communication can create and maintain these shared worlds of understanding:

Symbolic convergence begins when an individual ‘dramatizes’ or shares a narrative in such a way as to arouse excitement in the rest of the group. A chain reaction results as the other members begin to build on the initial narrative, embellishing and extending the story in response to each other. (Holtz-Bacha, Kaid, 2008, p. 768)

The sharing of a dramatized narrative to generate excitement can be seen in the initial sharing of the filmmaker pitch videos and is in fact the sole purpose of a crowdfunding campaign page. A chain reaction occurs when inspired audience members contribute financially and provide feedback and comments, which in turn attracts other audience members to the campaign. The process of inspiring the audience to engage with an idea that was not fully formed was an entirely new step for the collaborative filmmaker participants. Traditional filmmaking only engages an audience once a product has been fully solidified. The crowdfunding process was often seen as an extension of the pre-production phase specific to collaborative filmmaking.

*It was almost two months of work to build the Kickstarter. And what I mean by that is, figuring out, drafting how I'm going to write about this [film], like "How am I going to put my idea forward?" I mean, you have to write about yourself and I've always found that to be super hard to do. Because it's just finding that weird balance of, you don't want to sell yourself short, but you don't want to come off, you know, super cocky and overconfident, and braggy. You're basically writing a pitch of "Hey, this is my idea and I think you should help me make it because of this, this, and this." So, that whole aspect of it, figuring out how to present myself and my idea in the best way was stressful, was time-consuming, was a lot of work. Then, on top of that, there's building all the other stuff. Making sure you're covering all your bases, explaining what the budget's going towards, talking about what other sort of things you might need, and just being as clear as possible. So, yeah just the mental stress. - Lucas*

Trevor, on the other hand, felt that the setting up of the crowdfunding campaign and the promotion page was not too much extra work. Where the real increase in time commitment came from was the communicating with the audience.

*So, building the campaign is really not bad at all. If you're a content creator already, well it's perfect right? That's what we do. So, you use your concept art, you paint a picture [for the audience]. It's the same thing you do for your crew and your cast and everybody else, it's just you do it a little earlier is all. That's just good pre-production. That part I don't mind. Actually, I kinda enjoyed that side of it. But I loathe engaging with that 10% that's amplified. So, here's your audience, right? You've got your 80%, you've got your 10% that are really enthusiastic, and you've got your 10% that are just bastards (laughs). It's like "Well I bought a DVD, so I should be able to come to set." "No, you can't come to set. You bought a \$20 DVD and it would cost me more than that just to insure you to step foot on set." (Laughs). You can't do that, you know? So, that side of it becomes a lot of work. And, and you have to constantly engage with that audience, they're not just a regular transient customer. It becomes a lot to manage. Most of them are great and you just get a few that really become a huge burden on time. – Trevor*

It is important to remember that Trevor had conducted two successful crowdfunding campaigns before discussing this current project. It is possible that his comfort level in discussing his pre-production concepts in order to “paint a picture” for the audience comes from this previous experience. Most Hollywood films would never share these preliminary thoughts with their audience before the final film was completed. At that point they might include some of these pre-production concepts in the special features to increase their audience’s sense of connection to the film. Discussing ideas that are not fully formed with your crew members is a normal process for a filmmaker because there is an understanding that preliminary sketches and concepts may not translate directly to the final film. Managing the audience expectations in this discussion are new considerations for collaborative filmmakers.

After *The Woodsmen* was released, we frequently had to explain to our audience the discrepancies between our original trailer and the final piece. A proof-of-concept trailer is a well-known tool in the filmmaking industry. It is understood that the actors, scenes, and dialog in a proof-of-concept trailer are meant to allude to the overall feeling of the final piece without actually being direct excerpts, as would be the case with a normal film trailer. This disconnect between a standard industry tool and audience expectations was not something we had fully considered when we originally posted the trailer. In order to better manage our audience expectations, we needed to fully describe what a proof-of-concept trailer provides and how it connects to the film. A few extra posts of clarification in our funding stage social media could have prevented some misunderstandings.

### **Funding Stage Social Media Findings**

Over the course of what was identified as the funding stage (identified as when the push for crowdfunding contributions were made) each filmmaker or production team made the following number of Facebook posts to their audience and had the following engagement responses:

**Table 6. Funding Stage Social Media Posts**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of posts</b>	<b>Number of shares</b>	<b>Number of likes/engagements</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
<i>Better Left Unsaid</i>	1	9	15	8	June 2018
<i>Were-Wool</i>	14	33	38	0	June – July 2017
<i>Trevor’s Production</i>	2	95		167	March 2018
<i>The Woodsmen</i>	63	176	642	31	July – August 2017

There are two things to consider when reviewing the number of posts that took place in this pre pre-production phase. The first is to consider that Trevor's project did not need to crowdfund for their budget. This means that during this phase of production they were announcing to their audience that they would not be launching a crowdfunding campaign for their upcoming production. The other thing to consider is that *The Woodsmen* purposefully incorporated a key element of pre-production (casting decisions) into their funding phase. This means that while other productions (*Were-Wool*, and *Trevor's Production*) talked about these things in their pre-production updates, *The Woodsmen* posted about this in their funding stage, which increased their discussion points for this period. After this stage in production *Better Left Unsaid* refrained from posting updates to their Facebook page, preferring to keep their backers updated on their Kickstarter platform. For the duration of this research Curt moved back and forth between funding, pre-production, and production. He incorporated new ideas from his audience into his research and returned to a second cycle of funding. He did not fully enter production until the summer of 2019, after the research period for this project had ended.

The crowdfunding stage is a new addition to the production process for filmmakers looking to collaborate with their audiences and raise funds for their film directly from their audience. This stage does not need to take place prior to the start of production. Some projects crowdfund for their post production costs or for assistance with distribution. The funding stage took place prior to or simultaneously with the pre-production stage for Curt, Lucas, and me.

### **Pre-Production Stage**

This is the phase in film production that leads up to the actual filming of the movie. It includes scheduling, budgeting, shot lists, prop lists, location scouting, casting, crew hiring,

rehearsals, etc. For the collaborative filmmaker, this stage now included a continued conversation with their audience to provide updates on the project.

*We engaged them [the audience] right away. Announcing every casting decision, location scouting, researching artifacts, interviewing historians. We used this as a way to engage them while building an audience. – Trevor*

Casting would normally be something that happens in pre-production, just before moving into production. Both Trevor and Lucas cast at this stage of their production. For Lucas, this was after his crowdfunding period had ended. However, we had special considerations around casting because we wanted to use it as a point for collaboration before we even launched our crowdfunding campaign.

*We wanted to get our cast involved with the crowdfunding campaign, so we intentionally cast our characters a little early and ahead of the Kickstarter launch. So again, it impacted our production schedule slightly, in terms of just more forethought around when we were casting. We didn't cast at the traditional time, which would be just before we go into shooting, you know? We cast in June. We knew we weren't going to shoot till October. So that was quite a gap, but we made that gamble and hoped that the cast that we chose would still be around and available in October. We wanted them on board before the crowdfunding campaign launched. I mean it took a little bit of extra thinking ahead of time and created a few new pre-production stages, but otherwise it didn't really tie the production schedule up at all. – Jodi*

Casting before we knew that we had secured our budget added another element of anxiety for me. This was a new group that might have front row seats to watch us publicly fail if we were unsuccessful in our crowdfunding efforts. However, for us this tactic really paid off in the long

run. We made it clear that we were not expecting financial support from our cast, but we hoped that they would be excited about the project and asked that they share the campaign with their own networks if they were also excited. This helped us create personal connections between cast, crew, and audience members on a much larger scale than if we had only been sharing with our own networks.

Casting announcements received a high level of feedback and engagement with audience members on social media:

**Table 7. Casting Social Media Posts**

Film	Post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook posts	“Looks like an amazing cast!!” – Audience member
	“Can't wait to see my niece in action!” – Audience member
<i>Trevor’s Production</i> , Facebook posts	“Trevor & team. Love the idea! Count me in as an extra if you need. I’d love to be in a flick about my hometown. I just don’t have the time to commit to a full roll. Excited to see what comes of the flick. I’m sure **** will be a great character!!!” – Audience member
	“I am very honoured to be part of the film; a look at the beginning of the oil industry” – Audience member
<i>Were-Wool</i> , Facebook posts	“Registered dreamboat?” – Audience member
	“Nice haircut Mike!!” – Audience member

These posts show that sharing casting decisions with audiences is a great way to build their excitement and cement their connection to the film. Knowing a cast member or being located close to the area where the project will be filmed, gives an audience member a reason to follow along with the progress of the film. This helps build the audience base which is one of the key draws to collaborative filmmaking. The more audience members drawn in during the pre-production phase, translates to a more dedicated viewership during the distribution phase

because these viewers have followed along and built up cultural capital in terms of empathy with the filmmakers and their crew (Bourdieu, 1993).

**Pre-Production Social Media Findings**

Over the course of what was identified as the pre-production stage (identified as after the crowdfunding campaign ended and before production started), each filmmaker or production team made the following number of Facebook posts to their audience and had the following engagement responses:

**Table 8. Pre-Production Social Media Posts**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of posts</b>	<b>Number of shares</b>	<b>Number of likes/engagements</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
<i>Were-Wool</i>	8	0	57	4	September – October 2017
<i>Trevor’s Production</i>	28	181	925	214	March – July 2018
<i>The Woodsmen</i>	1	19	12	10	September 2017

There are some things to consider when analyzing the posting frequency of each project. Trevor’s film did not have a funding cycle the same way that the other two projects did, so their posting timeframe for traditional pre-production was much longer and this offered him more points of discussion with his audience. For other filmmakers, these same points of discussion took place in the funding rather than pre-production stage. As Trevor discussed, a lot of pre-production is required in the funding stage, so these two phases overlap each other. Curt had chosen to use Kickstarter as his main discussion platform. He was following a non-linear path between funding, pre-production, and production by integrating ideas from his audience into his research.

## **Production**

This is the actual filming of the movie. All four projects had made it to this stage of production during my research period. Curt had conducted one major interview prior to our discussion but was in the process of moving back into pre-production based on some feedback he had received. Each of the filmmaker participants discussed how working with a collaborative audience affected their production schedule and how they balanced the actual work of filming a movie with the requirements of keeping their audience updated.

*When we got going into production, we slowed down our communicating a bit, but still kept people updated and I think that we were kind of forgiven for slowing down, because everybody knew “Ok, like, they're busy. They're actually making the film now. – Jodi*

Lucas discussed how his project did not shoot in a predefined period, but rather had used a few days a week over a much longer production period.

*I think the way that we approached production was affected by the fact that we were a crowdfunded film. Due to our budget constraints, we weren't able to lock down a three-week period where we could just shoot the entire film. I think because of that, and then also just because of the control that we had over everything, I definitely think our production was more, oddly, like it seems like they don't go together, but it was more efficient while being sort of laid back, if that makes any sense? It was definitely more relaxed, because of the fact that we would be shooting like one, two, if we're lucky three days a week. And in that time, I'd go in and say, "These are the shots I wanna get today, this is what we need for this scene," and get all that done. So, I definitely think that essentially it just kind of took the pressure off, if that makes any sense? – Lucas*

Both Curt and Lucas felt that their audience collaboration had affected their production time by making it longer. Normally, an increase in production times in the filmmaking process equals a direct correlation to an increase in the budget required because production is when the most cast and crew labour is required. However, neither Curt nor Lucas were upset about their discovery that their audience had increased their production times. Curt was excited about the new ideas he had received from his audience and wanted to get back to his research. He was very comfortable with the idea of returning to the pre-production phase in order to fully explore the suggestions. Lucas described the freedom that had come from the limits of his crowdfunding budget. If he had raised more funds, he would have paid his cast and crew to take large periods of time off work. By accepting the limitations of what he had he was able to design a more relaxed working environment for everyone. While all four filmmakers discussed how they felt crowdfunding had increased their overall time spent on their films, an increase in production time was not a necessarily a negative experience. Taking more time during this period might also enable a filmmaker to spend more time crafting their social media posts in order to generate more discussion.

### **Production Social Media Findings**

Over the course of what was identified as the production stage (identified as the time period when active filming was being conducted on each project), each filmmaker or production team made the following number of Facebook posts to their audience and had the following engagement responses:

**Table 9. Production Social Media Posts**

Project	Number of posts	Number of shares	Number of likes/engagements	Number of Comments	Time Period
<i>Were-Wool</i>	7	19	63	1	October 2017 – June 2018
<i>Trevor's Production</i>	9	119	286	20	July – August 2018
<i>The Woodsmen</i>	10	41	232	14	October – November 2017

Despite the assertions from the filmmaker participants that they worked hard to keep their feeds updated during this phase, there was a large drop in the number of posts throughout this phase of production. This probably reflects the fact that everyone was very busy working on the filming of their movies over this period. It is worth remembering that *Better Left Unsaid* had the most recent project start date and planned to be in their production phase well past the end date of this research project. Updates to this project were posted during the summer of 2019. However, these were too late to be included in the analysis. At the end of this phase, each of the above projects (Table 9) posted an announcement that they were finished filming. Each project posted some version of “That’s a wrap”, which received a high level of likes and shares during this period. This shows that these filmmakers were able to keep their audience engaged in the process right into post production.

### **Post Production**

This is the phase in production that includes the editing, sound mixing, colouring, music composition, graphics, special effects, and other elements that get added to a film after the filming is completed. This should also be a key time in collaborative filmmaking to build

audience excitement because it is the last stage before releasing the final film. Only three of the four projects (*The Woodsmen*, *Were-Wool*, and *Trevor's Production*) had made it to this phase in production during my research period. However, Curt speculated on how he would engage the audience during this phase in his project. He planned to use this phase in production to post full, unedited clips of his interviews online to YouTube. These clips would be open source so his audience can edit them together for their own purposes. While each filmmaker agreed that post production was a key time for audience engagement and feedback, both Lucas and I discussed struggling with keeping up the momentum and crafting interesting posts during this phase.

*I mean I feel kind of bad just because (laughs) as we're getting into post [production], you know, the updates kinda get fewer and farther between... I feel like I'll be updating everyone once we're kinda like "Ok, we're halfway done colour correction. Ok, now we're done colour correction." – Lucas*

An option for how to best utilize the post production period is evident in Trevor's case. Trevor used this stage as a time for contests and promotions. He also strategically entered festivals that would announce festival acceptances and award results at key times. This way, he could post festival updates to keep his audience engaged during this phase in his production process.

*It's a funny thing, right? Because, most filmmakers they're making their film, and they don't have any audience for it. They submit to festivals in hopes that it finds an audience. We have an audience. We always have to get our audience's interest. So we use festivals and competitions as a talking point on social media, to sell tickets. – Trevor*

Editing a film can be a rather solitary process, taking place in a dark room with only one or two key people. For collaborative filmmakers it can be a struggle to find engaging ways to talk about this phase of production with audiences. During the on-set production period, audiences become

accustomed to being updated by impressive photos full of actors and crew members. The post production period does not offer many opportunities for impressive visual updates. Collaborative filmmakers could plan for this lull by being strategic with how and when behind the scenes photos from set are posted. They could also try a strategy like moving directly into film festival distribution discussions, as Trevor did. Both solutions could help to alleviate the long periods of silence that were evident in this period’s social media findings for Lucas and I.

