

# **Innovation through a crowdfunding platform for independent video games**

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Over the last few years, many independent video game development teams have seen in crowdfunding a viable alternative for funding their projects. Unfortunately, as this method has gained popularity it has also increased competition amongst projects, which has also led to a reduction in project visibility compared to previous years when the market was not so crowded. However, most of the activity in this sector is currently focused around a few generalist platforms, which do not offer specific features suited to independent game developers that could increase the quality and impact of their fundraising campaigns.

After identifying this business opportunity, this dissertation investigates the issues that currently affect these independent video game companies and how a new funding model may help to mitigate them. This new model aims at allowing independent developers to exploit the potential of crowdsourced fundraising in an environment favourable to social interaction such as video games, and introduces additional funding methods to address those needs. However, as this is a new concept which cannot be compared to any existing product, this new funding model for independent video game studios implies that development occurs in an environment of extreme uncertainty, which makes managing and assessing business progress very difficult by using traditional techniques.

The research was conducted inside an innovation incubator organised by Trinity College, called Launchbox, which provided a real environment for business start-ups. In order to first identify concerns, a set of initial hypotheses outlining independent developers' concerns were formulated. Those assumptions were either validated or rejected with the help of actual developers and industry experts, resulting in a core set of goals that drove the inception of a new solution. The solution proposed is composed of several elements that work together within the framework of a single platform generating a synergy aimed to tackle the aforementioned issues. Finally, the concept of this new platform was tested with potential customers in order to evaluate the actual impact the solution may have on the success of future independent video games.