Exploring the Veronica Mars Fan Movement

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Kickstarter is a website used to help creative individuals fund innovative and entrepreneurial ideas including (but not limited to) wallets, music, restaurants, and films. In 2013, 91,585 fans donated $5,702,153 to see the fan-favorite television show, Veronica Mars, become a film. The show, which was cancelled in 2007, aired for three seasons on CBS. In March 2014, the film was released in theaters as well as instantly on various video-on-demand options (later to be released on DVD and Blu-Ray in May 2014). The show and movie is centered on a high-school student-turned-private detective (Veronica Mars) who solves every day minor cases as well as an overarching theme throughout the first season regarding the murder of her best friend. Each season focuses on a main story arch with smaller cases in each episode. The film takes place ten years later and centers on the death of a classmate (who became a famous popstar after high school).

Rob Thomas (creator of the show) and Kristen Bell (Actress and star of the show) were the two who spearheaded the campaign, which was to become the most successful campaign at the time (although this title has since been ousted by other campaigns). There are many factors that must coincide for a Kickstarter campaign to be successful. What about this particular film made the campaign successful?

Fans of the show came together for a brief moment in time to accomplish a goal, and once it was funded, dispersed, creating a temporary organization. Henry Jenkins (2012) calls for additional research on fan studies because, “...fan studies as a research paradigm has something vital to contribute to larger considerations of the relationship between participatory culture and civic engagement” (para. 1.9). As organizations are looking to see how fan networks are mobilizing to accomplish goals (Jenkins, 2012), it is important to understand how fan networks are completing the tasks that are important to them, if that is equal rights, aid for different illnesses, or getting a movie made. This paper is a case study of the fan movement behind the Veronica Mars movie and looks at it as an adhocracy and temporary organization. Ultimately, if fan movements can be understood, this can translate to a bigger organization and may help social movements.

References: