
EMILY BEST + IVAN ASKWITH,
PROJECT LEADS

COMMUNITY PRODUCER PROJECT



PROJECT MISSION



A future where artists have the freedom to make meaningful creative work, with the ability to own/govern the systems they use to make that work and build sustainable careers.

PROBLEM

➤ WE DON'T HAVE WHO WE NEED FOR "DIRECT TO FAN" ECOSYSTEMS

Many people champion “direct-to-fan” and “democratized entertainment,” but most misunderstand what these models truly require. Building real communities and fandoms *safely* for all involved demands unique skills—content moderation and community management as well as building governance, norms and guidelines—ones that artists, producers, and marketers usually don’t have. As a result, those tasked with this work often treat fans only as consumers, not as partners in the creative process. They miss how invested communities can transform everything from funding to production and distribution and how they can mobilize for good. Realizing these opportunities requires new expertise.

A NEW ROLE

➤ INTERVENTION

We will create a new role in the creative team: **the community producer**. This person is “above the line” on par with the other producers/directors/artists and has the expertise to cultivate, strengthen, and manage a community from the inception of the project all the way through distribution and beyond. They understand and can activate the dynamics of fandoms as well as they understand principles and challenges of community organizing.

A community producer can bridge the gap between fan culture and movement building. Just as a producer “produces” a movie, a “community producer” can “produce” a community around it, by building, managing, and engaging communities that enable indie creators to create and distribute meaningful work.

THE WORK

➤ CURRICULUM + COHORT

Building on the strength of open-culture curricula like The Distribution Playbook, we will gather a team of experts across impact entertainment, fandom cultivation, governance and movement building to establish the curricula for Community Producers. This will be a living document that allows for quarterly updates, new case studies and structured (and vetted) community input.

Once we establish the curricula, we will convene a cohort made up of people who are already doing parts of this work in their communities or organizations. They will be trained as Community Producers as well as contribute their expertise to strengthen the curriculum. Once trained, we will seed projects with them through our organizational partners (Seed&Spark, Kinema, Pop Culture Collab, Popular Demand, (m)otherboard, Center for Cultural Power) and build case studies out of that work.

THE PROPOSAL



Phase 1: Convening

Convene a community of experts to build the V1 of the curriculum in fall 2025.

Over two days, we will devise the structure and plan for completing a V1 curriculum and a structure for the first cohort.

Deliverable: Emily and Ivan will produce an outline of the proposed curriculum and a plan to complete V1.

Phase 2: Building

Build out and launch the V1 the curriculum.

With the launch, identify the funders, partners and first cohort of Community Producers.

We seek to pay the cohort a stipend for the time they invest, or have their participation sponsored by a partner org with an expectation they are growing the efficacy/utility of the curriculum.

Phase 3: Producing

Seed the cohort with projects across entertainment and culture building, leveraging the full capacity of our partnerships and expertise.

If successful, this project will also build a strong network across all the partner organizations to accelerate the work of everyone involved.



PROJECT LEADS



**Ivan Askwith,
Popular Demand Studios**

Ivan is a cultural strategist and producer, specializing in experience design for digital platforms and fan communities. He has been named by WIRED as the “secret weapon” behind some of the biggest entertainment crowdfunding successes of the last several years including *Veronica Mars*, *Super Troopers*, *Reading Rainbow*, and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*.



**Emily Best,
Seed&Spark/(m)otherboard**

Emily is the founder and CEO of Seed&Spark, the #1 crowdfunding platform in the world for storytellers and musicians. Seed&Spark has helped creators raise more than \$75M, connect with millions of fans and launch sustainable careers. Best’s approach has been community-first, growing the company through education and grassroots engagement. She writes, produces and directs films and co-founded (m)otherboard to grow the movement for tech justice.



WISDOM COUNCIL

SOME OF THE EXPERTS ALREADY COMMITTED TO THE PROJECT TO ADVISE V1 CURRICULUM



Christie Marchese
Founder, Kinema
Founder, Picture Motion
Collaborator: The Distribution
Playbook
Expertise: Film, Television,
Impact media



Aisha Goss
Executive Director,
Center for Cultural Power
Expertise: Impact media,
Narrative Change, Curriculum
Building, Journalism



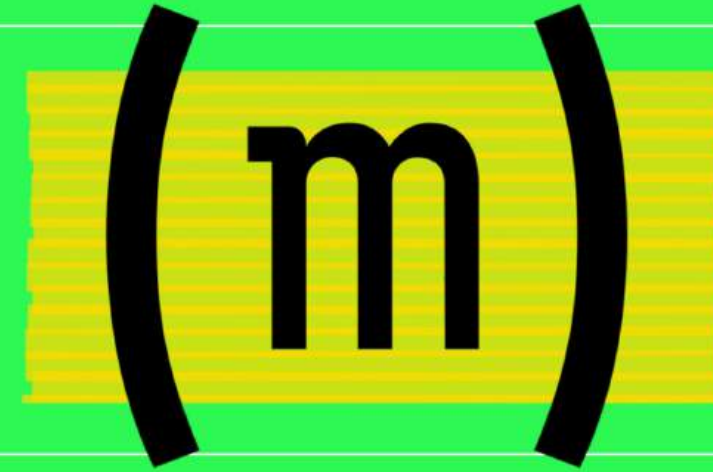
Coraline Ada Ehmke
Founder, Organization for
Ethical Source
Co-founder, (m)otherboard
Creator: Contributor Covenant,
Hippocratic License
Expertise: Open source,
community governance



Tracy Van Slyke
Chief Strategy Officer, Pop
Culture Collab
Founder, Culture Lan
Co-Author *Beyond the Echo
Chamber*
Expertise: Social justice, pop
culture strategy, org building



PARTNER ORG



 (m)otherboard

The Community Producer effort is a project housed inside (m)otherboard, a non-profit organization bending the arc of technology from individual convenience towards collective good.

(m)otherboard has a participatory governance structure, code of conduct and community compact that provide a strong foundation for an open culture project.

m.otherboard.org/governance

THANK YOU!

Get in touch with us

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