**Post Production Social Media Findings**

Over the course of what was identified as the post production stage (identified as the time period when active filming was complete, but before any screening or distribution discussion had started), each filmmaker or production team made the following number of Facebook posts to their audience and had the following engagement responses:

**Table 10. Post Production Social Media Posts**

Project	Number of posts	Number of shares	Number of likes/engagements	Number of Comments	Time Period
<i>Were-Wool</i>	2	6	24	9	September – December 2018
<i>Trevor’s Production</i>	6	235	382	39	August – September 2018
<i>The Woodsmen</i>	2	30	68	2	March – April 2018

In order to clearly see the struggle to engage the audience during this period with these social media posts (Table 10), it is important to remember the dates of each projects’ last production update. *The Woodsmen* posted our last production update in November 2017, and then did not update our audience on the post production process until March 2018. *Were-Wool* posted their

last production update in June 2018, and then started their post production updates in September. *Trevor's production* moved smoothly from the end of his production post in August 2018 to his discussion of post-production the same month. It is important to note that Trevor's period for post-production updates is much shorter than the other two productions. This is because his strategy, discussed above, to keep his audience engaged during this period was to move into the distribution phase and begin his distribution social media posts.

### **Distribution**

This is the phase where the filmmakers get their film out to the audience. It can include film festival and theatre screenings, DVD and VOD sales, free streaming online, etc. Only two projects were at this stage or heavily planning for this stage during the period of my research (*The Woodsmen*, and *Trevor Production*).

*We sold more than 17000 units (tickets, DVDs) and have spent a total of \$52 in advertising. This was almost entirely through social media. – Trevor*

*Were-Wool* was still in the middle of post production, but had made some promises to its audience regarding screening and distribution of the final film. Lucas could imagine that completing the film and screening it with his audience would be a very emotional moment for him.

*I guess there were like two or three emotional moments. At the end of the funding, the end of actual production, and you know, I'm sure that by the time we actually screen the movie for a crowd of people, that'll be another one. I feel like to screen the movie for the backers will be another impactful moment for sure. – Lucas*

For *The Woodmen*, this phase was the culmination of years of work and we were really excited to be able to watch our film on the big screen. It was amazing to see that our audience

was excited for this event as well, and that they felt like they had been there with us at every stage. Now they were ready to celebrate the achievement with us.

*We had over 600 people come out and join us for the premiere night. I could really feel their sense of ownership. They weren't just excited for us but they were excited for themselves, like, "This is something cool that's happening that we're part of."* – Jodi

It is a great accomplishment to finish a film. Setting out to create a film involves taking risks.

One of the reasons that it is becoming so hard to find traditional funding, is because studios and governments are becoming more risk adverse with their money even in creative fields.

Filmmakers are turning to crowdfunding to fill this gap, but the acknowledgement of risk is still important. The issue of accountability is something that Kickstarter takes seriously and requires every filmmaker to discuss their risks and challenges on their campaign pages. However, even with these considerations for risks, a number of projects never finish. The Kickstarter team (2012) has defended their stance on allowing risky endeavors by arguing that the “fact that Kickstarter allows creators to take risks and attempt to create something ambitious is a feature, not a bug” (Strickler, Chen, & Adler, 2012, para. 19). For both Trevor and *The Woodsmen* team, sharing our project completion announcements and letting people know how and where they could watch the film were very important moments in our experience. We were excited to post these updates and our audience showed they shared our excitement through their likes, shares, comments on social media, and their attendance at the screenings.

### **Distribution Social Media Findings**

Over the course of what was identified as the distribution stage (identified as the time period when a screening or DVD release was promoted), each filmmaker or production team

made the following number of Facebook posts to their audience and had the following engagement responses:

**Table 11. Distribution Social Media Posts**

Project	Number of posts	Number of shares	Number of likes/engagements	Number of Comments	Time Period
Trevor's film	78	1291	3255	216	September 2018 – April 2019
<i>The Woodsmen</i>	63	459	1739	153	May 2018 – December 2018

Trevor's ability to transition seamlessly in his social media posts, from each stage in his production, without taking breaks or having gaps in between allowed his project to keep up the momentum on social media. His ability to have a screening date or dates set in advance, certainly would have helped with this because he could begin advertising for these screenings immediately after his production schedule ended. This enabled him to begin the distribution conversation immediately after post production without taking any breaks.

For most filmmakers, finishing the screening and distribution phase signifies an end to the work of a film. However, for collaborative filmmakers who use crowdfunding to make their films, there may be a number of outstanding promises and more work that still needs to be done in order to fulfill them.

**Fulfilling Crowdfunding Rewards**

This phase can take place during post production or even distribution. It is a new phase specifically for collaborative filmmakers who have promised their audience members rewards based on their financial contribution. Only two filmmakers were in a position where they could

discuss the rewards distribution process (*Were-Wool* and *The Woodsmen*). Trevor's project did not promise any rewards or have backers for this film project, but he was able to discuss some of his past practices regarding rewards. These will be discussed further with the best practices described in the Final Pass section.

For my own involvement, I found collaborating with our audience increased our workload in both the funding and fulfilling rewards stages.

*Collaborating with our audience did significantly increase our production times, and in all honesty, we are still fulfilling rewards [months after posting the final film online]. –*

Jodi

These two new stages, funding and reward fulfilment, caused me the most stress and anxiety. They are the main reasons why I would be hesitant to crowdfund again. I really enjoyed engaging with our audience at each stage of production. I appreciated the ability to raise a budget for our film and the benefits that came from crowdsourcing. However, each filmmaker needs these benefits to be weighed against the drawbacks in order to fully appreciate if this experience is right for them and their project.

### **Drawbacks Versus Benefits**

The participants discussed the pros and the cons of crowdfunding as they saw them in their respective experiences. This question seemed connected to each filmmaker's own sense of whether they would organize another crowdfunding campaign in the future. When discussing if they would crowdfund again, some filmmakers (Trevor, Lucas, and myself) implied that the costs outweighed the benefits in some instances. There seems to be an overwhelming amount of work to take on this kind of campaign and it leaves filmmakers reluctant to do it again. This reluctance to take on this kind of collaborative project was something predicted by Luke Pebler

(2013) when discussing the crowdfunded Veronica Mars movie: “I predict it’s going to be a long, strange road for them to get this movie out, with too much accountability to the legion of people whose money they accepted. I doubt that they’ll think that a paltry \$5.7 million was worth it, in retrospect” (Chin, Jones, McNutt, & Pebler, para. 5.5). I asked Lucas directly if he would consider running another crowdfunding campaign. He felt that crowdfunding held great potential for enabling him to connect with genre specific audiences.

*I feel like there are ideas that I think we can pursue, you know? I could find the same audience or a similar audience. And I definitely think that it’s possible, and I’m willing. But now that I have done it, it’s like, I don’t know if (laughs) I can put myself through the wringer again. – Lucas*

I found Lucas’ use of the expression to “put myself through the wringer again” reflective of my own sense of the overwhelming workload that we had taken on. I asked him to explain what the “wringer” meant for him. In his explanation, Lucas discussed the communications workload as being arduous. It was not easy work to talk about his artistic process and find the balance between crafting posts that would inspire while carefully managing audience expectations. Throughout his project, Lucas focused on walking the line of convincing everyone that he was the expert for the job, while also maintaining a sense of approachability so his audience would want to engage with him. Marketing an unfinished product to a mass audience is not the normal way a film gets marketed. Both audiences and filmmakers are still learning how to engage in this arena to fully understand what is being offered and what is being expected. This kind of communication requires a set of skills that go beyond the skills required to make a film. These skills will be looked at in more detail in my conclusions. My participants also discussed that the

frequency in communication and feelings of personal accountability were costs for them as well, but that crowdfunding might still be a good tool in some instances.

### **Final Pass: Best Practices – Findings/Analysis**

Independent filmmakers often work in isolation of one another, especially those that are trying to forge careers outside of the large hubs of Los Angeles, New York, Vancouver, or Toronto. My participants were encouraged that their experiences might help other filmmakers who were considering or already working on collaborative projects. Through their narratives the following eight suggested best practices emerged. Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audiences should: (1) understand how genre contributes to the success of a crowdfunding campaign; (2) be explicit about their shared interest in seeing the film; (3) establish a personal relationship to the audience through the pitch video; (4) foster this personal relationship by using collaborative language; (5) develop rewards that are mutually beneficial; (6) consider the bragging rights of the audience; (7) know how to keep the audience informed during production; and (8) know how and when to incorporate feedback solicited from the audience. These eight strategies will be looked at in detail throughout this section.

During my research I found that it was helpful to consider my participants as both filmmaker and public relations professionals. In a sense, filmmakers that create dialog and relationships with their audiences are acting as a kind of public relations manager. For this reason, many public relations theories are useful in defining the best practice strategies behind audience-filmmaker communication.

The ideas of relationship building and relationship management are foundational to public relations theory, which posits that effective public relations strategies will foster positive relationships with an intended audience (Centre & Jackson, 1995, p. 2). There are many different

frameworks for relationship theory and various key relationship characteristics. Relationships can also be measured on a scale of communal to exploitive, with key positive relational characteristics being trust and mutual benefit for both sides of the relationship (Ledingham, 2003). The idea of being mutually beneficial was a particularly salient concept for this research, defined as John Ledingham's (2003) idea that "mutual benefit strategies can generate economic, societal, and political gain for both organizations and publics" (p. 188). These elements of gain are reflected in both the filmmaker's need for sustained successful careers and the audience's needs for active, meaningful participation. This section will look at the best practice strategies that emerged from the filmmakers' narratives and how the principles of public relations are useful in understanding these strategies.

#### **Research Question 4 - What Do Filmmaker's Narratives Tell Us About Best Practice Strategies?**

The following themes discuss how filmmaker narratives provide best practice advice for collaborating with audiences. Figure 4 is a visual representation of the key words used by the filmmakers and coded to this research question. While the word "think" occurs in other sections as well, I feel that it is important in the discussion of the best practices. The filmmakers each discussed their ability to *think* like they were one of their own audience members in order to generate the most engagement.



Figure 4 – Wordle for Research Question 4 Findings

The smaller word ‘decision’ only occurs in this wordle (Figure 4, above). It relates directly to each filmmaker experience of the collaborative process as a series of decisions. From deciding if their project would lend itself well to collaboration and crowdfunding, to determining how to present their project in the pitch and how to foster a sense of collaboration through the language used, to forming a plan for how best to keep their audience in formed. Every aspect of collaborative filmmaking required a decision. In this section, I consider the various points of decision making and how the filmmaker participants’ experience provides best practice considerations when making these decisions.

### **Crowdfunding Works Well for Specific Genres**

Film data researcher Steven Follows (2015) describes film projects on Kickstarter having an average success rate of 43%, while short films enjoy the highest success rate of 59% (para. 5). At the time of his research Follows (2015) discovered that these success rates were dropping, albeit “very slowly” (para. 5). All four of my filmmaker participants were part of these success statistics. Lucas, Trevor and I discussed how we felt that crowdfunding really worked well for the specific genres of our films. We felt that these genres might enjoy a higher success rate than

the average. The experiences of these three participants is in line with Trigonis' (2016) recommendation that selecting a genre can be important in determining a crowdfunding campaign's ability to succeed. Being tapped into these genres and audiences would also play a significant role in the consideration of attempting another crowdfunding campaign.

*I think I definitely would do another crowdfunding project again in the future. I think that there are two things that I would really consider. I think one is that there are certain genres which I think are better suited to crowdfunding, certain types of films. So, it would have to be the right project, not just necessarily my next project. It would have to be something that I thought "OK this is something that an audience is going to want to get involved with." Something that has a natural space for audience involvement and isn't going to take a lot of time to create that space for collaboration. It would also depend on the budget. Are we crowdfunding for the entire budget or just a portion of it? I think those would be some huge considerations if I wanna do this again. - Jodi*

Both Lucas and I discussed the ability to connect to very defined subgroups of genre audiences with our crowdfunding campaigns.

*There's all those kinda like little subgroups, you know? You've got your weird sub-Reddit's where people are into whatever they're into. But they're kinda sizeable communities. So, I knew that there was a chance we could tap into that with what we had specifically. - Lucas*

These audiences are often underserved by a Hollywood that directs its attention to the large mainstream audience tastes. These audience groups are very familiar with digital technology and crowdfunding platforms, because this is frequently how they ensure that the kind

of content they want to see gets made. I asked Trevor directly what it would take for him to consider running another crowdfunding campaign.

*So, if I were to do a crowdsourcing campaign again it would need to be something that they want to make just as much as I want to make it. They wanna see it just as much as I want to see it. And there's already a built-in niche for it, I'm not creating it from scratch. -*

Trevor

This ability to have a having a “built-in” audience, generally comes from focusing on content that audiences’ are not getting from mainstream media. Defining a film’s genre in broad strokes such as horror, comedy, documentary, or historical is often not enough to secure a dedicated collaborative audience. Collaborative filmmakers need to identify their niche audience (Trigonis, 2016). Both Lucas and I targeted a specific kind of horror audience; they had to enjoy practical effects horror over horror augmented with computer graphics. Trevor made films that were not only historical, they were based on the local history from the geographical area he lives in. Curt was not only making a political documentary, he was focusing on the extreme political left. Being aware of the genre of a project and audience expectations regarding the rules of the genre is important for every filmmaker (Jackson et al., 2011). For collaborative filmmaking this knowledge can take out some of the guess work in managing audience expectations, as discussed above. Trevor, Lucas, and members from *The Woodsmen* team spent time researching other crowdfunding projects in their specific genre to identify what worked and what did not work for other projects.

Filmmakers wishing to collaborate with their audiences should identify the specific, niche elements of their project in order to better understand the audience’s genre expectations. They should also know if audiences for their genre are used to accessing content through new

technology or if they are used to getting their content from Hollywood. One way to connect with these audiences is for the filmmaker to establish themselves as members of the niche community and share their own interest in the type of film they are planning to make.

### **Making a Film that the Audience and Filmmakers Want to See**

Axel Bruns (2006) writes that relationships between filmmakers and their audiences need to be organized in a way that attracts both users and producers, creates cohesion (p.278), and fosters sustainability by leaving both producers and consumers feeling rewarded for their efforts (p. 279). Lucas discussed his hope that this shared sense of reward would come from the creation of a film that both audience and filmmaker would like to watch.

*The crowdfunding itself was essentially me in search of people willing to assist in the creation of something we could both enjoy at the end of the day. – Lucas*

Trevor and Curt also said that their own interest in seeing the final film was part of what attracted them to the subject matter of the project. For *The Woodsmen*, we used our own desire to see a new kind of Bigfoot film as a way to solicit feedback from our audience.

*We're horror lovers ourselves and had watched most of the Bigfoot films already out there. With our project we knew what we liked, and what we didn't like, and we knew we didn't want shaky cam footage. We put this on the Kickstarter page and then seeing, you know, audience comments and people get excited about that, then we knew ok, absolutely this can't be a shaky cam footage film. – Jodi*

While common interests are a great foundation to developing a new relationship, it is not enough to assume these common interests are understood by all parties if left unspoken. Public relations theory suggests that to build strong relationships, filmmakers need to show that they share common goals with their audiences (Bruning, Castle, & Schrepfer, 2004; Ledingham, 2003).

Many big-name filmmakers, such as Peter Jackson, have been rewarded with fan loyalty by showing their audience that they have values and goals in common, and by admitting that they are fans themselves of the type of film they are trying to make (Shefrin, 2004).

Filmmakers wishing to collaborate with their audiences need to make their shared common interests explicit. These filmmakers should talk about their own interest in the genre or the specific subject matter of the film, in order to foster sustainable relationships. One of the best places to establish the genre for a collaborative film project is in the pitch video. This one element sets the overall tone for the campaign by introducing the audience to the storyline, genre, and filmmakers.

### **Filmmaker Presence in the Pitch Video**

One of the key elements of a successful collaborative film campaign is a well thought out pitch video. Public relations relationship theory indicates that relationships can take place on one of three levels: personal, professional and community (Bruning & Ledingham, 2000). On the personal level, studies have shown that when individuals feel they have a relationship they are willing to reciprocate by being personally dedicated to a project or organization (Bruning & Galloway, 2003). Research into why backers give financially to projects shows “personal connection between creators and backers is the main reason to engage with an audience in a reward-based crowdfunding project” (Leibovitz et al., 2015, p. 19). Both Curt and Lucas, discussed how important it is that the pitch video establish a personal connection between the filmmaker and their audience. By presenting themselves in the video, these filmmakers were able to create a sense of connection by giving a face to the project.

