# Media Crowdsourcing and Media Crowdfunding in the Digital Environment and Media Education Practices

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**Abstract**

The article analyzes the possibilities of using specialized digital platforms for both content and financial participation of the addressee in the implementation of media projects and for media education practices are investigated. The successful experience of crowdfunding media in the modern world is associated with digital platforms named *Planeta, Boom Starter, The Power of World,* and active crowdsourcing is carried out on the digital Service of journalistic inquiries named *Pressfeed.* During the pandemic, these platforms became objects of research by the authors of the article and educational formats for media students and seminars for regional journalists.

Crowdfunding and crowdsourcing in Russia as a collective cooperation of people and civic activity are most effective today in the media sphere. Through such civil complicity, a media community is formed. At the same time, digital platforms make it possible for people without experience in journalistic and expert activities to get involved in the creation of media content, to try their hand at performing tasks from journalists.

As a result of the study, key factors that should be taken into account in educational models of crowdfunding and crowdsourcing have been identified. Among them there are: 1) addressing the focus audience of media projects; 2) rewards for participation, including virtual participation, corresponding to the audience's requests; 3) types of motivations of the media accomplice audience: the desire to express a civic position, to be involved in something socially significant, to increase their expertise and make public their personal history. The article describes all these factors with their illustration by examples of media projects and the own expert practice of one of the authors of the article.

**Keywords:** media, media education, crowdfunding, crowdsourcing, digital platforms, civil society, community.

## 1. Introduction

Media is one of the most affected industries during the pandemic. At first sight, the importance of media has increased and the media consumption of the population has grown during forced stay at home, but this primarily concerned news resources and TV channels. The paper press, due to the inability to distribute its circulations and as a result of the economic downturn, lost not only revenues from sales and subscriptions, but also advertising contracts. Funding through advertising and various kinds of collaborations has decreased significantly in the press of various types. According to the Ministry of Digital Development, in the first quarter of 2021, the advertising market sank by 10 %, the Alliance of Independent Regional Publishers indicates a drop in the advertising market on the ground of at least 20 %. Thus, it was the local press and

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budget-independent media that suffered the most. This caused the acceleration of the transition of media projects to digital formats, which actively began a decade before the pandemic. At the same time, both traditional and digital media have become more active in appealing to the civic engagement of the target audience, seeking its diverse support and resorting to digital crowdfunding and crowdsourcing.

Media education should not stand aside from these processes, since it itself was carried out through digital formats during the pandemic, which prompted teachers to include trainings on digital platforms in educational trajectories.

Students and young journalists today actively use crowdsourcing and crowdfunding practices, moreover, about a third of media students (according to the observations of the authors of the article over many years of practice) become freelancers or creators of their own short-term projects like digital blogging. Today, the audience is increasingly actively providing content and financial support to media in online ways: through media sites themselves, through Yandex-wallets of editorial offices, through participation in various online events.

### 2. Materials and methods

The decline in the role of the state in a digital society inevitably leads to a change in the functioning of the media, as well as to an increase in the importance of communities emerging around media projects. The authors proceed from the fact that the digital involvement of the audience in financing and content participation gives the effect of a media community necessary for media independent of the authorities and highly specialized media.

The research objective of the article is to identify the factors and characterize the most successful communicative practices of Russian crowdfunding and crowdsourcing carried out through digital platforms and their applicability in educational processes. The authors of the article also present the results of their own experiment of expert work on the platform of the Journalistic Inquiry Service named *Pressfeed*.

The authors of the article use the methods of content analysis of these platforms, expert interviews with their organizers and authors of successful media projects, as well as their own experiment on the platform pressfeed.ru / conducted a study of factors and models of digital media crowdfunding and crowdsourcing.

Expert interviews were conducted at the first stage of the study. The authors of successfully implemented using platforms acted as experts Planeta.ru and the power of the word of diverse crowdfunding media projects, such as the film *Bears of Kamchatka* (I. Zhuravleva, 2,746,550 rubles were collected, 1,500 people transferred the money); *We will Survive:* a book of author's photographs by a journalist of centenarian people (M. Mordasov, freelancer, collected more than 219,000 rubles), a documentary film *Children of Narym* (Y. Korneva, a journalist of Tomsk TV2), a website about culture and society *Colta.ru.* Recharge (L. Goralik, collected 1,104,305 rubles, 276 % of the planned), as well as the manager of the crowdfunding platform *Planeta.ru* N. Ignatenko. These cases were also chosen for demonstration and discussion by students in the classroom at the university on the recommendation of the platforms themselves as diverse and successful.

