

ONLINE APPENDIX

Table A.1. Excerpt from the Codebook

Var.	Measure	Examples from Raw Data	Illustrative Coder Evaluations
Substantive Signal: Firm	Degree to which the senders of a signal (Kickstarter project initiators) referenced expert media coverage.	<i>From a referenced press report on a role-playing game (RPG):</i> “[developer’s name] has worked on titles from Fallout 2 to Neverwinter Nights, from the Realms of Arkania Trilogy to the more recent Planescape: Torment. If there’s one genre he knows, it’s RPGs. So, [developer’s name] decided to Kickstart his own. The game is [game name]. As [developer’s name] describes it, [game name] is a party-based, first-person RPG that borrows from classic pen-and-paper games, but introduces its own new ideas as well. [...]”	One coder rated this project description at 7 for expert media coverage, the other coder at 5. The developer references coverage of their project by the specialized press extensively, as illustrated in the left column.
		Project proposals without expert media coverage.	Proposals where referrals to expert media coverage where absent have consistently been rated as 1 by the coders.
Rhetorical Signal: Pathos	Degree of emotional arousal a signal contained for the coder.	<i>From the project proposal of a bible-themed adventure game:</i> "Does your family spend time playing video games? The answer is probably yes," asserts co-founder [developer’s name]. "And we are all aware of the morally questionable messaging most of them promote. By financially backing this project, we can change the video game industry together and provide a game that satisfies your desire for entertainment and has a strong spiritual message.”	One coder rated this post at 5 for pathos, the other coder at 6. The text did evoke emotions in our coders, addressing the unease many have with the “morally questionable message” of many video games, displaying colorfully and effectively a certain emotionally laden mental image of the envisioned project. Both coders found that this proposal was quite successful in arousing emotions.
		<i>From the project proposal of a space simulation game:</i> “[game name] is a real-time, science fiction, space adventure game about exploring and dominating the galaxy. The player controls a single character in a legendary tale of deep space exploration, strange alien worlds, and unknown civilizations. The player will interact with interplanetary economies, participate in galactic conquest, survey and plan for new colonies, and attempt to solve a mystery of galactic proportions.”	One coder rated this post at 1 for pathos, the other coder at 2. Both coders thus documented that they did not feel an emotional appeal emerging from this text, which is neutral in tone and at the few occurrences where more affectively laden vocabulary has been used (e.g., “legendary tale”) lacks the substance to evoke emotions. This post received a low rating regarding pathos appeals from both coders.
Rhetorical Signal: Logos	Degree to which a signal contained rational, neutral information about the envisioned game, from the viewpoint of the coder.	<i>From the project proposal of a turn-based fighting game:</i> “Once your fighter's characteristics have been chosen, you then can sign your very first sponsor. Each sponsor you sign gives your fighter specific benefits. For example, one sponsor may offer you free energy drinks while another may allow you discounts for sports clothing. Strategic sponsorship will enable your fighter to increase in rankings throughout career game play. The fighter will have some basic needs that will need to be met such as food, medicines and energy. The fighter will need to be healthy in order to be able to compete. We have tried to keep the RP as real as possible therefore it will be necessary for a player to give nourishment and healthcare to the fighter. [<i>The description continues in that style for another couple of pages, covering the different aspects of game mechanics</i>]”	One coder rated this post at 5 for logos, the other coder at 6. The developer provides plenty information here, which is mostly based on rational arguments of how the eventual game will look like. The information is relatively well structured. Still, the argument is not fully concise and systematic. It does, for example, explain that the player will have to cover the basic needs of his or her game character, but not how this will play out, which is relevant to develop a full understanding of the game mechanism, as the game system employs virtual as well as real money as game currency. Still, the signal conveys a relatively clear picture of how the game mechanics are supposed to look like. Therefore, the coders considered this signal having a strong logos appeal.
		<i>From the project proposal of a science-fiction roleplaying game:</i> “Train an army, control and battle with your own character or spacecraft. Mine resources, pirate or conquer others to build and expand your empire. Jump into your scout ship and explore the unique algorithmically generated worlds, and launch survey drones to discover the location of its riches beneath. Place structures, build your worlds, upgrade and customize your structures. Research, manufacture, use or sell advanced Weapons, Modules, Land/Space Vehicles. Unlock access to advanced weapons and modules as your character learns new skills.”	Both coders rated this post at 2 for logos. The text does not convey a clear idea of how the claimed features will be realized in terms of game mechanics. The coders did also not perceive the argument as clear and logical, the core mechanisms that make a game good or bad are not even hinted at. Therefore, this text did for the coders contain only a very limited logos appeal.

Rhetorical Signal: Ethos	Degree of reputation, credibility, competence and goodwill a signal contained for the coder.	<i>From the project proposal of a space simulation game:</i> “Our team consists of world famous astronauts, engineers, designers, programmers, artists and architects who allow us to construct a game that will be the most accurate virtual representation of our universe to date. [...] aims to be a game that is uncompromisingly entertaining and educational. Our game chiefly focuses on interstellar exploration; it is based on images and resources from the Hubble telescope, ESA/NASA, and numerous well known observatories.” <i>[The project proposal later lists detailed bio’s of 18 people, mostly astronauts/cosmonauts and story writers.]</i>	Both coder rated this post at 6 for ethos appeal. The entrepreneurs take great care to communicate the expertise of the team in the focal field of the proposed project, and do that rather successfully. Although they are not that convincing regarding core skills of video game development (e.g., programming or project management experience), they convey a claim of strong expertise in the field of space flight, providing an example for a strong ethos appeal.
		<i>From the project proposal of an action game:</i> “We are a small, independent company just trying to get started. We decided to try raising the money ourselves, rather than trying to go through a publisher. By doing so, we can make the games the way we picture them. This allows us to put more focus on aspects of the game such as game play mechanics, graphic quality, and storyline without the outside influence of a publisher. It is our goal to make [game name] and any future titles with our fans in mind and give ourselves the control to make the games we want the way we want to make them.”	One coder rated this post at 2 for ethos, the other coder at 3. The entrepreneurs aim to develop a rhetorical signal of about why they are qualified to conduct the proposed development project, but largely fail to do so. They provide little in terms of reference to previous success or qualifications. Accordingly, the coders did not perceive this project proposal to carry much ethos appeal.