*The main thing was to put a name to a face. If you make that connection with the audience, if you go out there and you're like "Hey we're making this movie, if you're*

*going to give us the money then this is what you're going to help fund." I do think it's a responsibility of that creator to be in communication, be directly, you know, face to face with that audience. I think the other things to be aware of are, essentially just how you present yourself and how you come off. People can tell when somebody's actually passionate about what they're doing. Again, just try to show yourself in your pitch video, be present, be there communicating with your audience, with your community online, whatever it may be. – Lucas*

Lucas felt that it would be only natural for to appear in his pitch, in order for his audience to identify with him as the filmmaker. Curt's case provided a counter point to this, as he had to seriously consider if he wanted to be the face of his project.

*So, this subject matter, it's controversial to me. And I was initially scared of doing it. I don't want someone to tell me that I'm a radical left sympathizer or an alt-right sympathizer. I remember thinking, "Will this impact the future of my filmmaking, my whole career?" And then I thought... if you actually believe in it [the film], and you're just pursuing the truth, if you get criticized then so be it. So, I thought, "I'm gonna try my best and I'll stick my neck out there." So that was one reason why I put myself as the face. And second, it's important. People don't fund companies, people fund people. – Curt*

Curt's comment that "people fund people" is in agreement with research that shows that backers are more likely to give to projects where they have a personal connection to the creator (Leibovitz et al., 2015; Trigonis, 2016). In fact, Trigonis (2016) argues that all crowdfunding filmmakers should be in appear in their pitch videos. Researchers Talia Leibovitz, Antoni Roig Telo, and Jordi Sanchez-Navarro's (2015) describe how the creator's real-life personal networks, such as friends and family, are the main foundations of support in crowdfunding projects. I argue

that by appearing as themselves in their pitch video, Lucas, Curt, Trevor, and *The Woodsmen* team were able to extend a sense of personal connection to people who were outside of their personal networks in order to be successful in their crowdfunding campaigns.

Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audiences need to establish a personal relationship, which can start by showing themselves in their pitch videos in order to provide virtual eye-contact with their audience members. This personal relationship is then developed further through the collaborative language used by the filmmakers throughout their projects.

### **Using Collaborative Language**

In order to engage in collaboration, you must encourage your audience to participate in the discussion. Bourdieu states that “the propensity to speak... is strictly proportionate to the sense of having the right to speak” (2010, p. 412). My participants used their crowdfunding and social media platforms to extend this invitation to participate to their audiences. One of the key factors to identifying these filmmakers as collaborative was their crowdfunding pitch videos and how they used language that described their audience as being a part of the filmmaking process.

*Whenever I post an update on our Kickstarter page (which are admittedly fewer and further between these days), I'm always sure to remind our backers that this is as much their movie as it is mine. For the simple reason I wouldn't have gotten this far on my own. I think that notion of ownership [for the audience] can foster a greater sense of collaboration and participation. – Lucas*

Trigonis (2016) maintains that collaborative filmmakers need to focus on their efforts on building their communities, reminding crowdfunding filmmakers that “it’s not about *you*, it’s about *us*” (p. 76). Curt also discussed being aware of his language choices for his crowdfunding page and video. Curt runs Indie Film Toronto (IFTO) and has a philosophy he calls

“IFTOflogical” which has enabled him to develop a framework for how to communicate with his audience.

*Everyone's unique, so why would you sell out? There's only one of you, why would you deprive the world of you? And so that's how I speak and that's the IFTOflogical method: to actually speak the way your audience speaks. So, when I'm talking to them, I'm speaking the way I speak. Luckily, I'm part of my own audience, so it's authentic. It was an easy choice to speak the way I spoke in the video. – Curt*

There were several areas where we invited participation for *The Woodsmen*. A significant use of collaborative language can be seen in our missing poster reward levels. We invited people to "become Slender Valley Citizens" (Cooper et al., 2017) by sending in photos of themselves to be included on missing posters that we used in the film. In our pitch video, we asked people to "make the film with us" and help us "make a film we all want to see" (Cooper et al., 2017).

Three of Telo's (2013) conditions of a participatory project are "Transparency," "Spaces of Negotiation," and "Mutual Recognition" (p. 2317). These conditions were met by all of my participants (if we include Trevor's previous crowdfunding projects) in their offer to the audience in their pitch videos; the filmmakers were transparent about who they were by presenting themselves and talking directly to their audience, they encouraged feedback on the crowdfunding platform and their social media channels, and provided recognition in the final credits. Telo's (2013) conditions were also met through the use of collaborative language, where the filmmakers were transparent in their collaboration goals and invited audiences to make the project "together" (Cooper et al., 2017), they created spaces of negotiation by asking their audiences to "tell us what you think" (Cooper et al., n.d.), and recognized their audience members by telling them that this is "your" film (Birnie, n.d.).

Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audiences should use collaborative language to foster a personal connection with their audience. This personal connection is the primary motivator for an audience to engage with crowdfunding projects. As this personal connection weakens across time or distance, then other motivators, such as the offering of enticing rewards, become a key factor in an audience member's decision to contribute to a crowdfunded project (Leibovitz et al., 2015).

### **Considerations for Rewards**

Deciding what crowdfunding rewards to offer backers took some time and consideration for the filmmaker participants. I noticed that a number of passages from my participant interviews were coded to both the node of "audience enticing" and to the idea of being "mutually beneficial". The decisions and considerations that the filmmakers made both consciously and unconsciously as they planned for their reward categories also seemed to have an inherent understanding of the "three primary motivations: entertainment, career and family" (van Dijk, 2009, pp. 50-51) for why audience members want to contribute to participatory projects. While Trevor had not crowdfunded for his most recent project, his experience with two previous campaigns provided some good suggestions for best practices.

*Well, I can tell you some of the things we tried that didn't work [for the previous projects which were crowdfunded]. And some of the things that we tried that were popular. Most popular one we did was the red-carpet package. Which was basically, like, VIP access to the premiere. It included their tickets, they got reserved seating, they didn't have to wait in line, and they got to come to the after party to meet the cast and crew. Four tickets, so a couple plus their friends. Bragging rights, right? Like "I'm bringing you to this exclusive thing." You know it doesn't really add to our costs, it increases the numbers a*

*little bit but we're already catering. Everyone gets to the after party and they're all stiff. So, you've gotta have a way to get everyone to mingle. Cause they'll get more out of it that way, if they network and talk to everybody. So, what we do is we put down a stack of posters and a box of sharpies, and say "Here's your poster, you've gotta take your poster and have a conversation with every person in this room, and get them to sign your poster." And so, everyone's having these conversations. A hundred conversations with cast and crew that are thanking them for helping make the film, so they feel really good about it. I think with your perks there are things that have higher value to them than they have cost to you, and that's the perfect perk. It costs you almost nothing, but the value to them is equal to what they're paying for it. – Trevor*

Curt and Lucas discussed the idea that throughout the production they were constantly considering how things could benefit to both themselves and their audience members. Trigonis (2016) suggests that the best rewards are tailored to the audience member, such as customized poems, songs, or scripts (pp. 69-72). However, personalized incentives can create a lot of additional labour for filmmakers. Additional labour was an important consideration for the rewards offered by *The Woodsmen* team as well. We wanted to provide custom value to our audience, without the creating a lot of extra work. In his narrative, Trevor also addressed the idea of being mutually beneficial directly.

*Well it has to be, right? Because there's sales and then there's relationship sales. And for us, we're not trying to make one film, like a one and done right? We're trying to build an audience and you can only do that by them feeling like they got a good value for their money. We're gonna try to keep our prices so that they're competitive with Hollywood films, what people are used to paying for that type of entertainment. We're not going to*

*undervalue ourselves. But we're gonna have to have tight cost controls, so that we don't have to charge more than they're used to paying. You know, if they're used to paying X when they go to the theatre, that's what we can charge.* – Trevor

Ensuring mutual benefit in a collaborative project can help to reduce the potential drawbacks to engaging with a participatory audience as discussed in the Colour Correction analysis section above.

Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audience by crowdfunding should develop rewards designed in a way that entices the audience and also provides a benefit to the production by fulfilling a need of the project, such as the missing posters described above. By purchasing a reward that fulfills a real need of the project, the audience is also able to see their impact on the final film in a clear way. In this way, rewards can contribute to the audience's bragging rights.

### **Audience Bragging Rights**

The way the impact of the bragging rights on the audience were described by my filmmaker participants seemed to tap into CarrieLynn Reinhard's (2009) idea of the "audience-as-pusher" (p. 9) or publicity partner. The filmmakers expressed hope that the insider knowledge gained will encourage the audience to share the content to their own networks.

*Once the film is done, then it's sort of like "Ok you guys, this is your movie now, so let's communicate that to the world. It's your bragging rights, you know? Let's show it off."* –

Lucas

Telo (2013) states that "just making people feel part of the project is not a sufficient condition [to participatory production] in itself" (p. 2316). I disagree. These participant filmmakers put a lot of time and effort into making people "feel" like they were a part of the

project. I think that if audiences feel that they are part of a production, then there is a participatory element that cannot be disregarded so easily. If, as Bourdieu (2010) suggests, the audience interprets themselves as “having the right to speak” (p. 412), I argue that these feelings are a type of mental and emotional participation. Dialog is not created by what is being said by the filmmaker alone, but also by how the audience understands it. “Each listener, each reader, each viewer brings a similar sort of complexity to the reception of communication, brings a range of contexts in which the 'word' is received and made part of the receiver's world” (Newcomb, 1984, p. 40). If the audience member understands a filmmaker as inviting them to participate in the filmmaking process and, either actively or passively, receives this invitation, then the final context for the film to be viewed in is altered. In other words, if a filmmaker manages to have an audience member just “feel” like they are part of the project, this will influence how they perceive the final film. These “feelings” also contribute to the cultural capital of each audience member, through the internalized increased appreciation for the final film (Bourdieu, 1993).

This sense of the audience receiving the invitation to collaborate and take ownership can be seen in the posts and engagement on the films’ social media channels, where the audience talks about “their” film:

**Table 12. Bragging Rights in Audience Social Media Posts**

Film	Post
<i>The Woodsmen</i> , Facebook Post	“Got my pledge in!! So excited in being a part of such an awesome project!!” – Audience member post
<i>Trevor Production</i> , Facebook Post	“Proud to be a sponsor to the great history portrayed in your film <i>Trevor Production</i> . It is nice to be able to be part of your depiction of our local area's history.” – Audience member post

<i>Better Left Unsaid</i> , Facebook Post	“I donated right away. This is something that we DEFINITELY need!” – Audience member post
<i>Were-Wool</i> , Facebook Post	“We have picture lock. So excited.” – Audience member post

Through audience comments where the members discuss the film in possessive contexts, such as the posts above (Table 13), we can see that the filmmakers have managed to create feeling of participation within each project. These audience members have made the film part of their “world” (Newcomb, 1984, p. 40) and taken ownership. This sense of ownership will permeate through and alter their reception of the film when they watch it.

Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audience should focus on giving their audience bragging rights, through elements of their project that create both real and perceived participation. This will deepen the relationship the audience has to the actual project and change the way they view the final film. Audiences will also build a connection to the film through open and transparent communication that helps situate the audience so that they feel like they know what is happening with a project.

### **Having the Audience Know What is Going On**

Making sure that the audience is kept up-to-date is one of the foundational promises made between a collaborative filmmaker and their audience. Updates are essential for audience members who have a vested interest in the final project and want to see what becomes of their investment (Trigonis, 2016). One of the most important best practice strategies discussed by the participants revolved around the key issue of keeping their audience updated and ensuring they knew what was going on during the filmmaking process. Curt, Lucas, and I discussed knowing the importance of keeping the audience informed, but still struggled to keep on top of our updates punctuating them with long periods of silence.

*It kind of ebbs and flows, you know? I definitely feel that when we were in production, I had much more interaction than I've had in the past couple of months. Just because when we were in production it was like "Ok, we're meeting deadlines," so I'm going to update them. I think in general, [updates are] important. Not even specifically in regards to my project. I think it's just important, because it's their investment. I feel like if you're going to buy stock in a company, you want to know what's going on, right? You wanna be aware of how things are changing and developing on the fly. But with our project specifically, I feel like it's important because we are not a typical production. We're not a Hollywood production, where everyday somebody is constantly working on this thing and then we have a deadline for when the movie is coming out, you know? I think that [updates] have an increased importance because we're not able to fully work towards a very specific goal [for the audience to anticipate the film's release]. – Lucas*

While it is important that the audience be kept up-to-date on production details, there is a fine line that the filmmakers indicated one needed to be aware of. Trevor discussed deciding what details he could share to entice his audience and why he did not want to give away too many details.

*And it was a careful balance of not showing too much, because then, you know, you've got nothing left to show them. But enough that it piques their interest and they feel like they're seeing behind the scenes, and they're part of this inside club. – Trevor*

Audiences still want to be surprised when they are finally able to see the film, so updates need to increase the anticipation without exposing too many specifics from the final piece.

Filmmakers who want to collaborate with their audiences need to provide updates during the various production phases so that their audience can feel like they are a part of the process.

Filmmakers also need to be cautious about what elements from their productions get shared before the final film, especially if they want to scare or surprise their audiences. Production updates can also serve as a great way to foster dialog and ask for feedback from the audience.

### **Collaboration Through Feedback**

Mark Deuze (2005) suggests that all kinds of storytellers need to figure out a way to collaborate with their audiences and work towards co-creation:

A radical reworking is necessary. I would like to argue that a future professional identity of media work could only be maintained if it includes a participatory component — such as a notion of storytelling as a collaborative experience. In other words... to think about the stories they tell as co-created with those they once identified (and thus effectively excluded) as audiences, users, consumers or citizens. (Deuze, 2005, para. 18)

For my filmmaker participants the act of collaboration with their audience came from the eagerness to hear and incorporate the audiences' feedback into the process and the final film. The importance of using the filmmakers' vision as a filter through which to view audience feedback was important to these filmmakers. Curt described the various sieves that a collaborative filmmaker needs to use when deciding on how to proceed with his project. It is okay to incorporate a variety of perspectives for both artistic and capitalist reasons, as long as the final sieve is the filmmaker's artistic vision.

*I plan to incorporate audience feedback on my initial interview footage, into the further interviews and how I'm going to edit the film. At the same time that sounds like it's selling out, and it would be if that's all it was. It always has to be filtered. There's what your audience wants, then there's what you want, and then there's what makes money. So, you*

*have to have those three. As long as one of the sieves that you're using is "what do I feel like is artistically credible?" then cool. – Curt*

Trevor also suggests that filmmakers need to filter their audience's feedback. However, he cautions that filmmakers need to really value feedback in order to get the best out of their collaborators.

*I think it's a careful balance, because you can't make a film by yourself. It takes a lot of talented people to make a film. And when you direct you've got to collaborate anyway. It can't just be that they just feel like you value their opinion. You have to value their opinion, to get the best out of them. Because the project's the best when everybody's contributing to it. But at the same time, you've got to take every idea and filter it and stay true to the story otherwise it's not going to be compelling. - Trevor*

These filters act as a process for filmmakers to recognize the worthiness of an audience suggested change or critique. Bourdieu (2010) describes the practices of a challenge of honor as being like a gift given to the challenged that recognizes he/she is worthy of challenge (pp.10-15). This way of thinking of a challenge as a gift could be applied to the challenges offered by audience members in the form of critiques and suggestions. I believe that a filmmaker cannot accept each challenge; they cannot incorporate every suggestion by every single audience member. This would not bestow honour on any of the suggestions and would instead make all of the suggestions worthless. The final film would lack the cohesion of the original pitch and would not match the expectations of what audience members had been excited to see in the first place. Often times, audience suggestions will contradict one another, so filmmakers must "possess the capital of authority necessary to impose a definition of the situation, especially in the moments of crisis when the collective judgement falters" (Bourdieu, 2010b, p. 40). The audience believes

and has bought into the filmmaker's vision (literally, by spending their money on a crowdfunding campaign) enough to trust their ultimate decision-making authority in a collaborative project.

Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audience need to understand that they hold the ultimate creative vision for the project, the final filter through which all suggestions need to go. The filmmaker deems some of the "challenges" given through audience feedback worthy of response through incorporation. In order to incorporate these best practice strategies into their projects, filmmakers may need to develop skills beyond their filmmaking skillset. This will be discussed in further detail in the Video on Demand conclusions section.

### **Distribution**

#### **Limited Theatrical Screenings: How Methods Affected This Research – Conclusions**

This study has enabled me to begin to develop an understanding for the experience of filmmaker-audience collaboration through my four participant's narratives. This section discusses some of the potential problems with these research methods, and my thoughts on the autoethnographic experience.

#### **Potential issues with the methodology**

Ethnography and autoethnography research methods have a number of potential pitfalls that researchers must attempt to address in their research. I have tried to address some of these issues in this project by blending these two methods. In traditional ethnography the issue of researcher subjectivity can be a critique, where failing to remain objective can be seen as contaminating the scientific data collected. However, many theorists are asking questions about subjectivity and objectivity, and what they mean for ethnographic research (Chang et al., 2013;

Hegelund, 2005; Lapadat, 2017). Allan Hegelund (2005) suggests that a dogmatic adherence to objectivity all but makes objectivity impossible because there is

danger in assuming that it is possible to work from some atheoretical approach... it completely blinds the researcher to all the paradigmatic assumptions he or she carries around. By not being aware of these, researchers, although claiming to be objective, are, in fact, just the opposite. (p. 660)

Researchers need to accept their own subjectivity and still work to produce scientific data that has meaning. I placed emphasis on my own experience for this research, using this as a framework to study my other participants. Autoethnographic researchers “place value on being able to analyze self, their innermost thoughts, and personal information, topics that usually lie beyond the reach of other research methods” (Chang et al., 2013, p.18). The goal is to be aware of biases and the subjective nature of research (Lapadat, 2017, p. 592). However, autoethnographic research alone would only have examined my own experience of filmmaker-audience collaboration. This would not necessarily have helped me to understand the bigger societal impact that collaboration has on filmmakers and the films themselves. This inability to understand the larger societal implications from only one person’s experience is one of the major critiques of autoethnography in that it can “fall short of ideological promise due to a lack of distance that results from the subject and the researcher being the same person, and because it can be challenging to translate personal experience into...action” (Lapadat, 2017, p. 589). Having the researcher as the only participant also causes issues of researcher accountability and lacks the benefits of fresh perspectives (Chang et al., 2013). Chang (2008) suggests that there are five potential downsides that autoethnographers need to be aware of and to try to compensate for, including “(1) excessive focus on self in isolation from others...” (p.54). In order to address and

mitigate this issue, and in order to be able to generate a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of filmmaker-audience collaboration, I conducted a project that combined case study, narrative, and autoethnographic methodologies. Adding the experience of other filmmakers and then analyzing these shared experiences, provided the opportunity to discover best practices for future actions. However, these methods are not the only methods that can and should be used to gain an understanding of this phenomenon. In order to get a true understanding of the “production, distribution, and *reception* [emphasis my own] as the best means of understanding the social role of texts” (Newcomb, 1984, pp. 34-25), research would need to be conducted with audience members as well. Much of the current research into participatory film audiences *does* look at the audience practices and reception of the media products in isolation from the filmmakers (Bird, 2011; Cochran, 2015; Deuze, 2006; Gehring & Wittkower, 2015; Jenkins, 2002; Keltie, 2017; Reinhard, 2009). My research has provided a voice for the filmmaker’s experience but looks at this in isolation from the audience’s interpretation of their own experience. In order to fully understand how filmmaker practices of intended spaces of collaboration are received by their audiences, a research project combining both filmmaker experience and audience experience of the same film project is necessary.

### **Autoethnographic Experience**

Reflecting on this autoethnographic experience, I find that there is one significant emotion that stands out to me: vulnerability. Autoethnographic work has a goal of emotional rigor and therefore researcher vulnerability is one of the paths to good work (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 1991; Lapadat, 2017), so I am attempting to embrace this feeling of being exposed. Autoethnography is often used to explore trauma, loss, pain, and experiences of inequality (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Chang, 2008; Chang et al., 2013; Lapadat, 2017). I would never define

my collaborative filmmaking experience in these terms, because they just do not apply.

Consequently, I have felt periods of insecurity with my choice of research methods. I tried to ask myself questions to determine if it was painful for myself as an artist to face the idea of not being able to create when we were denied access to traditional funding. I also thought perhaps that I might look at the idea of collaborative funding being more socially just. While some aspects of my experience would lend themselves to these interpretations, they did not characterize my narrative of collaborative filmmaking as a whole. I tried to find a connection to the ideas of pain, loss, and inequality but could not find one that fit as instinctively as the methods did themselves. It was not until I hit on the idea of transformation in autoethnography (Romo, 2004), that I finally began to feel comfortable with my use of autoethnography. I feel that transformation is one thing that I share with traditional autoethnographic research; the idea of being in some way changed by a specific experience. The process of collaborating with my audience has changed my ideas for how filmmaking occurs and has transformed many of the practices. Independent filmmaking is experiencing a period of change, so perhaps this research into my own transformation can serve as a map for others. Beyond my feelings of vulnerability stemming from my research methods, I also feel vulnerable towards both my audience members and my participants. Some of this comes from feelings that I am in their debt.

I feel indebted to the *Five Year Plan* audience first and foremost for the funds they gave to us. These audience members contributed over \$14,000 on Kickstarter. Without this financial backing we would not have been able to rent equipment, pay our actors, feed the cast and crew, hire a composer, enter film festivals; essentially without their money we would not have been able to make our film. Secondly, I feel indebted to our audience for believing in us. It was not only their financial backing, but words of encouragement and overwhelming sense that they

really supported what we were doing that got us through the hard work. Finally, I am indebted to our audience for their willingness to engage and contribute as we made spaces for them to do so. These feelings of indebtedness lead directly into my feelings of vulnerability. I was unclear how to discuss any drawbacks that I had experienced while working with a group that I clearly owed so much to.

Collaborating with our audience was extremely rewarding and enabled us to be one of the select few who get to see their films completed. However, it was not an experience without challenges. Some of these challenges came from my own perceptions. I felt that I needed to be the poster child for collaboration since I wanted to study it. I wanted to accept a lot of audience feedback that would not have enhanced the film. Fortunately, I had filmmaking partners that wanted to be supportive of my research while still knowing how to stay true to the overall artistic vision. I also faced some challenges in wanting to be open and discuss negative aspects of collaboration so that other filmmakers could benefit. However, this desire was inhibited by worries about sounding ungrateful to my audience and in anyway jeopardize future films that we might make together. I feel indebted to my participants because I feel that in many ways, I let them carry some of the heavy load in these discussions, while trying to support their narratives in showing that these were not isolated experiences.

I am so grateful to my participants for opening up and sharing their experiences. Their own vulnerability encouraged me to be more open in my own reflections. I am indebted to these filmmakers for their dedication to my project. Each participant offered up multiple hours of their time and provided thoughtful consideration for each of my questions. Completing my own autoethnographic work also gave me a keen awareness of what kind of commitment I was asking

of my participants, during each of their very involved collaborative campaigns. This sense of indebtedness to my participants also causes me to feel vulnerable, both towards, and for, them.

I feel vulnerable for my participants in how their narratives will be perceived by the reader. I am also anxious that my participants feel comfortable with how they are portrayed. Ellis and Bochner (2016) assert that in autoethnography that combines narratives from other participants there are both pre-existing relationships and ones that develop over the course of the research. Though I only spent a few hours with each of my participants, I have engaged with their narratives for several months thus cementing my feelings of loyalty towards them. I have tried to balance what I feel I “owe” my participants, with what I feel is necessary for my reader to get a full sense of these individual experiences (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 140).

The work of autoethnography requires careful memory work to recall the people, events, and experiences in our lives that we wish to examine (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). However, memories are susceptible to our own desires to remember only what we want to (Chang et al., 2013). My autoethnographic journey included journaling both during and after my collaborative experience had ended. I thought that I had been faithful in collecting notes during my involvement. However, when I entered researcher mode, I discovered that so much of what I wanted to explore and discuss had taken place during the busiest times of audience collaboration and filmmaking. My notes from these periods, if they existed at all, were very sparse. This required much of my own experience to be drawn out through the use of the autoethnographic reflection guides that were developed specifically to acknowledge the limitations of memories (Chang, 2008; Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013). These exercises are designed to prepare the researcher to expect rough outlines rather than exact details, through prompts to recall and record memories as they are remembered (Chang et al., 2013, p. 75). Despite these best

intentions, my own collaborative experience will now always be remembered through the lens of this collaborative research project. Boucher (2016) described this best:

Subjectivity and temporality play a significant role in what and how I remember. Once the past was there; now it is gone. I want to be faithful to the past, but what I remember of experiences I lived through is anchored by what summons me *now* to remember; and my memory is, in part, a response to what presently inspires my recollections. (p. 251)

As a filmmaker, I am also aware that turning a camera lens towards a subject changes how that subject behaves and distorts the subject's true behaviour. By simply inviting my participants to take part in a research project on collaborative filmmaking, I reframed how they saw their own work and encouraged them to look at it through my lens. By doing this I may have altered their own memories and changed their 'truth' of these experiences.

Universal truth is not among the key goals for autoethnography and narrative research (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). Rather, the intent is to share specific experiences and our own interpretations of them, in the expectation that these experiences resonate with our readers' own experiences and lead them to action (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Lapadat, 2017). Autoethnography "replaces the concept of 'truth' with the concept of 'usefulness'" (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 239). My hope is that by framing our memories through the lens of collaboration, our experiences will be useful to filmmakers and other creators who have, or are considering, collaborating with their audiences.

### **Video on Demand: Significant Findings in the Filmmaker Experience and Broader**

#### **Cultural Implications – Conclusions**

This research has fostered an understanding of the collaborative filmmaker's experience and helped to identify eight suggested best practices for filmmakers wishing to collaborate with

their audiences. This section cements the suggested best practice strategies, discusses how the participants' narratives revealed a specific skill set to be developed outside of the practices of filmmaking, and how their experiences pointed to broader cultural implications.

### **Eight Best Practice Strategies for Audience Collaboration**

Through this research and the participants' narratives of experience, eight best practice strategies emerged. These strategies reinforce and build on the crowdfunding tactics defined by Trigonis (2016) and begin to establish a framework for audience-filmmaker collaboration. These practices describe how to engage audiences, incorporate feedback, and develop personal relationships that foster audience dedication to the filmmaker and their projects.

1. Filmmakers wishing to collaborate with their audiences should identify the specific, niche elements of their project in order to better understand the audience's genre expectations. They should also be aware of where their audiences are used to accessing content.
2. Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audiences need to establish a personal relationship, which begins by showing themselves in their pitch videos.
3. Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audiences should use collaborative language to foster a personal connection with their audience.
4. Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audience should focus on giving their audience bragging rights, through elements of their project that create both real and perceived participation.
5. Filmmakers in interested in collaborating with their audience by crowdfunding should develop rewards designed in a way that entices the audience and also provides a benefit to the production.

6. Filmmakers wishing to collaborate with their audiences need to make their shared common interests explicit.
7. Filmmakers who want to collaborate with their audiences need to provide updates during the various production phases so that their audience can feel like they are a part of the process.
8. Filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audience need to understand that they hold the ultimate creative vision for the project, the final filter through which all suggestions need to go.

My research shows that in order to use these best practice strategies to their fullest potential, filmmakers need to develop a new skillset for collaboration in order to augment their other filmmaking practices.

### **Transforming the Filmmaking Skillset**

While this research project is limited to the experience of four filmmakers, their narratives of the skills required for collaborative filmmaking indicated important findings for the overall understanding of this type of filmmaking experience. As Lucas explained, he wore many “hats” on his project as the writer, director, editor production designer, member of the sound team, and one of the producers. This is not unusual for independent filmmakers who cut costs by using their filmmaking skillsets to their maximum capacity by working on many aspects of the project. However, collaborative projects filmmakers need to become proficient in wearing some of the “hats” not usually connected to production. Lucas explained these new skills were not yet something that he felt entirely comfortable in:

*I do think there are some extra things that I had to learn how to do for this project. You develop a greater understanding and respect for the marketing people that do that sort of*

*thing. You understand why there's a marketing department for a Hollywood film, you know? They devote half their budget to marketing because it is a lot of work. I think what I've basically become is like a Jack-of-All-Trades, master of none type thing. If I've evolved in any way [for collaborative filmmaking] it's that. It's like I've just learned a bunch more skills that I can't execute to the best of their ability, but I can get by on them (laughs). – Lucas*

Like a muscle, through practice and repeated use, these specific collaboration skills get stronger. Although I was aware, on some level, of the different skills required to create a collaborative film project, seeing how many there were and how they worked together to supplement filmmaking practices was a surprise finding. In order to collaborate with their audiences, filmmakers should be developing and practicing their ability to communicate about themselves and their work, the ability to tolerate dissenting opinions and change, and the ability to hear the audience' collective voice in their heads.

### **Ability to Communicate About Yourself and Your Work**

For filmmakers who want to collaborate with their audiences, the ability to clearly communicate about themselves and about their work in all stages of development is important. This kind of open, transparent communication is what will attract audiences to participate and help the them feel like they are a part of the process. This is not a skill that a traditional filmmaker would necessarily require. While some indie filmmakers pitch their own projects to studios, many bring a producer onboard specifically for this purpose. Filmmakers are taught how to properly present their projects to studios, through the use of proper script and treatment formatting. However, the ability to talk about themselves and their process directly with the audience is not something taught in traditional filmmaking courses. For my filmmaker

participants the ability to clearly communicate to their audience was especially important, and many did this by talking to their audience directly through video. Curt's philosophy is to treat his filmmaking like a start-up company. He encourages other filmmakers to see themselves as a start-up and find positives in the fact that they may not have everything that comes with a full Hollywood studio production. When an organization is very large, they can quickly become impersonal.

*It's interesting because these large companies are trying their best to humanize themselves. And then these independent filmmakers, or these small start-ups, are trying their best to look like they're large. – Curt*

I agree with Curt and believe that an independent filmmaker or small filmmaking team has a better chance to develop a relationship with their audiences if they communicate in a personal way. It is easier to adopt a one-on-one communication style when posts are left and read directly by filmmakers or audience members, without any corporate hierarchy between them.

Filmmakers should embrace this and create communication that sounds like it is coming from them personally, rather than trying to mimic corporate communication practices.

Equally important is the ability to talk about films in progress and find terms to discuss unfinished work that the audience can understand. As I discovered with our proof-of-concept trailer release, audiences are not always as aware of filmmaking practices or terms as we give them credit for. Filmmakers need to be aware of the jargon that may be useful in day-to-day conversations with their crew but does not always translate as easily to their audience. Alan Alda (2017) has a great way of explaining the language that filmmakers use:

If you walked onto a movie set and someone asked you to “go get the gobo on the Century over there, and while you’re at it bring back a half apple and a kook – and hurry up, this is the Martini Shot,” you might be a little puzzled.<sup>3</sup> (p. 188)

However, this really useful shorthand lets a filmmaker know that a number of pieces of equipment are needed in order to get the last shot of the day. Sometimes using terminology can be a fun way to let your audience feel like they are part of an exclusive club, and other times it can lead to unmet expectations and broken relationships. It is important to know which is which and make sure that you provide transparent explanations when needed.