At the second stage, an experiment was carried out. The author of the article is T.L. Kaminskaya, having registered on the Journalistic Inquiry Service platform named *Pressfeed* as an expert, for six months she wrote expert comments to leading media. The result of the presentation and discussion of the experience at seminars with students and regional journalists of Veliky Novgorod was the registration and work of media and experts from among the regional, including students.

The statistical data provided in the article about the service Pressfeed.ru were provided to the authors upon written request by the platform.

### 3. Discussion

Our research, on the one hand, is based on scientific publications related to the practice of collective implementation of socially significant projects, and, on the other hand, on the results demonstrated by researchers in media education in the new conditions of society (Pantserev, 2021).

Thus, O.Y. Patlasov, speaking about crowdfunding in general and offering an overview of special digital platforms for it, calls it "a chance to study the audience closely, find out its needs and

assess the viability of his idea." "Unlike standard market mechanisms", he notes, "people's financing allows you to create a 100 percent payback project without spending additional funds on advertising, marketing research, market analysis and fortune-telling on coffee grounds" (Patlasov, 2015: 210).

Just five years ago, scientists analyzing the situation with public financing of projects and initiatives more often mentioned offline ways of raising funds, only casually mentioning digital collection models as a possibility of the future. So, I.E. Korneeva, speaking about collecting donations for NGOs and their projects, calls such methods as piggy banks, charity auctions and dinners. Indeed, digital specialized Russian crowdfunding and crowdsourcing platforms have emerged quite recently. However, this happened before the pandemic and as noted, is connected with completely different social trends (Korneeva, 2016). O. Basheva describes voluntary activity through crowdsourcing, which is carried out by the state , transferring part of the functions to volunteers (Basheva, Ermolaeva, 2020). Specialist in network technologies of mass media E.M. Pak even before the pandemic, Pak justified the idea that "crowdsourcing is understood not only as a hierarchical model that concentrates the attention of the general public around itself to achieve a goal, but as a new information technology tool that helps organize a network "crowd" to solve social, public and other problems" (Pak, 2014: 154). At the same time, she also noted that it was "media projects and portals of professional communities that will be one of the starting points for the development of crowdsourcing" (Pak, 2014: 157).

As for the media, the optimal models of their existence in society are discussed all over the world, and there is no unity of opinion. J. Bateman conducts research on various approaches to the definition of digital media and shows how multi-valued digital reality is (Bateman, 2021). He also focuses on the importance of digital technologies. Some researchers when reviewing all media financing methods, single out crowdfunding as one of the main income for the media (Kind et al., 2009). It is very important to note that in the USA, the subscription model in some cases is transformed into a club model — for a certain amount, the reader receives certain preferences, for example, the right to visit the editorial office and communicate with journalists, to be in internal working chats, to receive exclusive products with media trademarks. The same principle underlies crowdfunding with its range of rewards.

Media crowdfunding and crowdsourcing as new communicative media practices have been understood up to now mainly by foreign researchers or in English (Ulin, 2010; Yuzvovich et al., 2016). Mainly foreign cases are also considered as examples of civil participation of the audience in the media projects of the Russian Federation. For example, E.A. Osipovskaya, calling crowdsourcing one of the innovative techniques for involving the audience in the activities of the media, among others, notes voting, polling, additional buttons on websites. At the same time, crowdsourcing is considered by her on the developments of crowdsourcing models of The Guardian editorial office (2009), the project *Off the Bus* (translated from English — overboard, 2007) of the American edition of *The Huffington Post*, the Ask program, which is also based on the principle of collective voluntary cooperation (*The Washington Post, The New York Times* and the *Mozilla Foundation*, which studied the news commenting system for its improvement for both users and the media themselves) (Osipovskaya, 2017).

Over the past 10 years, a number of scientific publications by foreign authors have appeared devoted to the study of crowdfunding in the media environment. The greatest attention is paid to crowdfunding for innovative projects (Piller, Roberts, 2016), in which special digital platforms (*Kickstarter, Indiegogo, Seedrs,* etc.) are used to find additional support. The growth of activity in the media space opens up new opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses (Hibbert, 2013; Ordanini et al., 2011), and it is not only about attracting investments, but also about finding in-demand ideas and solutions. It should be noted that institutional opportunities for the use of media in the fundraising process are expanding: legislative changes correspond to current trends associated with the growth of the use of social networks in crowdsourcing and crowdfunding processes (Feigin, Levine, 2014).

Also, the attention of researchers is attracted by the process of forming various business models of digital media, depending on their priority tasks, a wide range of opportunities for the use of crowdsourcing for the development of entrepreneurial activity (Brown et al., 2018). An urgent topic for research is the search for optimal strategies for organizing successful crowdfunding in the media space, in particular, using social networks (Marco et al., 2017). In this context, the idea of joint work of participants proposed by I. Everett on the principle of a beehive deserves attention

(Everett, 2015). G. Clapperton notes that the "culture of social networks" also applies to social investments, and in this case co-financing of projects carries an important emotional component, which means involving participants in the activities of a caring, approved project or enterprise (Clapperton, 2012). In the new reality of the media industry, crowdfunding acts as a new model of project financing, which has significant potential for development (Szopa et al., 2017).

