CHAPTER

17

What About Crowdfunded Comics?

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Introduction

Although many academic libraries have incorporated comics into their collections since the 1970s, there are sectors of the comics publishing landscape that remain underrepresented within them. One such area is crowdfunded comics. Crowdfunding is when creators leverage social networks to seek individual donations to fund their projects. Each project sets goals for the number of contributors or the amount raised, and the project typically proceeds when the goals are met. Crowdfunding provides niche and marginalized voices with opportunities to create and sell art outside of mainstream channels and is a valuable resource for readers and libraries looking to create diverse and inclusive collections.[1]

Crowdfunded comics present challenges for selectors because the act of purchasing them is speculative—supporters are funding an idea that has not yet come to fruition, so the quality, including both content and physical form of the final product, is unproven at the time of submitting payment. Furthermore, crowdfunded comics aren't represented in the tools librarians often use to curate collections such as "best of" lists, book reviews, or mainstream vendor catalogs. To collect crowdfunded comics, the selector needs to be very familiar with and connected to comics creators and publishers and their communities. They also need

to have flexible policies at their institutions to facilitate the ability to purchase such materials.

This qualitative study uses survey data collected from academic and public libraries to look at where comics fall within library collections, how selectors choose which comics to acquire, whether selectors are able to purchase crowdfunded materials, what types of crowdfunded materials are purchased, and what barriers there are to purchasing crowdfunded and self-published works. Although the primary audience for this chapter are those working in academic libraries, we feel that public libraries also provide an interesting point of comparison. Ultimately, we hope this research will help academic libraries make informed decisions about including crowdfunded comics in collections and ensure that comics collections are diverse and inclusive of the wide range of materials published outside of mainstream publishing avenues.

Background
Comics and Crowdfunding

Since the launch of Kickstarter in 2009, crowdfunding campaigns have become increasingly popular within the comics world. Part of the reason behind this may come from a lack of stigma surrounding self-publishing that has existed within other fields. Titles such as *Bone* by Jeff Smith and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird were originally self-published and still managed to gain popularity and large audiences. Many crowdfunding campaigns are also for print editions of popular self-published webcomics. The success of comics projects on Kickstarter has even led to some asking (somewhat facetiously) if Kickstarter is one of the largest "publishers" of comics.[2]

As of August 2021, Kickstarter listed 19,429 projects within their "comics" category, with 11,922 successfully funded. Though not all of these projects have been successful, they have an overall success rate of 62.06 percent, the highest of any category Kickstarter tracks, and have successfully raised $143.14 million USD.[3] In the first six months of 2021, comics projects on Kickstarter raised $16.6 million and featured a 76.3 percent success rate.[4] Patreon, a site that asks for recurring donations, has over 6,000 comics-related projects with at least one backer and 2,500 with over ten, though these numbers include projects such as videos and podcasts that are about comics.[5] There are many other crowdfunding sites out there that have been used for comics publishing and the ones we looked at were predominantly used by English speakers. For example, crowdfunding site Ulule lists over 1,700 funded French language projects in their comics category.[6]

As crowdfunding projects have grown in frequency and popularity, we have seen increasing numbers of "legitimate" or "traditional" comics publishers and well-known comics creators use crowdfunding sites in various ways. Some titles that were initially crowdfunded by independent creators have been reprinted by established comics publishers, sometimes in expanded editions, allowing them to gain access to a different audience. Examples include *Check, Please!* (republished by First Second Books, 2018),

Ménage À 3 (republished by Udon Entertainment, 2018), *The Secret Loves of Geek Girls* (republished by Dark Horse Comics, 2016), and *Grafity's Wall* (also republished by Dark Horse Comics, 2020).