Communication is a skill that requires practice and some training. Therefore, filmmakers may be tempted to hire professionals to take over the communication with their audience. As tempting as this may be, Lucas suggested that audiences expect communication to be coming directly from the lead creative vision for the project.

*I just think it comes off weird to not want to directly associate with them [the audience], you know? Like, I feel like that would be off-putting in a way. – Lucas*

Audiences may forgive filmmakers for communication that is a little less professional, as long as it is authentic. Remembering personal relationships can lead audience members to feel loyal and dedicated to a project or group (Bruning & Galloway, 2003), it is important for this relationship to be built by the filmmaker themselves. In this way, audiences can develop a loyalty with a filmmaker that may last longer than one particular collaborative project and may enable the filmmaker to sustain their creative career.

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<sup>3</sup> Alda (2017) goes on to explain that: “The gobo casts a hard shadow and is attached to a Century stand, manufactured by the century company and bearing its name. The kook, or cocoloris, is a board with a patterned cut-out for casting feathery shadows. A half apple is a small platform about the size of half an apple box. Cameras, lights, and height-challenged actors can be placed on them. And the Martini Shot is the last shot of the day, after which everyone goes home and has a martini” (p. 188).

### **Tolerating Dissenting Opinions or Change**

Collaborating with your audience means that you must be open and tolerant to other ideas that might differ from your original view of the project. For a relationship to be two sided and beneficial, the power dynamics of both filmmaker and audience need to be balanced through the allowance of a variety of opinions. Postmodernism in public relations encourages dissenting and plural discourses (Kennedy & Sommerfeldt, 2015). In her digital ethnography of television fans, Elizabeth Bird (2003) shows that fans embrace this idea of dissenting opinions. One fan stated that "stars should trust their fans' judgement, and that they should appreciate the support fans give, even if it includes criticism" (Bird, 2003, p 79). Collaborative filmmakers need to see that sometimes fan ideas can change their project for the better. Any indie filmmaker who posts their films online opens themselves up to criticism. Collaborative filmmakers need to embrace and often even incorporate these critiques.

This particular skill was often a little challenging for me. While Curt, Trevor, and I all discussed receiving negative feedback or comments on our social media posts, I struggled with how to handle these. In the spirit of collaboration, we often tried to respond and start a dialog with the audience member. However, there were some posts that we did not feel were appropriate to engage with. Rather than deleting them, many of these were left up. I discovered that occasionally audience members would take it upon themselves to respond to the critic. Not only was this a great feeling, it also provided these audience members an opportunity to become part of the team in explaining certain aspects or defending the production.

### **Hearing the Audiences' Collective Voice in their Heads**

For collaborative filmmakers it is important work to always keep the audience in mind, especially when around decision making. A filmmaker interested in building a relationship with

their audience through collaboration needs to remember to allow room for the audience to influence decisions. This moves beyond the ability to tolerate dissenting opinions, to the point where each filmmaker can appreciate the variety of perspectives and internalize them to an extent.

*It is just closing my eyes and thinking "what does my audience want?" – Curt*

I am defining this as a skill because I noticed that each of the filmmakers' narratives showed points in their decision-making processes where they practiced talking to themselves in a way that showed how they anticipated their audiences' response.

Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) suggests that all media has a dialogic component between author and audience. Even media that may be thought of as traditionally passive, like a novel, "every literary work faces outward away from itself, toward the listener-reader, and to a certain extent thus anticipates possible reactions to itself" (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 257). An author imagines and anticipates the responses from their readers. In their writing, authors are having a conversation with the audience where "the words themselves are, in a sense, 'half someone else's'" (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 11). If an author writes both sides of these audience conversations, then after a while anticipating the audiences' response is no longer fully separable from the authors response. This may also be true for collaborative filmmakers.

*It was just like they were always in the back of my mind. - Lucas*

For collaborative filmmakers, these imagined and anticipated conversations are intermixed with real audience discourse. For my own project I experienced this as always having our audience in my head at the same time as my own voice. With every decision I made, I reflected on how it would impact the audience and what their response would be based on how they had responded in the past. Imagining the audience as smiling or laughing at a particular post would encourage

me to write about the event in a specific way for them. I then experienced their feedback as positive if they reacted the way I had projected they would.

If every filmmaker, like every author, starts out with an imaginary audience in mind, then for the collaborative filmmaker this dialog is enhanced by an ongoing feedback loop from real audience members. Most filmmakers need to wait until their films are completed before they start to receive feedback and determine if their imagined audience responses were correct. My filmmaker participants used their knowledge of their actual audience to bridge the gap between actual and imagined audience. Considering the audiences' response was important at every stage became second nature during the process of collaborating for many of the filmmakers.

### **Broader Cultural Implications**

Filmmaker interactions with their audiences show that there is more to these collaborative projects than the final film itself. The process and practices of collaborating are, in and of themselves, just as involved as the actual filmmaking. These practices include the filmmaker's considerations for how to attract and entice their audiences, thoughts on how to best present the project, and what language to use. These activities have set expectations for both the collaborative filmmakers and the audiences that engage with them. Some theorists (e. g., Golding & Murdock, 1978; Newcomb, 1984) have called for "the analysis of social practices involved in production, distribution, and reception as the best means of understanding the social role of texts" (Newcomb, 1984, pp. 34-25). This research project has focused on understanding the production and distribution experience of collaborative filmmakers. Collaborating with an engaged participatory audience had specific impacts in the areas of production and distribution for my four filmmaker participants. They felt that it increased their production times, at times caused extra stress, and required them to learn new skills not typically required by filmmakers.

However, they also felt that working directly with their audiences enabled them to make films that they would not necessarily have had the opportunity to make any other way, and that the final creative artifact would be all the better for the audiences' input. Based on my discussions with the participant filmmakers, there are other broader cultural implications arising from collaborative filmmaking and the industry structures that have led to its popularity.

### **The Change in the Hollywood Production Model**

There are changes happening to the traditional Hollywood production model. Film funding from studios or government grants is precarious and not something filmmakers can rely on. The traditional production model was also closed to audience members. Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito, and danah boyd (2013) have stated that when a cultural product “is produced according to a one-size-fits-all model, it imperfectly fits the needs of any given audience” (p. 26). New technologies are disrupting the traditional studio model of media funding and opening up ways for niche audiences to make an impact and have a say in the media texts (films, television shows, etc.) that they want to see funded (Jenkins et al., 2013). Filmmakers agree that collaborating directly with audiences through these shifts in technology might be part of a new movement that helps support the industry.

*Yeah, I think the more democratized the technology gets I think the better it is for everybody.* – Lucas

Anderson (2004) argues that there are more people with niche tastes than there are people with mainstream tastes. However, before the rise of new digital technologies it was easier and cheaper to cater to the mainstream tastes, rather than trying to create different products to cater to multiple individual tastes. These neglected audiences are now providing opportunity to filmmakers who can create the content that was missing. New technologies are providing some

industries, such as music and books, the opportunity to transform by tapping into niche audiences in “the long tail” (Anderson, 2004, para. 27). I believe that new technologies provide the access for collaborative filmmakers to connect with niche audiences in order to find a place for their content.

Collaborative audiences want to help create content that they cannot access anywhere else, they want to be engaged, and they want to participate in the process. Bruns (2006) defines audience members who both produce and consume, or use, media content in a participatory environment “*producers*” (p. 276). The participants in this study also saw benefits in the participatory audience trend. Audience members who want to be involved in the filmmaking process are eager to learn more. Through this education they are becoming better critiques of content, which in turn is helping to make the filmmakers better at their craft.

Participatory audiences who are educated about film production and have a vested interest in creating niche content are a valuable resource for filmmakers. This is especially true in this period of transition in the filmmaking industry, when even large studios seem to be struggling with the question of how to be sustainable. Our current culture is creating an opportunity in content gaps and access to audiences through technologies, however, crowdfunding may need to be only one component of a successful collaborative filmmaking career. Collaborative filmmakers consider crowdfunding audiences as a scarce and even non-renewable resource.

### **Not Wanting to Over-Tap their Audience**

This research shows that independent filmmakers who made their films with the funds raised through crowdfunding did not take their audience for granted. Filmmakers who have tried other avenues for funding and have managed to raise their budgets want to ensure that their

audiences' feel their investment was well spent. Funding a film is never an easy task. There are grant applications to fill out, potential major investors to impress, and often this kind of funding comes with creative provisos. The funder often wants to have the final say on the film before it is released. This is what attracts filmmakers to crowdfunding to begin with, however, these filmmakers may not understand the full sense of responsibility that they will develop towards their audience. The filmmakers in this research project would be cautious to pursue another crowdfunding campaign because of the workload that comes from what they feel they owe their audience beyond the actual film itself. A sense of responsibility and concern for the audience is also an important factor in a filmmaker's decision to crowdfund for a second time, and they do not want their audience to feel like their contributions are taken for granted.

*I think that it's a bit like the week before Christmas and everywhere you go it seems like somebody's asking for money, right? I just didn't want to take advantage of people or them to feel like we were taking advantage of them. – Trevor*

After taking the time to carefully build a personal relationship with their audience, collaborative filmmakers are concerned with preserving this relationship. Having a solid audience base can sustain a filmmaker and allow them to move away from crowdfunding. This was evident in Trevor's case. After two successful crowdfunding campaigns he was able to connect with his audiences in different ways and was able to forgo crowdfunding for his two subsequent projects.

During this research project I have reflected many times on whether I would pursue a crowdfunding campaign again. I would consider running a campaign if I had a project that I thought was sure to interest the audience our filmmaking team already has. We have already spent the time identifying the audience and established ourselves as creators who share their interest in content. That work would not need be repeated. However, I feel very protective of our

audience and grateful for the opportunity that they have provided for us. I do not wish to strain our relationship by asking these same individuals for funding again. I would want to create opportunities for our existing audience to get involved again because I know a lot of them really enjoyed it and were really excited to be a part of it. Therefore, in order to consider another crowdfunding campaign, we would first need to develop a strategy to grow our audience base, so we have a new group of people that we can excite and ask for funding assistance. I believe that as more filmmakers turn to crowdfunding, independent collaborative filmmakers will need to set themselves apart by showing their concern for their audience. This will also require staying on top of trends and opportunities in order to shift away from the crowdfunding element of collaboration or to grow and refresh the audience base.

### **Collaborative Films as Art**

Filmmakers who collaborate with their audiences make art with their audiences. There is the potential that a sense of responsibility to the audience may encourage a filmmaker to create the “‘give the people what they want’ version” (Sepinwall, 2015, para. 37). However, collaborative filmmakers who are creating something brand new have sparked their audience’s imagination. The audience wants to be a part of a project based on a filmmaker’s ability to share their creative vision. It would be a disservice to both the filmmaker and the audience member to stray too far from what was at the heart of their original concept. Through collaboration, a filmmaker is able to enrich their concept.

Every film is the product of many people's creative vision and collaboration. For some films it is the collaborative effort between writers, directors, actors, and countless others who all bring some of their own perspective and creative flourishes to the project. I believe that films provide social value, by reflecting society and providing a way to look at things from another

different perspective. I think this is one of the reasons that getting the audience involved in the creative process can be very rewarding; you are adding so more perspectives. As these perspectives get filtered through the filmmaker's creative vision, they are leaving an impression, an imprint that will influence how the director makes subsequent decisions. The final product is a film, a product that is so much richer and diverse than any one person could make alone.

### **Worldwide Release: Potential for Further Research - Conclusions**

#### **Potential for Further Research**

This research project enabled me to look at four different case studies of filmmaker-audience collaboration. Analyzing these cases separately helped me to understand these specific filmmakers' experiences and provide a voice for filmmakers in this research field. Analyzing the cases together, a picture began to form of how this kind of filmmaking differs from other types of filmmaking and what the broader societal implications of this might be. I believe that the main differences in this kind of collaborative filmmaking are: (1) the idea of keeping the actual versus imagined audience in mind, (2) knowing how and when to incorporate audience feedback, and (3) the performance of a number of communications and public relations skills that would not necessarily be a part of a regular independent film project.

I wish I had asked the participants themselves what they felt the differences were, and if they agreed with my interpretation, in order to see if I am understanding their experience fully. As mentioned above, a problem in single interview projects is that the process of interviewing can be distracting and result in the interviewer splitting their attention between listening, observing, and worrying about their next question. In a larger research project, I would welcome the ability to return to my participants for multiple interviews after taking time in between to transcribe and code some of what they had said. This would enable the asking of follow-up

questions that may arise and the fleshing out of areas that may not have received as much coverage in just one interview. In order to expand on my understanding of the phenomenon, a future project should provide the opportunity to return to the participants to discuss the ideas of how audience collaboration changes the filmmaker process, what additional skills they required to conduct this kind of work, and what the broader societal implications might be. The purpose of this project was to understand the individual filmmaker experiences; however, future research should also revisit these themes with other filmmakers to determine if these experiences are common and continue to analyze across cases to understand the broader implications of participatory audiences on filmmakers.

It is also important to remember that as technology shifts and filmmakers' processes change, the experience of the filmmaker will also change. A "persuasive interpretation of a narrative text at one historical moment may not be later" (Riessman, 1993, pp. 65-66). For this research project I was looking to describe the experience for the collaborative filmmaker as it is now, when these methods are still relatively new. The experience will shift and change with every project, even for these specific filmmakers the experience will not be the same the next time. I would highly encourage completing this kind of scholarship on a regular basis to check in and see what the filmmaker's current experiences are and how technology and the practices of active audiences are influencing their filmmaking.

### **Practical Applications**

This research project explores filmmakers' experiences and provides them with a voice in participatory audience research. With their narratives, I have begun to establish a framework of process and best practices. Through the narrative analysis and findings, a general theory of process has emerged. The filmmaker narratives have described which actions, decisions, and

communications happen best at which stages of production. This research has begun to develop best practice strategies for filmmakers interested in collaborating with their audiences.

Filmmakers should have an understanding of how genre and niche audiences contribute to the success of a crowdfunding campaign. Filmmakers should share their own interest in the niche genre with the audience. Establishing a personal relationship to the audience needs to be a priority for filmmakers. One way to do this is by talking directly to their audience in a pitch video. Filmmakers can then continue to foster this personal relationship through the use of using collaborative language in their posts and other communications. Consideration needs to be given for how to develop rewards that are mutually beneficial, to both the filmmaker and their audience. Filmmakers need to develop opportunities for audience members to feel a sense of ownership over the final film and to have bragging rights. Filmmakers should always keep the audience informed during production and provide opportunities for feedback. Knowing how and when to incorporate audience feedback requires careful consideration by the filmmaker.

In the current shifting climate of film funding, many filmmakers are considering how to use new technologies in approaching their audience directly to establish and maintain creative careers. Providing audiences with opportunities for collaboration is one way that filmmakers are exploring this. Collaborative filmmakers are discovering that when we tell our audiences “We couldn’t do this without you,” we mean this from both a financial and a creative perspective. Every incorporated audience suggestion, character that they play, or location they help find, adds to the final experience of the film. My hope is that this research will provide some direction for independent filmmakers, who often operate in isolation of each other, allowing them to learn and benefit from the experiences and actions of other filmmakers.

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## Appendix 1

### Final Interview Questions

Icebreaker: How did you get started with filmmaking?

Tell us about your current role in the film project. If you thought about “defining moments” that contributed to you becoming a filmmaker and assuming your current role, what comes to mind?

Q1: What led you to crowdfunding?

Probe: Did you try any other avenues to fund this specific project? If so, what?

Probe: Did the crowdfunding budget cover all of your costs, if not why not? And were you aware of that going into the funding process?

Probe: Where there surprises in raising the funds on a crowdfunding platform?

Q2: What stage are you at in your production?

Probe: When do you expect the project to be complete and what still needs to happen in the process?

Q3: What is your relationship with your audience?

Probe: When did this relationship begin? Was it prior to the funding cycle for this project?

Probe: How and why did you decide to give your audience creative control in the form of (area identified in preliminary participatory project analysis)?

Probe: How much time and effort do you feel that you spend in communicating to your audience? What are the effects and impacts of this (positive/negative)?

Probe: Do you crowdsource from your audience? If so, what and how?

Probe: Did you use any resources to learn to develop your relationship with your audience? If so, what did you learn from them?

Q4: How did you conceptualize your pitch video and what elements were important to you?

Probe: Why did you decide to present yourself in the video?

Probe: Why did you decide to use open and collaborative language like “explore/create it WITH YOU”?

Probe: How much effort (mentally and physically) do you feel went into your pitch videos?

Q5: How did you build (how do you maintain) the relationship with your audience?

Probe: Do you communicate or give updates at specific stages of the production? If so, which ones and how?

Q6: For this film project specifically how did you conceptualize the funding rewards and what was important to you when planning what these rewards would be?

Probe: How did you come to the decision to provide a film credit for each of your backers?

Probe: How did you come to the decision to provide BTS or “insider” access?

Probe: What, if any, resources did you use to brainstorm reward ideas and how were they impactful?

Q7: How has the creative experience been? How has audience feedback influenced the production process and the final film? Was there anything unexpected?

Probe: Has audience involvement had an impact on your own creative process? If so, how?

Probe: Has audience involvement had an impact on your sense of ownership of the film?

Does the audience have a sense of ownership in the cultural capital? If so, how?

Probe: Do you feel that you would be making a different film without audience involvement? If so, how?

Q8: What has your experience been in fulfilling crowdfunding rewards?

Probe: Has this impacted your production schedule? How so?

Probe: How has this impacted your filmmaking process overall?

Q9: What has the emotional experience been?

Probe: How has audience collaboration impacted you personally as a filmmaker?

Probe: Was there anything unexpected?

Q10: Would you create another audience participation project in the future?

Probe: Would you do anything differently? If so, what?

Q11: What are the costs (financial and otherwise) and benefits of audience collaboration in the filmmaking process?

Probe: Did you consider these before the project?

Wrap up: What are we missing, what else have you experienced that we haven't yet covered?

Observations	Researcher Comments

## Appendix 2

### Biography and Filmography Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 75+

The age of majority in my location of \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_  
years old.

I have reached the age of majority in my location (please check one).

- Yes
- No

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

- would rather not say

Education: (Please indicate the highest level of education achieved)

- some high school
- high school diploma
- professional certification
- some post-secondary
- college diploma
- university degree
- graduate degree
- PhD
- other
- would rather not say

My education is in film studies (or other related studies)  Yes  No

My education (either in film studies or not) has helped me with my film career  Yes  No

Comments (if any):

Occupation:

- employed full-time
- employed part-time
- self-employed
- not employed
- retired
- student
- homemaker
- other
- would rather not say

I am a full-time filmmaker  Yes  No

I hope to one day be a full-time filmmaker  Yes  No

Comments (if any):

Nationality:

- Canadian
- Indigenous
- Official immigrant status
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

Filmmaking in general:

How many films have you been a part of making?

What role do you usually have in the filmmaking process?

What role would you like to have in the filmmaking process?

Do you have an IMDB page? If yes, please provide link.

Have you been a part of film projects that used only traditional funding (grants, broadcast licenses, distribution advances, etc.)? If so, how many? And briefly describe the experience.

Have you been a part of film projects that used only crowdfunding? If so, how many? And briefly describe the experience.

Have you been a part of film projects that blended traditional funding with crowdfunding? If so, how many? And briefly describe the experience.

Do you have a favourite genre of film? If so, what is your favourite genre and why? Does your favourite genre change depending on if you are watching or making the film? Please explain.

What value (social, artistic, or otherwise) do you ascribe to films? Please explain.

Specific project for this research: \_\_\_\_\_

For this project are you the creator (writer, director, or person who is most responsible for the overall creative outcome of the film)?  Yes  No

If yes, please outline your role:

If no, please indicate who on your team has this role:

For this project are you the main spokesperson for the film (the person who is communicating the most with the audience or community)?  Yes  No

If yes, please outline your role:

If no, please indicate who on your team has this role:

Audience collaboration, participation, or engagement.

Thinking about this project, consider your social media channels, your in-person events, and other ways that you reach your audience. Which elements of your project would you identify as creating collaboration, participation, or engagement with your audience? Would you call it collaboration, or would you call it something else? Why? Did you create this space for collaboration specifically? Why or if not, how did it come about?

What are the channels of communication for this project and for the production company (select all that apply and provide links):

- Crowdfunding platform \_\_\_\_\_
- Twitter \_\_\_\_\_
- Facebook \_\_\_\_\_
- Instagram \_\_\_\_\_
- YouTube \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

How do you envision or remember your original collaboration plan?

In broad strokes list out how you planned to collaborate with your audience at these four stages of production: (a) pre-production, or initial story formation and research, (b) production, or the

actual filming, (c) post-production, or the editing and scoring, and (c) distribution, or the final viewing of the film. What were (if any) the major activities, events, or communications at each stage?

Pre-production:

Production:

Post-production:

Distribution:

Other Media

Would you be willing to share any audience photos, graphics, or videos? These could include any audience filmmaker interactions on set, any art objects created by the audience, posters or other marketing materials to elicit audience collaboration, etc. Submission of these elements is voluntary and any submissions must be accompanied by release forms.  Yes  No

Thank you for the time and effort you spent to complete the questionnaire. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me.

You may submit your completed questionnaire to me by email.

**Appendix 3**

Online Observation Framework

<b>Project Title:</b> <b>Production Phase:</b> (Funding, Pre-Production, Production, Post Production, Distribution) <b>Social Media or Crowdfunding Platform:</b> (Facebook or Kickstarter) <b>Notes:</b> <b>P:</b> Project owner's comment. <b>C:</b> Presumed audience comment.					
Post Date	Preliminary Post Info	Post Topic	Interactions	Comments	My Thoughts

**Appendix 4**

Framework for Identifying Participatory Film Projects

Definition - "I define participatory creation as **opening some decision-making processes** to a loose collective of participants who **gain recognition as practitioners** through their engagement in a creative practice." (Telo, 2013, p. 2314 – emphasis my own)

I want to massage and expand on Telo's definition to add some additional landscape to "opening some decision-making processes" to include any way for the audience to contribute to the final film. I won't say "meaningfully" contribute because that is really up to the audience member.

Project:	
Platform:	
Necessary Conditions	Link:
Unrestricted Membership	
Self-selection of participants	

<p>Distribution of control (decision-making processes)</p> <p>*doesn't have to be as open</p>	
<p>Spaces of negotiation</p>	
<p>Transparency</p>	
<p>Mutual recognition</p>	

**Notes:**

## Appendix 5

### Custom Consent Form for Filmmaking Partners

(Printed on MSVU Department of Communication Studies letterhead)

#### **Autoethnographic Collaborator Participant**

(full name of participant)

#### **Title of Research Study**

Collaborative Filmmaker-Audience Relationships: The Experience of Engaging, Co-Creating, and Building Community

#### **Student Researcher**

Jodi Cooper, student, MA (Communication), Communication Studies, MSVU

#### **Thesis Supervisor**

Dr. DeNel Rehberg Sedo, Professor, Communication Studies, MSVU

#### **Purpose of Research Study**

You are invited to participate in this narrative research study which will discover the experience of filmmaker audience collaboration, from your (the filmmaker's) perspective, gained through your own narratives and sites of online audience/filmmaker interaction. This study will conduct analysis to identify common threads, which may point to best practices, and will help to get a clearer picture of the impact on creative careers. The intention is to explore the connected nature of media and culture, to provide a voice for filmmakers in this type of scholarship, and to discover the impact of these connections on both creators and on society in a broader sense. Using an ethnographic approach to observe and listen to stories of production and reception of cultural media products, this qualitative research will be a blend of narrative research, including autoethnographic, and digital ethnographic methods. It will use narrative research to collect lived experiences of filmmakers, and will analyze the communication between filmmakers and their audiences on online platforms. The objective of this research is to help filmmakers better understand these relationships and use them to build a collaborative framework that can be mutually beneficial to both filmmakers and audiences.

#### **Autoethnographic Collaborator Recruitment**

Filmmaker participants have actively collaborated with the researcher, Jodi Cooper, on the collaborative and participatory film project *The Woodsmen*. Your collaboration has been identified as significant and as such you accept that you will be identifiable in the final research report as part of the autoethnographic reflections that the researcher completes for this project.

Participants must meet the age of majority requirements for their location.

### **Requirements of Participants**

Autoethnographic collaboration participants may have their contributions to *The Woodsmen* included, and reflected on, in the autoethnographic component of this project. Collaboration participants understand that information regarding their demographic/background information including age, gender, education, and experience within the filmmaking community may be used in the final report.

Collaboration participants may be asked to provide or review photos, graphics, and videos in which they appear in relation to *The Woodsmen*. These could include any audience filmmaker interactions on set, any art objects created by the audience, posters or other marketing materials to elicit audience collaboration, etc. Participants understand that official publicity materials and behind the scenes elements for *The Woodsmen* may be used in the final report without further notification. Submission of additional and personal elements is voluntary, and any submissions must be accompanied by appropriate release forms.

Collaboration participants are welcome to provide written reflections on, or discuss in person, their own collaboration experience working on *The Woodsmen*. These submissions and discussions may be included as I reflect on my experience collaborating with the group.

### **Study Period**

All research for this study is to take place between July 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019. If deemed necessary, collaboration participants should complete the questionnaire, guided reflection, and one-on-one interviews prior to January 31, 2019 and to allow for online communication observation until March 31, 2019.

### **Potential Risks & Benefits**

As a practicing filmmaker, active in making films with a strong audience engagement component you are aware of the risks and benefits of creating films and engaging in online conversations about your films. For this project, you may be discussing your methods and experience on a deeper level than what you may already be making public through your online communication channels. The reflections and questions may trigger a psychological or emotional response, challenging how you think about your process and experience as a filmmaker. Due to the secretive nature of media industries, you may not wish to have names, project titles, and/or production companies published. On the other hand, as a filmmaker it can also be beneficial to be credited for your work on audience participation projects and may want to have full names and titles made public. For this project you will be identifiable in the autoethnographic component as key collaborators in *The Woodsmen*. However, you will have the option to engage more and

provide your own reflections on the experience or to engage the minimum and only be identifiable as a key contributor in the researcher's own autoethnographic reflections.

It is reasonable to expect that you will benefit from this study by gaining a new understanding and perspective of your own filmmaking process. You also have the potential to have your own work in this field recognized, alongside others, from whose experience you will also benefit by receiving the final report.

It is my hope that by exploring the experience filmmakers collaborating with their audiences a comprehensive understanding of the costs and benefits from the filmmakers perspective can be gained. This will answer questions of what audience participation means for the filmmaker's own creative process, claims of authorship, and the potential for overall social and cultural impact. This information will be used to develop a framework of best practices, which can then act as a guide to building filmmaker-audience relationships to achieve enduring creative careers. At any point during the research process should you feel the need to talk to someone further about any emotions, memories, or anything else that may arise during this study it is recommended that you call 211 or visit [www.211.ca](http://www.211.ca). This is a national service where you can gain access to community-based health and social services should you need anyone to talk to.

### **Data Storage, Security & Use**

Research data will be collected via: 1) a written demographic/background questionnaire; 2) a written guided reflection; 3) copies of online communications between filmmakers and audience members; 4) written notes of the researcher's observations of online communication between filmmakers and audience members; 5) a digital audio (and possibly video) recording of the one-on-one interview; and, 6) written notes of the researcher's observations at the one-on-one interview. Data collected in hardcopy will be stored in a locked file as well as transcribed to a computer file. Digital audio recordings, videos, and images will be stored on a memory card in the same locked file as well as transcribed verbatim to a computer file. Hardcopies of these transcripts will also be stored in the locked file. I will be the only person with access to the locked file. All computer files will be secured by password protection on an encrypted hard drive, and back-ups will be stored on the MSVU OneDrive server located on campus.

Study data will be electronically archived indefinitely for its potential to inform future research. All computer files will be archived on the MSVU OneDrive server. Data in hardcopy form will be destroyed 6 months after completion of the research study.

### **Limits to Confidentiality**

There will be an autoethnographic component to this research, where I reflect on my own personal experience working on *The Woodsmen* in collaboration with key project members and our audience. As key collaborators you will be identifiable through your relationship with myself, the researcher.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not want to answer some of the questions in the reflections, or in the one-on-one interview, you do not have to and you can still remain in the study. You have the right not to participate and to end your participation at any time, for any reason, with no consequences to you. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data will not be used in the analysis, interpretation, or final report unless you indicate otherwise. The right to withdraw from the study extends for the duration of your participation until the end of the study period. The withdrawal of individual data can only be completed prior to preparation of manuscripts for knowledge sharing and publication.

### **Dissemination of Results**

The final study results will be disseminated according to MSVU policy for electronic, hardcopy and/or bound copies to the library, archives, and thesis committee members.

I intend to seek opportunities to publish and present the results of my thesis research once complete. Your confidentiality will be maintained in any and all published articles or presentations that may result from this study. Unless otherwise requested, you will not be identified as a participant, nor will comments be attributed to you in the final study report, potential articles or presentations.

I will inform you by email when the study report is finalized, and you will receive a copy of the final report.

### **University Research Ethics Board Clearance**

The ethical components of this research study have been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Board and found to be in compliance with Mount Saint Vincent University's Research Ethics Policy.

### **Contact Information**

If you have questions about the study and wish to speak to someone directly involved in the research, you may contact me, Jodi Cooper, as the lead researcher. You may also contact Dr. Rehberg Sedo, my research thesis supervisor.

If you have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone not directly involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office.

### **Signatures**

I, (full name of participant), consent to participate in the study entitled "Collaborative Filmmaker-Audience Relationships: The Experience of Engaging, Co-Creating, and Building Community" conducted by Jodi Cooper. I understand the nature and requirements of this study and wish to participate. My signature below indicates my consent.

I certify that I meet the age of majority requirement for my location.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

## **Appendix 6**

### **Participant Consent for Thesis Research Study**

(Printed on MSVU Department of Communication Studies letterhead)

#### **Participant**

(full name of participant)

#### **Title of Research Study**

Collaborative Filmmaker-Audience Relationships: The Experience of Engaging, Co-Creating, and Building Community

#### **Student Researcher**

Jodi Cooper, student, MA (Communication), Communication Studies, MSVU

#### **Thesis Supervisor**

Dr. DeNel Rehberg Sedo, Professor, Communication Studies, MSVU

#### **Purpose of Research Study**

You are invited to participate in this narrative research study which will discover the experience of filmmaker audience collaboration, from your (the filmmaker's) perspective, gained through your own narratives and sites of online audience/filmmaker interaction. This study will conduct analysis to identify common threads, which may point to best practices, and will help to get a clearer picture of the impact on creative careers. The intention is to explore the connected nature of media and culture, to provide a voice for filmmakers in this type of scholarship, and to discover the impact of these connections on both creators and on society in a broader sense. Using an ethnographic approach to observe and listen to stories of production and reception of cultural media products, this qualitative research will be a blend of narrative research, including autoethnographic, and digital ethnographic methods. It will use narrative research to collect lived experiences of filmmakers, and will analyze the communication between filmmakers and their audiences on online platforms. The objective of this research is to help filmmakers better understand these relationships and use them to build a collaborative framework that can be mutually beneficial to both filmmakers and audiences.

#### **Participant Recruitment**

Filmmaker participants must be actively engaged in projects identified as participatory at the time of my research or have been engaged in these activities within the past 12 months.