As for foreign authors, we note that social networks in current research are considered by them both as a source of capital and as a source of innovation for the development of projects of various directions (Boulianne, 2019; Muninger et al., 2019; Vuong, Wallace, 2011).

It is worth noting the works devoted to the study of digital technologies in the field of education and the use of media resources for educational purposes (Frania, 2021; Smyrnova-Trybulska, Zegzuła, 2021). Media education in this case is interpreted as the development of competencies for the use of technologies that ensure effective work with information in new conditions (for example, in a pandemic situation)

Russian journalism theorists associate the development of crowdfunding in Russia primarily with crisis phenomena in the economy (Teplyashina, 2016). Before the pandemic, crowdsourcing technologies were considered mainly as some additional elements of media interactivity, which included "ad sections, meme contests and witty statements, reposting blog entries of famous media personalities or random participants in events, posting videos from a mobile phone, polls, voting, etc."; at the same time, it was noted that crowdsourcing "most often has a fragmentary nature, indicating a lack of understanding of the essence of the phenomenon and its economic potential" (Vitvinchuk, 2016: 15).

As for interaction with target audiences in the new digital formats of Russian media, observations related to the addressee factor in the modern media situation are relevant for our research. It is civic journalism that is increasingly involving the audience in its activities today and increasing the importance of the audience factor in the implementation of the social function of the media (Kaminskaya, 2020). One of the effects of this involvement is the creation of a community around the media. In addition, the researchers note that the factor of "new media" and their remote work changes the approach to media education. So, K. Pantserev notes that "Special attention is paid to technologies which are based on artificial intelligence (AI). And the capabilities of such technologies are growing at unprecedented speed» (Pantserev, 2021: 507). His article deals with the need for new solutions to preserve the target audience of media and the development of new competencies by students in the global digital world. These works reflect the Russian view on the actual problem of the use of new digital technologies in education and the use of media resources to improve the efficiency of students' learning of educational programs (Bond, Bedenlier, 2019).

T. Vladimirova analyses systemic factors of optimization of the Russian media space in the process of intellectualization of society. The criteria of media personality as a set of information relations between the participants of this process, providing optimal intellectual interaction between economic, political, scientific, educational, artistic and other social realities, are investigated (Vladimirova et al., 2020). Today, a large number of studies are devoted to various activities in digital formats: sociologists and psychologists measure people's adaptability to remote interaction, explore their new competencies and social trajectories, the stress level of life in digital formats and its economic effect. At the same time, the pandemic has updated research on the willingness of Russians to help others with the help of digital technologies. So I.V. Mersiyanova and A.S. Bryukhno, based on the data of the All-Russian opinion poll, revealed a high level of readiness to register on a specialized website that allows developing volunteer initiatives (Bryukhno, Mersiyanova, 2020).

In the newest studies of the interaction of media with the audience and their ways of survival during a pandemic, such a resource as the medical community plays a huge role. For example, E.Y. Kolomiytseva, noting the strengthening of social forms of media financing during the pandemic, emphasizes: "users, consumers of information themselves decided who to provide financial support to: whether by subscription, donation, crowdfunding, etc., and did it the more willingly, for example, the more effective, in their opinion, a specific journalistic product was, the more effectively it changes something in the surrounding reality. There is a so-called social trust" (Kolomiytseva, 2021: 151). Social trust is possible if the media becomes a kind of social space. M.V. Livanova, using the example of small-town publications, shows the mechanism of the "club format of media activity" when "The editorial office assumes the function of the center of local social relations of the territory for building and maintaining a community (Livanova, 2020: 69).

Thus, the role of crowdfunding and crowdsourcing platforms has been noted from various points of view in modern media practice, and the need to include them in the process of media education is becoming more and more obvious.

### 4. Results

The successful experience of initiative media projects is primarily associated with such digital platforms as the very first in Russia and the largest *Planeta.ru*, which has the project category "Literature and Journalism"; Boom Starter is the second largest Russian crowd platform attracting investment in creative projects. And finally, launched in 2020, the first specialized crowd platform for journalists and media, *The Power of the Word*.

Examples of successful crowdfunding cases on the new platform are the magazine *World of Fiction* collected (more than 8 million rubles, 2020) for the work of the editorial office and the issue of the magazine during 2021. As a reward, users could subscribe, forming a circulation of the publication for a year ahead.