In addition to reprinting existing work, publishers such as Boom! Studios, Fantagraphics, Avatar Press, Top Cow Productions, Aspen Comics, Digital Manga Productions, and Archie Comics have begun using these platforms to fund their own comics (though Archie canceled their 2015 project after fan backlash over the way they planned to use the platform). The Kickstarter campaign for Boom! Studio's *BRZRKR* series, co-written by actor Keanu Reeves, is the highest-funded comic project in Kickstarter's history, raising 1.45 million dollars, but is seen by some as a "pre-order" system and not a true crowdfunding project.[7] This is because the series would have been released whether the crowdfunding campaign was successful or not and was always intended to be available to purchase through traditional comic and book distributors.[8]

Comics creators more directly tied to the traditional comics world have also used crowdfunding websites. Scott Snyder, Matt Kindt, and Gene Ha are a few who have used Kickstarter to fund comics projects they have worked on. Some of these creators, like Scott Snyder, already have traditional publishers such as Image Comics lined up for their work.[9] There are also publishers, including Iron Circus Comics, which started using crowdfunding platforms and, while continuing to use these sites to fund their work, have now grown large enough that their titles are available through traditional distributors and to have a physical presence at events such as the American Library Association annual conference.

Libraries and Comics Crowdfunding

The importance of libraries is now well known to comics publishers and creators, leading to crowdfunding projects mentioning the desire to get their titles into libraries.[10] Despite this, we were not able to find many projects that actively made an effort to attract libraries during the course of their campaigns. On this point, we will note that our ability to find crowdfunding campaigns mentioning libraries was limited as many campaigns place information about stretch goals[11] or specific tiers[12] into images with no equivalent text version available, hampering the ability of anyone trying to find these campaigns through text-based searches.[13]

Some comics crowdfunding projects have realized the difficulties libraries have in acquiring self-published material,[14] including specific references to using crowdfunding campaigns to acquire ISBNs for titles.[15] We were unable to find any campaigns that mentioned the difficulty libraries have ordering through crowdfunding websites. Several crowdfunding projects have offered tiers for libraries that included multiple copies, access to educational content, bonus material such as posters, and wholesale pricing.[16] For example, the *Cartozia Tales* "Libraries & Librarians" tier had five backers. Some tiers place libraries in the same category as comic or book shops, assuming that libraries will want multiple copies of the titles in question.[17]

The most frequent references to libraries in the campaigns we found were related to donations, with those running the campaigns intending to provide copies of the crowd-funded items to libraries for free if the project is successful. Some campaigns[18] allow supporters to choose the library in question, while others specify they'll be ones local to the creator or don't say how libraries will be chosen to receive copies of the comics.[19] As some libraries are not willing or able to accept donations of books in this manner, we do not know how successful this method has been. Only one campaign was found that specifically offered libraries the opportunity to ask for a donated copy.[20] While forty-one of the fifty-one libraries that responded to our survey said they could accept donated comics, none mentioned receiving any from crowdfunding campaigns.

Literature Review

The majority of writing about crowdfunding and libraries so far has focused on how libraries can create their own crowdfunding campaigns for special projects or to make up for funding shortfalls.[21] Examples of crowdfunding campaigns started by libraries include funding summer reading programs, purchasing books or other supplies, paying for leases or building costs, and even buying a nine-foot-tall statue of the Incredible Hulk.[22]

We were not able to find many examples of libraries contributing to crowdfunding projects beyond one librarian purchasing books and another purchasing zines to add to their collections.[23] Neither source mentioned how the purchases were completed. We were able to find a source mentioning that crowdfunding campaigns may include bonus material that would otherwise be unavailable to libraries and a column that sometimes called attention to specific comics crowdfunding campaigns.[24]

Some of the challenges that have been mentioned regarding libraries and crowd-funding campaigns included titles being easy for library staff to miss (due to the lack of coverage in traditional places and unavailability through distributors),[25] titles not being printed or received until over a year after the crowdfunding project was completed, and institutional policies and acquisitions systems restricting use of credit cards on sites such as Kickstarter or Patreon or otherwise not integrating well with crowdfunding platforms.[26]

One source did discuss the "why" of self-publishing and the use of sites such as Kickstarter and Patreon and the "how" of marketing to libraries but did not discuss the "how" of libraries acquiring material.[27]

The sole example of crowdfunded comics-specific "collection" we could find was a curated list created by the Seattle Public Library that called attention to projects that were initially released through Kickstarter.[28] While not explicitly stated, these appear to be titles that were later picked up for distribution or republication by publishers and not purchased through Kickstarter projects themselves.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative analysis of survey results gathered between November 17, 2020, through January 4, 2021. After obtaining approval from the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board, data was collected using a web-based survey implemented through Google Forms. The researchers invited participation in the survey by sending targeted emails to public and academic librarians known by the authors to be engaged in building comics collections, posts to the American Library Association's Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (ALA GNCRT) Facebook group and ALA Connect forum, the Library Think Tank - #ALATT Facebook group, the Collection Development Support Group Facebook group, the Zine Librarians listserv, the Zine Librarians Facebook group, and through posts from the authors' personal social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter).

The survey contained a total of twenty-two questions, though only the first seven questions were asked of all participants. These were questions about the institution type and basic questions about how acquisition works at each library. The seventh question was whether the respondent's library acquires comics through crowdfunding platforms, and there were separate sets of questions for those whose institutions do acquire comics from crowdfunding platforms and those whose do not.

After closing the survey, we cleaned the data for easier analysis. This included normalizing variations of country response for the United States, removing institution name and country from the analysis file, and splitting "check all that apply" answers for easier coding. We also had two sets of responses from two institutions, and we merged the response sets for each so we could compare by institution rather than individual respondent.

Results
Demographics

We received a total of fifty-three responses representing fifty-one unique institutions. There were two institutions that were represented twice, though based on the responses, we can assume they were submitted by unique individuals. When more than one response was given from a single institution, the responses were merged. Thirty-four of the responses were from public libraries, nine came from private academic libraries, seven from public academic libraries, and one response came from a school library. The majority of the respondents were based in the United States, but there were three international respondents representing New Zealand, Australia, and Namibia. Lacking a larger number of international respondents, we did not differentiate any of the remaining data by country.

Most of the respondents (thirty-four) reported that their comics are their own stand-alone collections. In addition, twenty-three respondents, primarily public libraries,

indicated that their comics collections were divided by age range. It should be noted, however, that several institutions had comics in multiple distinct locations. Of the sixteen academic libraries represented in our survey, nine of them had comics in special collections (including one that included some comics in a larger zine collection), and nine had comics included in their general collections. Three institutions indicated they collected non-comics material—including literature, zines, and poetry—through crowdfunding sites.

Forty-six institutions said they do not acquire comics through crowdfunding platforms and only five said that they do. In the results section that follows, we pull together different themes from those that collect crowdfunded materials and those that do not to consider what the greatest barriers and incentives are for collecting crowdfunded comics. We use these themes to develop a set of recommendations for libraries and professional organizations as well as comics creators who use crowdfunding platforms to better facilitate the inclusion of crowdfunded comics (and other crowdfunded materials) in library collections.

Money and Payment

Policies and procedures around payment were a major factor contributing to whether an institution collected crowdfunded comics or not. It is perhaps not surprising that of the five institutions that do acquire crowdfunded comics, four of them were private academic libraries with much more flexible policies around purchasing compared to their public academic and public library counterparts. Three of the respondents from private academic libraries mentioned being able to use an institutional credit card to make purchases. Even with this increased flexibility, one of the private academic respondents indicated that they purchase the materials themselves and then donate them to the library. They stated that they use this tactic without requesting reimbursement because reimbursement isn't allowed "more than 60 days after the expense." Purchasing crowdfunded comics out-of-pocket for later donation was a tactic also employed by three respondents, two of which represented public libraries and one of which represented a public academic library, who indicated that their library did not collect crowdfunded comics.

Eleven of the forty-six respondents who indicated that their library does not acquire crowdfunded comics pointed to issues with payment policies as being a major prohibitive factor. Four of the eleven respondents who stated payment policies inhibited their ability to purchase crowdfunded comics indicated that while the policies didn't completely preclude the possibility, the complexity and labor involved in working within those policies were prohibitive. While many respondents simply said their purchasing system was not set up for that, a few did name specific purchasing policies. Specific policies named included requirements from finance departments that purchased materials have an ISBN, needing to use a specific budget line that didn't yet exist, or invoicing requirements. One distinct payment issue to which we assigned a separate code was around

the fiscal cycle. Many institutions are unable to pay for items that they won't receive within the same fiscal year, and few projects ship immediately upon completion of the crowdfunding campaign.

Related to purchasing and policies, budgets themselves are often an issue. Four respondents said they would need a larger budget or a new dedicated budget line to consider purchasing crowdfunded comics. All four of these institutions were public libraries, which also serves to highlight the very real funding challenges faced by many public libraries.

Vendors and Processing

The need to work with approved and established vendors was a concern shared by many of our respondents across institution type. As with payment, we can see that flexible policies around working with vendors may be one reason why private academic libraries are more easily able to acquire crowdfunded comics compared to their public academic and public library counterparts. One respondent wrote, "Being a private institution means we are free to use whatever vendors we wish and I have a supportive administration."

On the other side, thirteen respondents indicated issues relating to vendors as a reason their library did not acquire crowdfunded comics, and eleven specifically highlighted vendor policies as prohibitive. Vendor policies were often related to procurement systems and needing to be an approved vendor or requiring vendors to offer value-added services relating to cataloging and processing materials. Beyond specific policies which require the use of approved vendors, one respondent indicated that staff were reluctant to approve new vendors, implying that unwillingness or issues related to workplace culture could be a factor. In fact, three respondents indicated that the complexity of working within existing policies was more prohibitive than the policy itself. That is, although it is theoretically possible within existing vendor policies, it would not be worth the labor involved. Finally, two respondents mentioned that they receive discounts (on the materials themselves or on shipping and processing) through their regular vendors, which makes them reluctant to purchase from other vendors (even if they were able).

Just as paying out-of-pocket is a workaround used to skirt prohibitive payment policies, one workaround with approved vendor policies is waiting for crowdfunded projects to be republished and/or distributed by mainstream publishers for direct order later. Three respondents mentioned using this strategy to acquire comics that had previously been published using a crowdfunding platform.

On the processing side of things, when asked to describe unique cataloging or processing considerations for crowdfunded comics, responses mentioned a lack of existing records to copy catalog (meaning each item must have original cataloging done) and less metadata than would be expected from traditionally published titles (ranging from no information for date, location, or publisher name to creators who list "a cloud on Jupiter's moon" as their birthplace). A lack of standardized sizes and needing to do in-house processing that was usually left to vendors (such as covering covers with plastic) were

also mentioned as challenges. Processing considerations may also be related to the most common format that comics libraries acquired from crowdfunding websites. Of the five libraries that do collect crowdfunded comics, four collected paperback or hardcovers of books, three collected minicomics (including one institution that only collected these), and only one collected single issues.

Policies and Buy-in

When asked what would have to change in order for an institution to begin collecting crowdfunded comics, there were two major themes: policy changes and buy-in. Generally speaking, given how many respondents pointed to prohibitive policies, it's not surprising that fourteen responses indicated that policies would need to be changed in order to acquire crowdfunded comics. While most of the named policies pertained to vendors and payment/procurement, one respondent said their collection development policy itself would have to change. It was unclear whether that specifically referred to the scope of the collection, which three other respondents indicated would have to change in order to be able to acquire crowdfunded comics. Interestingly, however, at the end of the survey, one respondent added the following comment: "I'm not actually sure I'd like to change the policy to add crowdfunded platforms."

Apart from policy, twelve respondents talked about administrative buy-in as a cultural change that would need to occur in order to be able to acquire crowdfunded comics. Of course, one could argue that buy-in is a prerequisite for policy change. One respondent wrote, "We have a new head of collections strategy who is aware of our interest in this, and how the current policy severely restricts how subject librarians can acquire materials of interest to their respective departments, so there may be opportunity for some innovation in the future!"

One other outlier worth mentioning is that one respondent mentioned that other libraries setting a precedent for how it could be done would be helpful. We interpret this as a call for buy-in at the level of the profession writ large as a mechanism to convince skeptical administrators as well as share knowledge and develop benchmarks and tools for simplifying the acquisitions process.

Quality and Value Concerns

Concerns about the quality of crowdfunded materials intersect with policy in a few ways. Most commonly, survey responses indicated that libraries rely on positive reviews or critical acclaim to justify purchases. Another respondent wrote that they would be able to consider buying crowdfunded comics only if a patron requested a title or if it became very popular. Even among respondents that do collect crowdfunded comics, some mentioned that their collection policy states that they need to use reviews from "authoritative sources" to purchase materials and noted that these aren't usually available for crowdfunded materials. All of the institutions that report relying on reviews

or patron demand, including one institution that reported that they do acquire crowd-funded comics, were public libraries.

Concern over quality also overlaps with the fourth most popular answer to the question about which policies or regulations inhibit purchasing crowdfunded materials: "not applicable." Eight respondents indicated that there was no policy or regulation at their institution that inhibited their ability to purchase crowdfunded comics. Since the respondents are all engaged in comics collection development for their institutions, this implies either a lack of interest in collecting these materials, skepticism about the value of these materials, or lack of time to find individual crowdfunding campaigns.

There were also comments sprinkled throughout the responses which illustrated a general skepticism about the quality of crowdfunded materials. Several felt that if they were popular enough, they would have gotten patron requests for purchase, and the fact that they had not received any requests indicated that they weren't popular enough to be worth collecting. Another respondent mentioned that even if there were patron requests, they'd prefer that their board retain oversight of the collection. On the other hand, responses from those who collected crowdfunded comics as to why it was important included supporting creators, material by and about marginalized communities not seen in mainstream publishing, fulfilling collection scope, and high production values.

Education

Five respondents directly mentioned a need for more education and/or information as a prerequisite to begin acquiring crowdfunded comics. Education around crowdfunded comics was interpreted in multiple ways. Some respondents pointed to needing more understanding of the process and logistics of supporting crowdfunded campaigns. Still others seemed to want better ways to keep track of upcoming crowdfunded projects that were most likely to be of interest. Given that the six respondents (representing five institutions) who do purchase crowdfunded materials largely rely on social media to stay informed and how many collection policies require authoritative reviews as a prerequisite for purchase, it's clear that a more authoritative resource that centralizes information about crowdfunded comics would be useful. One respondent wrote, "I would love to see an influential body (ALA-related or otherwise) issue a report on crowdfunded comics and a toolkit for getting your institution to see the value in purchasing these things!"

Limitations

One issue we ran into was the blurring of lines between the concept of donated materials and crowdfunded materials. Since some of our early questions asked about an institution's ability to accept donations, some respondents continued to answer the questions in ways that seemed they were talking about donated materials generally rather than crowdfunded materials specifically. It also seemed that since crowdfunding is also a common tactic for charitable causes, respondents may have used the terminology of

donation to refer to supporting a crowdfunded campaign. Apart from the specific issue around donated materials versus crowdfunded materials, some of the answers were ambiguously phrased and brief, leaving plenty of room for interpretation. We made our best guesses at interpreting what was meant, but it's possible we misunderstood the intent behind a few of the answers.

Another limitation of the study is that the decision to focus on institutions and policies rather than individual library workers means that we didn't collect data related to job titles, educational background, percentage of duties related to comics collecting, or whether the respondents considered themselves comics fans. This decision was made so that we could preserve the anonymity of our respondents and comply with IRB guidelines. But we recognize that for some respondents, comics selection may only be a very small part of what they do and a duty they have by happenstance, not by design. For selectors who are comics fans and who purposely sought a position around comics curation, awareness of crowdfunded comics may be second nature and they may be more intrinsically motivated to pursue policy changes or undertake the complexities involved in acquiring crowdfunded comics.

Discussion

The survey results make it clear that crowdfunded comics are being left out of most comics collections. Of those institutions that did report buying crowdfunded comics, all but one were private academic libraries. Often, state-funded institutions have more restrictive policies that contribute to this disparity. But while private institutions might have more flexibility with purchasing, their collections are less publicly accessible, meaning that most of the public has limited access to crowdfunded materials unless they are able to purchase personal copies. For libraries that are mission-bound to develop diverse and inclusive collections, support specific programs, or contribute to collaborative collecting initiatives, this means that there is a real need to begin collecting crowdfunded comics. So, we are left to consider: what is the path forward for libraries to include these materials, and what can creators or crowdfunding platforms do to help?