I am interested in studying the person who is most responsible for the overall creative outcome of the film (such as the director, or writer) and, if different, the main spokesperson for the film (the person who is communicating the most with the audience or community).

Participants must meet the age of majority requirements for their location.

### **Requirements of Participants**

Study participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire to collect demographic/background information including age, gender, education, and experience within the filmmaking community. The questionnaire should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Included in the questionnaire is a request to share any audience photos, graphics, and videos. These could include any audience filmmaker interactions on set, any art objects created by the audience, posters or other marketing materials to elicit audience collaboration, etc. Submission of these elements is voluntary, and any submissions must be accompanied by appropriate release forms. Next, each participant's collaborative filmmaking experience will be explored in a written guided reflection format. You will be provided with questions to help you remember details and reflect on your involvement in the project. The time required for this activity will depend on how far along you are with your audience collaboration and the extent to which you engage with the exercises.

Each participant will consent to having their audience communication observed across all online channels (including their crowdfunding channel and any other social media channels) for both the project and the production company, for the duration of the study. Filmmakers will provide access in the way of links to all channels of communication, and will send any exclusive communication (intended for specific levels of backers) to the researcher, during the study period. All audience member identifiers, user names, and characteristics will be removed and comments will be paraphrased in the final report.

Finally, each participant will be asked to meet with me one-on-one to talk about your experience. You will choose the date and time to meet for approximately one hour. Depending on participant locations these interviews may take place online (using an online voice and video tool such as Skype). These interviews will be audio recorded, and maybe video recorded if agreed to by participants.

### **Study Period**

All research for this study is to take place between July 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019. Participants should complete the questionnaire, guided reflection, and one-on-one interviews prior to January 31, 2019 and to allow for online communication observation until March 31, 2019. If your ability to fulfil the requirements within the timeline changes over the course of the study you are not obligated to continue, but you are always welcome to discuss the potential to complete elements outside the timeline with the researcher.

### **Potential Risks & Benefits**

As a practicing filmmaker, active in making films with a strong audience engagement component you are aware of the risks and benefits of creating films and engaging in online conversations about your films. For this project, you will be discussing your methods and experience on a deeper level than what you may already be making public through your online communication channels. The reflections and questions may trigger a psychological or emotional response, challenging how you think about your process and experience as a filmmaker. Due to the secretive nature of media industries, you may not wish to have names, project titles, and/or production companies published. On the other hand, as a filmmaker it can also be beneficial to be credited for your work on audience participation projects and may want to have full names and titles made public. For this project you will have the ability to decide on either full recognition or full confidentiality at any point during the study.

For this project you will have the ability to decide on either full recognition or full confidentiality at any point during the study. If you do not wish to have your name, production company name, or project title used in the final report you will need to confirm or request confidentiality prior to preparation of manuscripts for knowledge sharing and publication. If you request confidentiality a pseudonym will be used in place of your real name in the final report, and no other titles or company names will be used in association with your participation. It is reasonable to expect that you will benefit from this study by gaining a new understanding and perspective of your own filmmaking process. You also have the potential to have your own work in this field recognized, alongside others, from whose experience you will also benefit by receiving the final report. It is my hope that by exploring the experience filmmakers collaborating with their audiences a comprehensive understanding of the costs and benefits from the filmmakers perspective can be gained. This will answer questions of what audience participation means for the filmmaker's own creative process, claims of authorship, and the potential for overall social and cultural impact. This information will be used to develop a framework of best practices, which can then act as a guide to building filmmaker-audience relationships to achieve enduring creative careers. At any point during the research process should you feel the need to talk to someone further about any emotions, memories, or anything else that may arise during this study it is recommended that you call 211 or visit [www.211.ca](http://www.211.ca). This is a national service where you can gain access to community-based health and social services should you need anyone to talk to.

### **Data Storage, Security & Use**

Research data will be collected via: 1) a written demographic/background questionnaire; 2) a written guided reflection; 3) copies of online communications between filmmakers and audience members; 4) written notes of the researcher's observations of online communication between filmmakers and audience members; 5) a digital audio (and possibly video) recording of the one-on-one interview; and, 6) written notes of the researcher's observations at the one-on-one interview. Data collected in hardcopy will be stored in a locked file as well as transcribed to a computer file. Digital audio recordings, videos, and images will be stored on a memory card in

the same locked file as well as transcribed verbatim to a computer file. Hardcopies of these transcripts will also be stored in the locked file. I will be the only person with access to the locked file. All computer files will be secured by password protection on an encrypted hard drive, and back-ups will be stored on the MSVU OneDrive server located on campus. Study data will be electronically archived indefinitely for its potential to inform future research. All computer files will be archived on the MSVU OneDrive server. Data in hardcopy form will be destroyed 6 months after completion of the research study.

### **Confidentiality**

Your participation in this study will be confidential, unless recognition is otherwise requested by yourself. If you would like to have your name, production company, and/or project title printed in the study, you can elect to receive this credit for your contributions. Otherwise, I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified in the data and subsequent analysis and final report. All identifiable information will be securely stored separate from the data collected in the study. To protect your confidentiality, this information about you will only be accessible to my thesis advisor and myself (Dr. DeNel Rehberg Sedo).

### **Limits to Confidentiality**

Individual participants could be identifiable due to the small community of independent filmmakers in Canada who have participated in audience collaboration projects. There will also be an autoethnographic component to this research and participants could be identifiable through their relationship with myself, the researcher. Every effort will be made to ensure participants are unidentifiable for those who wish to have their information kept confidential.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not want to answer some of the questions on the demographic/background questionnaire, or in the one-on-one interview, you do not have to and you can still remain in the study. You have the right not to participate and to end your participation at any time, for any reason, with no consequences to you. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data will not be used in the analysis, interpretation, or final report unless you indicate otherwise. The right to withdraw from the study extends for the duration of your participation until the end of the study period. The withdrawal of individual data can only be completed prior to preparation of manuscripts for knowledge sharing and publication.

### **Dissemination of Results**

The final study results will be disseminated according to MSVU policy for electronic, hardcopy and/or bound copies to the library, archives, and thesis committee members.

I intend to seek opportunities to publish and present the results of my thesis research once complete. Your confidentiality will be maintained in any and all published articles or

presentations that may result from this study. Unless otherwise requested, you will not be identified as a participant, nor will comments be attributed to you in the final study report, potential articles or presentations.

I will inform you by email when the study report is finalized, and you will receive a copy of the final report.

### **University Research Ethics Board Clearance**

The ethical components of this research study have been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Board and found to be in compliance with Mount Saint Vincent University's Research Ethics Policy.

### **Contact Information**

If you have questions about the study and wish to speak to someone directly involved in the research, you may contact me, Jodi Cooper, as the lead researcher. You may also contact Dr. Rehberg Sedo, my research thesis supervisor via email.

If you have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone not directly involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office.

### **Signatures**

I, (full name of participant), consent to participate in the study entitled "Collaborative Filmmaker-Audience Relationships: The Experience of Engaging, Co-Creating, and Building Community" conducted by Jodi Cooper. I understand the nature and requirements of this study and wish to participate. My signature below indicates my consent.

- I certify that I meet the age of majority requirement for my location.

At this time, I would like to:

- Remain confidential. I understand that my name, film project title, production company name, and any other identifiers will not be published in the final report and instead a pseudonym will be used. I understand that I can change my mind about this at any point during the research process prior to preparation of manuscripts for knowledge sharing and publication
- Receive credit. I would like my name, film project title, and production company name to be used in the final report. I understand that I can change my mind about this at any point during the research process prior to preparation of manuscripts for knowledge sharing and publication

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

### Appendix 7

#### Early Coding - Parent and Child Nodes Not Organized By Research Question

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Amount of time to create campaign		3	9 2019-01-14 4:05 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:45 PM	JRC
Considerations for Rewards		3	13 2019-01-20 6:57 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 1:26 PM	JRC
Pitch Video		3	9 2019-01-19 5:15 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 3:09 PM	JRC
Test footage, or teaser trailer		2	2 2019-01-19 5:16 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 1:09 PM	JRC
Art		1	9 2019-01-24 4:20 PM	JRC	2019-01-30 4:11 PM	JRC
Different film without the audience		3	6 2019-01-30 4:06 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:39 PM	JRC
Budget items covered by crowdfunding alone		2	5 2019-01-14 4:15 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:37 PM	JRC
Collaborative Language		3	9 2019-01-30 3:27 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:40 PM	JRC
Cost Benefit		3	14 2019-01-30 4:21 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:44 PM	JRC
Crowdfunding works when or for...		2	4 2019-01-24 3:21 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:41 PM	JRC
Affording you time		3	6 2019-01-24 4:12 PM	JRC	2019-02-05 9:13 PM	JRC
Specific genres or types of film that crowdfunding or audience collaboration work		2	3 2019-01-24 3:23 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:44 PM	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker		3	3 2019-01-14 4:09 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 1:59 PM	JRC
Storytelling importance		3	3 2019-01-14 4:10 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 1:28 PM	JRC
Doing most of the work yourself - Passion project		2	5 2019-01-14 4:07 PM	JRC	2019-02-05 9:13 PM	JRC
Volunteering time		3	9 2019-01-14 4:32 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 2:15 PM	JRC
What you need for a successful film		1	1 2019-01-25 1:29 PM	JRC	2019-01-30 3:18 PM	JRC
Emotions		6	6 2019-01-14 4:21 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:22 PM	JRC
Excitement		2	3 2019-01-30 2:30 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:25 PM	JRC
Guilt		14	14 2019-01-14 4:20 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:26 PM	JRC
Importance of credit and ownership		3	12 2019-01-30 3:21 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 1:38 PM	JRC
Sense of responsibility		3	21 2019-01-14 4:20 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:37 PM	JRC
Shock		1	2 2019-02-01 3:29 PM	JRC	2019-02-02 2:37 PM	JRC

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Stress		2	4 2019-02-02 5:11 PM	JRC	2019-02-02 5:15 PM	JRC
Interactions with the audience		2	7 2019-01-14 4:06 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 3:10 PM	JRC
Audience Ownership or Bragging Rights		3	19 2019-01-14 4:39 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:47 PM	JRC
Collaboration - Feedback		3	23 2019-01-21 2:12 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 1:24 PM	JRC
Crowdsourcing		3	8 2019-01-23 4:54 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:47 PM	JRC
Having them know what's going on		3	14 2019-01-14 4:33 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 3:13 PM	JRC
Mutually beneficial		2	8 2019-01-23 4:15 PM	JRC	2019-02-05 9:12 PM	JRC
Something I (the filmmaker) wanted to see		3	4 2019-01-30 2:55 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 2:56 PM	JRC
Not showing too much in an update		1	1 2019-01-19 4:43 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:43 PM	JRC
Not wanting to overtap audience - can only harvest once		1	1 2019-01-20 6:54 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:43 PM	JRC
Real world interactions		3	10 2019-01-23 3:26 PM	JRC	2019-02-05 9:10 PM	JRC
More creative control		3	16 2019-01-02 3:31 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:40 PM	JRC
Participatory Audiences		2	9 2019-01-14 4:23 PM	JRC	2019-02-02 5:00 PM	JRC
Production cycle		13	13 2019-01-14 4:32 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:27 PM	JRC
Casting		2	3 2019-01-14 4:43 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:21 PM	JRC
Crowdfunding platform building		2	10 2019-01-30 2:48 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:45 PM	JRC
Fulfilling rewards		2	3 2019-02-02 2:14 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:16 PM	JRC
Incorporation of feedback		3	7 2019-01-30 4:10 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 2:56 PM	JRC
Market research		4	4 2019-01-30 2:48 PM	JRC	2019-01-30 3:41 PM	JRC
Production Updates		3	18 2019-01-14 4:43 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:45 PM	JRC
Skills		3	14 2019-01-14 4:01 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:33 PM	JRC
Budgeting		2	15 2019-01-14 4:29 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:44 PM	JRC
Communicating about yourself and your work		3	15 2019-01-14 4:04 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:46 PM	JRC

Early Coding Continued - Parent and Child Nodes Not Organized by Research Question

Collaborative Filmmaker-Audience Relationships.nvp - NVivo 12 Plus

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Communication routines		3	7 2019-01-30 3:43 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 3:13 PM	JRC
Enticing Audience		3	19 2019-01-14 4:16 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:43 PM	JRC
Entrepreneurship		2	13 2019-01-30 2:40 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:47 PM	JRC
Fulfilling orders and rewards - style of factory production managing		2	4 2019-02-02 2:13 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:28 PM	JRC
Inability to delegate the role of communicator		1	1 2019-01-14 4:03 PM	JRC	2019-02-02 2:35 PM	JRC
Keeping the audience in mind		10	2019-01-30 3:48 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:41 PM	JRC
Knowing your audience and market research		3	13 2019-01-14 4:03 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 2:50 PM	JRC
Marketing - In person and online		2	3 2019-01-23 3:26 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:30 PM	JRC
Research - of other crowdfunded projects		3	9 2019-01-23 3:20 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:29 PM	JRC
Research - subject matter of film		3	3 2019-01-25 4:24 PM	JRC	2019-01-30 4:15 PM	JRC
Tollerating or being okay with dissenting opinions and change		3	16 2019-01-25 1:28 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 2:58 PM	JRC
The change in the Hollywood Production Model		3	6 2019-01-14 4:26 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:45 PM	JRC
Trying other ways to get funding		3	6 2019-01-14 4:05 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:38 PM	JRC
↳ Led to crowdfunding		3	11 2019-01-14 4:13 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 2:18 PM	JRC
↳ Build an audience		3	8 2019-01-30 3:09 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:47 PM	JRC
↳ Seeing others being successful		1	3 2019-01-14 4:11 PM	JRC	2019-02-04 1:26 PM	JRC
↳ Working with crew on other projects		1	2 2019-01-14 4:18 PM	JRC	2019-02-01 6:57 PM	JRC
↳ Idea		0	0 2019-02-06 1:56 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 1:56 PM	JRC
↳ Working with crew on a collaborative project		3	15 2019-01-24 3:46 PM	JRC	2019-02-06 2:19 PM	JRC

Appendix 8

Later Coding - Parent and Child Nodes Organized by Research Question

Research Question 1

Name	Files	Referenc	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified
1. What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers	0	0	2019-02-24 12:03	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
Doing most of the work yourself - Passion project	3	6	2019-01-14 4:07 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:07 P	JRC
Volunteering time	3	9	2019-01-14 4:32 P	JRC	2019-02-04 2:15 P	JRC
What you need for a successful film	1	1	2019-01-25 1:29 P	JRC	2019-01-30 3:18 P	JRC
Emotions	5	9	2019-01-14 4:21 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:05 P	JRC
Excitement	2	3	2019-01-30 2:30 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:25 P	JRC
Guilt	3	14	2019-01-14 4:20 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:26 P	JRC
Sense of responsibility	4	22	2019-01-14 4:20 P	JRC	2019-02-15 3:40 P	JRC
Shock	1	2	2019-02-01 3:29 P	JRC	2019-02-02 2:37 P	JRC
Stress	2	4	2019-02-02 5:11 P	JRC	2019-02-02 5:15 P	JRC
Interactions with the audience	2	7	2019-01-14 4:06 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:27	JRC
Real world interactions	5	22	2019-01-23 3:26 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:20 P	JRC
Trying other ways to get funding	6	16	2019-01-14 4:05 P	JRC	2019-02-19 6:33 P	JRC
Seeing others being successful	2	4	2019-01-14 4:11 P	JRC	2019-02-13 3:40 P	JRC
Working with crew on other projects	3	8	2019-01-14 4:18 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:05 P	JRC
Working with crew on a collaborative project	4	21	2019-01-24 3:46 P	JRC	2019-02-18 1:06 P	JRC
2. Why and how do filmmakers build and maintain relationships with their audience	0	0	2019-02-24 12:06	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
3. How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship	0	0	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC
4. Could this have broader cultural implications	0	0	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC
5. What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmma	0	0	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker	8	20	2019-01-14 4:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC
Skills	4	15	2019-01-14 4:01 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:59	JRC

Research Question 2

Name	Files	Referenc	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified
2. Why and how do filmmakers build and maintain relationships with their audience	0	0	2019-02-24 12:06	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
Led to crowdfunding	8	22	2019-01-14 4:13 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:20 P	JRC
Build an audience	6	14	2019-01-30 3:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:15 P	JRC
3. How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship	0	0	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC
4. Could this have broader cultural implications	0	0	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC
5. What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmma	0	0	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker	8	20	2019-01-14 4:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC
Skills	4	15	2019-01-14 4:01 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:59	JRC

Research Question 3

Name	Files	Referenc	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified
1. What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers	0	0	2019-02-24 12:03	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
2. Why and how do filmmakers build and maintain relationships with their audience	0	0	2019-02-24 12:06	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
3. How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship	0	0	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC
Amount of time to create campaign	6	15	2019-01-14 4:05 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:03 P	JRC
Crowdsourcing	4	11	2019-01-23 4:54 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:21	JRC
Different film without the audience	6	9	2019-01-30 4:06 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:16 P	JRC
Importance of credit and ownership	4	15	2019-01-02 3:21 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:55	JRC
More creative control	5	20	2019-01-02 3:31 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:05 P	JRC
Production cycle	8	19	2019-01-14 4:32 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:19 P	JRC
Casting	5	8	2019-01-14 4:43 P	JRC	2019-02-19 6:59 P	JRC
Crowdfunding platform building	5	16	2019-01-30 2:48 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:19 P	JRC
Fulfilling rewards	3	5	2019-02-02 2:14 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:00 P	JRC
Incorporation of feedback	6	10	2019-01-30 4:10 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:23 P	JRC
Market research	3	6	2019-01-30 2:48 P	JRC	2019-02-19 6:37 P	JRC
Production Updates	8	31	2019-01-14 4:43 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:24 P	JRC
4. Could this have broader cultural implications	0	0	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC
5. What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmma	0	0	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker	8	20	2019-01-14 4:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC
Skills	4	15	2019-01-14 4:01 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:59	JRC

Research Question 4

Name	Files	Referenc	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified
1. What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers	0	0	2019-02-24 12:03	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
2. Why and how do filmmakers build and maintain relationships with their audience	0	0	2019-02-24 12:06	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
3. How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship	0	0	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC
4. Could this have broader cultural implications	0	0	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC
Art	5	16	2019-01-24 4:20 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:16 P	JRC
Not wanting to overtap audience - can only harvest once	2	3	2019-01-20 6:54 P	JRC	2019-02-18 1:08 P	JRC
Participatory Audiences	4	15	2019-01-14 4:23 P	JRC	2019-02-19 6:39 P	JRC
The change in the Hollywood Production Model	3	6	2019-01-14 4:26 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:45 P	JRC
5. What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmma	0	0	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker	8	20	2019-01-14 4:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC
Skills	4	15	2019-01-14 4:01 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:59	JRC

Research Question 5

Collaborative Filmmaker-Audience Relationships.nvproj - NVivo 12 Plus

File Home Import Create Explore Share

Clipboard: Cut, Copy, Paste, Merge

Properties, Open, Memo Link, Create As Cases

Query, Visualize, Code, Auto Code, Range Code, Uncode

Case Classification, File Classification, Detail View, Sort By, Undock, Navigation View, List View, Find

Workspace

Quick Access: Files, Memos, Nodes

Data: Files, EverNote - Media and, File Classifications, Externals

Codes: Nodes, Evernote Tags, Sentiment, Relationships, Relationship Types

Cases: Cases, Case Classifications

Notes

Search

Maps: Maps

Output

Search Project

Name	Files	Referenc	Created On	Created	Modified On	Modified
1. What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers	0	0	2019-02-24 12:03	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
2. Why and how do filmmakers build and maintain relationships with their audience	0	0	2019-02-24 12:06	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
3. How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship	0	0	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC
4. Could this have broader cultural implications	0	0	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC
5. What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relationships that are good for both filmm	0	0	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC
Audience Ownership or Bragging Rights	6	33	2019-01-14 4:39 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:23 P	JRC
Budget items covered by crowdfunding alone	2	5	2019-01-14 4:15 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:37 P	JRC
Collaboration - Feedback	8	35	2019-01-21 2:12 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:23 P	JRC
Collaborative Language	5	11	2019-01-30 3:27 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:16 P	JRC
Considerations for Rewards	4	18	2019-01-20 6:57 P	JRC	2019-02-18 1:10 P	JRC
Cost Benefit	3	14	2019-01-30 4:21 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:44 P	JRC
Crowdfunding works when or for...	2	4	2019-01-24 3:21 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:41 P	JRC
Affording you time	3	6	2019-01-24 4:12 P	JRC	2019-02-05 9:13 P	JRC
Specific genres or types of film that crowdfunding or audience collaboration works well for	3	5	2019-01-24 3:23 P	JRC	2019-02-18 1:09 P	JRC
Having them know what's going on	5	16	2019-01-14 4:33 P	JRC	2019-02-19 6:57 P	JRC
Mutually beneficial	4	17	2019-01-23 4:15 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:20 P	JRC
Something I (the filmmaker) wanted to see	5	8	2019-01-30 2:55 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:13 P	JRC
Not showing too much in an update	2	2	2019-01-19 4:43 P	JRC	2019-02-13 3:53 P	JRC
Pitch Video	5	11	2019-01-19 5:15 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:11 P	JRC
Test footage, or teaser trailer	3	3	2019-01-19 5:16 P	JRC	2019-02-13 3:58 P	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker	8	20	2019-01-14 4:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC
Skills	4	15	2019-01-14 4:01 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:59	JRC

JRC 69 Items

## Appendix 9

### Remaining Nodes not Organized into a Research Question

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
1. What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers	0	0	2019-02-24 12:03	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
2. Why and how do filmmakers build and maintain relationships with their audience	0	0	2019-02-24 12:06	JRC	2019-02-24 12:09	JRC
3. How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship	0	0	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC	2019-02-24 12:11	JRC
4. Could this have broader cultural implications	0	0	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC	2019-02-24 12:13	JRC
5. What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies to develop collaborative relat	0	0	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC	2019-02-24 12:15	JRC
Defining moments to become a filmmaker	8	20	2019-01-14 4:09 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC
Storytelling importance	7	13	2019-01-14 4:10 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:04 P	JRC
Skills	4	15	2019-01-14 4:01 P	JRC	2019-02-18 12:59	JRC
Budgeting	5	26	2019-01-14 4:28 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:04 P	JRC
Communicating about yourself and your work	6	20	2019-01-14 4:04 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:11 P	JRC
Communication routines	8	21	2019-01-30 3:43 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:14 P	JRC
Enticing Audience	7	33	2019-01-14 4:16 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:20 P	JRC
Entrepreneurship	6	35	2019-01-30 2:40 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:10 P	JRC
Fulfilling orders and rewards - style of factory production managing	3	5	2019-02-02 2:13 P	JRC	2019-02-19 6:51 P	JRC
Inability to delegate the role of communicator	3	3	2019-01-14 4:03 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:11 P	JRC
Keeping the audience in mind	4	17	2019-01-30 3:48 P	JRC	2019-02-18 1:10 P	JRC
Knowing your audience and market research	4	17	2019-01-14 4:03 P	JRC	2019-02-15 4:01 P	JRC
Marketing - In person and online	2	3	2019-01-23 3:26 P	JRC	2019-02-06 2:30 P	JRC
Research - of other crowdfunded projects	5	11	2019-01-23 3:20 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:19 P	JRC
Research - subject matter of film	2	6	2019-01-25 4:24 P	JRC	2019-02-18 1:12 P	JRC
Tolerating or being okay with dissenting opinions and change	5	19	2019-01-25 1:28 P	JRC	2019-02-19 7:06 P	JRC

**Appendix 10**

Wordle Word Exclusion List

about	actually	after	again	already	always
and	another	around	because	before	being
between	black	but	can't	cause	coming
could	couple	definitely	didn't	doesn't	doing
donnelys	don't	either	every	first	getting
going	gonna	gotta	guess	had	have
having	just	kinda	laughs	like	little
nothing	obviously	other	pauses	person	point
probably	projects	really	right	sense	still
stuff	that	the	their	then	there
these	they'll	they're	thing	things	this
those	three	through	wanna	was	wasn't
we'll	we're	we've	whatever	where	which
would	yeah	you	you're	you've	

### Appendix 11

#### Wordel Word Lists – By Research Question

Pink = word appears on every list.

Green = word appears on four or more lists.

Yellow = word appears on three or fewer lists.

Unhighlighted = unique to that list.

Question 1 - What is the story of collaborative audience relationships for filmmakers

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
people	6	127	0.83
think	5	101	0.66
something	9	81	0.53
audience	8	48	0.31
project	7	48	0.31
production	10	47	0.31
money	5	37	0.24
everybody	9	30	0.20
funding	7	29	0.19
involved	8	23	0.15
different	9	22	0.14
experience	10	22	0.14
whole	5	21	0.14
budget	6	19	0.12
community	9	19	0.12
crowdfunding	12	19	0.12
great	5	19	0.12
movie	5	19	0.12
myself	6	19	0.12
credit	6	18	0.12
camera	6	17	0.11
excited	7	17	0.11
feedback	8	17	0.11
somebody	8	17	0.11
director	8	16	0.10
everything	10	16	0.10
kickstarter	11	16	0.10
better	6	15	0.10
terms	5	15	0.10
together	8	15	0.10
working	7	15	0.10
school	6	14	0.09
weird	5	14	0.09
years	5	14	0.09
short	5	13	0.09
sound	5	13	0.09
thought	7	13	0.09
business	8	12	0.08
feature	7	12	0.08
found	5	12	0.08
guilt	5	12	0.08
important	9	12	0.08
making	6	12	0.08
remember	8	12	0.08
trying	6	12	0.08
video	5	12	0.08
wanted	6	12	0.08
almost	6	11	0.07
films	5	11	0.07

Question 2 - Why and how do filmmakers build maintain relationships with their audience

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
audience	8	38	1.17
think	5	30	0.92
people	6	27	0.83
crowdfunding	12	24	0.74
money	5	12	0.37
school	6	11	0.34
build	5	10	0.31
films	5	10	0.31
funding	7	9	0.28
knowing	7	8	0.25
something	9	8	0.25
thought	7	8	0.25
interesting	11	7	0.22
making	6	7	0.22
project	7	7	0.22
directly	8	6	0.18
involved	8	6	0.18
kickstarter	11	6	0.18
seeing	6	6	0.18
wanted	6	6	0.18
building	8	5	0.15
dollars	7	5	0.15
experience	10	5	0.15
industry	8	5	0.15
movie	5	5	0.15
production	10	5	0.15
short	5	5	0.15
thousand	8	5	0.15
traditional	11	5	0.15
anything	8	4	0.12
aware	5	4	0.12
collaboration	13	4	0.12
everybody	9	4	0.12
feature	7	4	0.12
festivals	9	4	0.12
filmmakers	10	4	0.12
indie	5	4	0.12
investors	9	4	0.12
reason	6	4	0.12
specifically	12	4	0.12
starting	8	4	0.12
against	7	3	0.09
amount	6	3	0.09
become	6	3	0.09
budget	6	3	0.09
competitions	12	3	0.09
decided	7	3	0.09
dedicated	9	3	0.09
describe	8	3	0.09

Question 3 - How do these relationships impact the filmmaker's creative process and sense of authorship

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
people	6	108	0.73
think	5	108	0.73
production	10	75	0.51
something	9	68	0.46
audience	8	67	0.45
crowdfunding	12	54	0.36
kickstarter	11	38	0.26
project	7	36	0.24
control	7	31	0.21
feedback	8	29	0.20
thought	7	27	0.18
wanted	6	26	0.18
everybody	9	22	0.15
credit	6	21	0.14
creative	8	20	0.13
different	9	20	0.13
making	6	20	0.13
money	5	20	0.13
process	7	20	0.13
whole	5	20	0.13
campaign	8	19	0.13
collaboration	13	19	0.13
crowdsourcing	13	19	0.13
maybe	5	19	0.13
almost	6	18	0.12
backers	7	18	0.12
involved	8	18	0.12
times	5	18	0.12
movie	5	17	0.11
saying	6	17	0.11
terms	5	17	0.11
trying	6	17	0.11
build	5	15	0.10
looking	7	15	0.10
remember	8	15	0.10
should	6	15	0.10
anything	8	14	0.09
funding	7	14	0.09
rewards	7	14	0.09
social	6	14	0.09
thinking	8	14	0.09
casting	7	13	0.09
certain	7	13	0.09
interesting	11	13	0.09
myself	6	13	0.09
scenes	6	13	0.09
somebody	8	13	0.09
tried	5	13	0.09
actual	6	12	0.08

Question 4 - Could this have broader cultural implications

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
think	5	51	1.00
people	6	41	0.81
audience	8	29	0.57
better	6	21	0.41
films	5	18	0.35
something	9	18	0.35
industry	8	16	0.31
craft	5	14	0.28
movie	5	13	0.26
everybody	9	11	0.22
money	5	11	0.22
watch	5	11	0.22
business	8	10	0.20
interesting	11	10	0.20
source	6	10	0.20
crowdfunding	12	9	0.18
project	7	9	0.18
collaboration	13	8	0.16
filmmaking	10	8	0.16
remember	8	8	0.16
whole	5	8	0.16
everyone	8	7	0.14
making	6	7	0.14
pareto	6	7	0.14
production	10	7	0.14
trying	6	7	0.14
innovate	8	6	0.12
product	7	6	0.12
question	8	6	0.12
rising	6	6	0.12
value	5	6	0.12
vision	6	6	0.12
years	5	6	0.12
almost	6	5	0.10
amount	6	5	0.10
audiences	9	5	0.10
called	6	5	0.10
change	6	5	0.10
different	9	5	0.10
great	5	5	0.10
knows	5	5	0.10
maybe	5	5	0.10
music	5	5	0.10
process	7	5	0.10
saying	6	5	0.10
seeing	6	5	0.10
terms	5	5	0.10
wants	5	5	0.10
whether	7	5	0.10

Question 5 - What do filmmaker's narratives tell us about best practice strategies

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
people	6	201	0.93
think	5	179	0.83
audience	8	129	0.59
something	9	110	0.51
thought	7	68	0.31
movie	5	54	0.25
project	7	51	0.24
wanted	6	47	0.22
production	10	43	0.20
crowdfunding	12	39	0.18
behind	6	31	0.14
collaboration	13	31	0.14
video	5	31	0.14
certain	7	30	0.14
involved	8	30	0.14
money	5	30	0.14
trying	6	30	0.14
credit	6	29	0.13
costs	5	28	0.13
maybe	5	28	0.13
everybody	9	27	0.12
should	6	26	0.12
kickstarter	11	25	0.12
poster	6	24	0.11
rewards	7	24	0.11
thinking	8	24	0.11
whole	5	24	0.11
remember	8	23	0.11
saying	6	23	0.11
someone	7	23	0.11
making	6	22	0.10
budget	6	21	0.10
scenes	6	20	0.09
started	7	20	0.09
value	5	20	0.09
decision	8	19	0.09
helped	6	19	0.09
somebody	8	19	0.09
sound	5	19	0.09
together	8	19	0.09
better	6	18	0.08
especially	10	18	0.08
least	5	18	0.08
seeing	6	18	0.08
almost	6	17	0.08
backers	7	17	0.08
feedback	8	17	0.08
great	5	17	0.08
important	9	17	0.08