In an ideal world, there would be administrative buy-in and subsequent support to change policies around payment, procurement, and vendor restrictions to better facilitate the purchase of crowdfunded materials. Given the pervasiveness of these policies, that's unlikely to be a quick or easy change. A workaround might be for libraries to identify already approved vendors that would be willing to support crowdfunded comics campaigns with the intention of later supplying these materials to libraries. Some campaigns offer support levels geared toward bookstores or bulk orders, so it's possible that it's just a matter of asking and demonstrating market value. Of course, if libraries were able to make policy changes and directly support crowdfunding campaigns, that leads to some other important questions related to the creation of institutional accounts on crowdfunding platforms. If libraries create institutional accounts to support

crowdfunded projects, what would it mean if a library's name is printed in a book as a supporter?

Requiring reviews from "authoritative sources" is a challenge that will be hard to overcome. *No Flying No Tights*, the major library-focused comic review site, specifically excludes crowdfunding campaigns and comics not yet in print from their content and will only consider reviewing a comic when it is already available through library distributors.[29] The American Library Association's Best Graphic Novels for Adults and Best Graphic Novels for Children lists include similar availability requirements and specifically exclude titles only available through crowdfunding.[30] While some crowdfunded comics that eventually get picked up for republishing or distribution by a mainstream publisher may eventually make their way into these resources, many crowdfunded comics will not.

Indeed, a future study should look at the characteristics of crowdfunded comics that get republished and what does not. With many crowdfunded projects representing niche and marginalized creators and audiences, are these the projects getting picked up, or do those projects that get picked up reflect the characteristics of other commercially successful comics? It's also worth asking why a comics creator might choose crowdfunding and self-publishing over traditional publishing models and, having made that choice, be resistant to redistribute the comic through a mainstream publisher. Some special collections in libraries (such as zines) may even specifically want material that is not mainstream.

Creators running crowdfunding campaigns wanting to reach libraries could be explicit about whether and how donated copies can be requested, build donations of copies to the library into the base goal or stretch goals of the project, or create specific tiers that purchase copies of comics to be donated to libraries. Creators could also provide the option for libraries to purchase titles outside of the crowdfunding project and offer to create invoices. (This option should probably only be used after a project has reached its funding level.) Creators looking for reviews could look into releasing digital versions of their comics or serializing their titles as webcomics prior to launching a crowdfunding campaign. Creators could also look at releasing digital versions of their comics to library platforms. Also, while not an immediate benefit for crowdfunding campaigns, creators including complete and accurate metadata within their titles would presumably make many catalogers happy.

Libraries unable to purchase items through crowdfunding campaigns could look to partner with local comic book shops that may be planning on purchasing items through crowdfunding campaigns or be willing to do so for a library. Libraries that are able to purchase items at comic book conventions could also specifically look for titles that were funded through crowdfunding. Libraries may also look to alternative funding sources that may be less restrictive than general collection development budgets. In some instances, it may be possible to use money from Friends of the Library funds, select endowment funds, or grants for crowdfunding campaigns. Some libraries may also find the subscription model that Patreon uses a better fit for their institutional

policies, though no respondent to our survey mentioned using this site. Libraries looking to expand collection development policies to allow for purchasing of crowdfunded material could include reviews from "non-authoritative" websites, such as GoodReads, or use criteria such as popularity or whether a creator has successfully fulfilled previous crowdfunding projects.

Conclusion

For libraries seeking to diversify their comics collections, crowdfunded comics provide an opportunity to get comics from creators who do work on niche topics or represent small or marginalized communities. In addition to comics produced by members of marginalized communities, libraries should be aware that crowdfunding campaigns can include limited edition ephemera which could have unique research value and be unavailable to acquire easily outside of these campaigns. Special collections and academic libraries are an obvious home for these materials based not only on their research value but also on shared values around collaborative collecting and shared responsibilities on preserving and making accessible the cultural record in as complete a manner as is feasible.

However, at this time, crowdfunded comics (and their associated ephemera) have been severely under-collected by libraries. While there are often logistical barriers to purchasing crowdfunded comics that require close work and negotiation with business and acquisitions offices, we believe it is worth it for libraries to attempt to overcome these barriers. An important step would be for professional library organizations to publish toolkits with best practices and explore ways to share reviews of material. We also hope that creators and crowdfunded platforms may be proactive in finding ways to facilitate libraries being able to purchase their materials. If library workers, professional organizations, and creators are able to collaborate on finding solutions, we see a bright future for building comics collections that can represent the full depth and breadth of comics publishing.

Note: In December 2021 Kickstarter announced they were changing their platform to begin using blockchain.[31] *This has been a controversial move that has angered many, including creators who have stated they will no longer be using the platform to fund their projects.*[32] *Some creators have already moved to different platforms.*[33] *As this book goes to press, this is a developing situation, but in light of what is currently known, we encourage you to consider what platforms you use to purchase items for your collections.*

Notes

1. Caitlin McGurk and Jenny E Robb, "Comics in Special Collections: Purposeful Collection Development for Promoting Inclusive History," in *Comics and Critical Librarianship* (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2019), 169; examples of crowdfunded comics providing a platform for marginalized voices include *Black Comix Returns: African American Comic Art & Culture, Bystander: Stories, Observations & Witnessings from South Asia* and *Sensory: Life on the Spectrum—An Autistic Comic Anthology*.

2. Todd Allen, "Is Kickstarter the #2 Graphic Novel Publisher?," PublishersWeekly.com, July 10, 2012, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/comics/article/52925-is-kickstarter-the-2-graphic-novel-publisher.html.

3. "Kickstarter Stats," Kickstarter, accessed August 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/help/stats.

4. Chris Arrant, "These Are the Titles Driving Kickstarter Comics to Their Biggest Year Yet," gamesradar, July 21, 2021, https://www.gamesradar.com/these-are-the-titles-driving-kickstarter-comics-to-their-biggest-year-yet/.

5. "Monthly Ranking for Patreon Comics: Ranking for Top Creators by Month," Graphtreon, accessed August 12, 2021, https://graphtreon.com/monthly-ranking/comics.

6. "Ended on Ulule," Ulule, accessed August 12, 2021, https://www.ulule.com/discover/?categories=bandes-dessinees&offset=0&statuses=ended&languages=fr.

7. Oriana Leckert, "Pow! 2020 Is the Best Year Yet for Comics on Kickstarter," Kickstarter.com, October 20, 2020, https://www.kickstarter.com/articles/2020-is-the-best-year-yet-for-comics-on-kickstarter.

8. Kat Calamia, "Should Major Publishers & Creators Be Crowdfunding Comics alongside Independent and DIY Creators?," GamesRadar+, September 22, 2020, https://www.gamesradar.com/should-major-publishers-and-creators-be-crowdfunding-comics-alongside-independent-and-diy-creators/.

9. While Image Comics is a well-known comics publisher, they tend to operate more like self-publishing than many traditional publishers as they do not pay page rates or advances, provide minimal editorial oversight, and charge a flat publishing fee.

10. "Drainers—An Underground Graphic Novel," Cloudscape Comics, Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/cloudscape/drainers-an-underground-graphic-novel; Robert Jeffrey II, "Route 3: Vol 1," Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1484007393/route-3-vol-1; Richard C. Meyer, "'No Enemy, But Peace' Graphic Novel," Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/863672719/no-enemy-but-peace-graphic-novel; "Are You Ready for War in the Neighborhood?," Ad Astra Comix, Indiegogo, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/1856162.

11. A "stretch goal" is an amount above the initial amount asked for at which point additional rewards are "unlocked."

12. A "tier" is a level of support tied to a specific amount of money.

13. The campaign for "Atomic Robo and the Spectre of Tomorrow HARDCOVER" lists "Fifty copies for Libraries + another Print in Print Set!" as a stretch goal in an image but doesn't describe these goals in text anywhere on the project page.

14. Rachel Seeger, "SPROUT: A Wordless Comic Book for Kids," Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1511570919/sprout-a-wordless-comic-book-for-kids.

15. Tom Humberstone, "Solipsistic Pop 4: Maps," Indiegogo, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/solipsistic-pop-4-maps#/; Becca Hillburn, "7 Inch Kara Volume 2: An All Ages Watercolor Comic," Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/beccahillburn/7-inch-kara-volume-2.

16. Isaac Cates, "Cartozia Tales: Ten Issues," Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1765342446/cartozia-tales-ten-issues; "Life Finds a Way," Cloudscape Comics, Kickstarter, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/cloudscape/life-finds-a-way.

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