In 2020, a team of journalists from the *TV2 News Agency* raised funds for an expedition to remote areas of the Tomsk region, where there were orphanages for children of exiles and repressed. As a result of the trip, a longrid was published and a documentary was released, which was watched by over 665 thousand people.

*The Power of the Word*, as the first and only specialized media crowdfunding platform in Russia, has directed its efforts to raise funds for four types of civic-oriented projects, namely:
- investigative journalism;
- journalistic landings in hard-to-reach and remote places for filming;
- media collaboration projects of several editorial offices to cover socially significant topics in the regions;
- support for journalists (mainly for court costs) who are out of work and in a difficult life situation.

This platform is still in its infancy, and according to its management, it is not ready to work with amounts of more than 100 thousand.

As for foreign crowdfunding platforms for Russian journalists, they are more extensive in terms of resource capabilities, but only one of the experts noted that he plans to carry out crowdfunding on foreign platforms as well. Among the foreign ones, the most famous are Patreon, Kickstarter, Indiegogo, however, it seems that it is more difficult for Russian media to act on them due to the lack of a starting target audience – readers and subscribers.

All the authors of media projects said that they had guessed to use crowdfunding in the last 2 years. First of all, experts emphasized the difference between crowdfunding and other ways of raising money and noted the social significance of the procedure itself:
- It is necessary to immediately make it feel that you do not put pressure on pity and do not stand with an outstretched hand, you are from another category;
- You give people the opportunity to touch socially significant goals;
- Crowdfunding platforms provide reliable processes for transferring money from hand to hand. Bypassing intermediaries, for example, in the person of the authorities;
- Crowdfunding involves testing an idea for social significance and, in fact, is a pre-order of the society.

Among the disadvantages were the need to pay interest to the platform and the inability to collect less than a certain amount (usually 50 % of the stated amount). With regard to the collected amounts, the general opinion is that 50 % of the collected funds or more is a success.

The authors associate their positive experience of crowdfunding with the following aspects of using platforms: a high-quality video message, a description of the project aimed at the target audience, a well-thought-out financial goal and collection period, as well as interesting rewards for transferring money.

The rewards, according to experts, should include material (subscription to a publication or a CD with a film), but no longer material (lunch with a team of journalists, "big Himalayan thank you" – in the case of a film about bears, online courses on media literacy and the like). Crowdfunding rewards are also called lots, in general they can be divided into 4 types: symbolic, electronic, material (the manuscript of the author's poem, a picture, etc.) and event:
- symbolic lot, this is the lot "just want to support";

As for the video message, the consensus of the experts was obvious: – A high-quality video doubles the chances of the project's success;
- a video with an appeal to the target audience expands the possibilities of promoting the project in social media and after its completion.

The timing of the video message was indicated to be optimal for no more than two minutes, the need for a clear definition of the target audience, good sound quality, a change of plans and the presence of sincerity and motivation for action in it was emphasized:
- It is necessary to indicate in two or three phrases for each item which project is being proposed, who is doing it (and why they can be trusted), what has already been done and what remains to be done, how much is missing: the amount and explanation and give step-by-step instructions on how to transfer money;
– In fact, we are opening an online store, in connection with this, certain vocabulary and marketing approaches are involved, journalists are not used to this; at the time of crowdfunding, we are less media than a store, we have to think about how to "sell" an idea, and most media have no such experience. And here the most useful thing is to find a volunteer with online sales experience, you can also read about online stores;
- A high-quality video approximately doubles the project's chances of success. In addition, it expands the possibility of promoting the project after its implementation.

The effectiveness of using the first persons of the project team and opinion leaders in the video was emphasized:
– You can ask the whole team of your important connections – someone can turn to a famous rapper, and someone – to a well-known media, from this you need to make a mix, often strange;
- Quotes from the video can then be used in the texts of press releases and posts in social networks.

The experience of media crowdfunding has shown the special importance of promoting fundraising: the need to promote the project on social networks and other digital platforms during crowdfunding was noted by all speakers, Among the information guides for promotion are:
- the very fact of crowdfunding;
- individual lots of it (each lot is an information guide of a press release, as an "event for itself");
- a weekly report in the form of news about the progress of fundraising for the project and constant gratitude to the enumerators (and with a request to disseminate information about the project.

News about the project is automatically sent to the mail of people who have already supported the project. In fact, the author forms a community of people around his project, it is not by chance that experts suggest calling this process community funding (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2019). One of the most significant points of fundraising is the remuneration of its participants.

Communication with experts allowed us to identify the following types of audiences for media crowdfunding:
- Inner circle, people loyal to the author of the project;
- Loyal, but not personally familiar to the author of the project;
- Completely unfamiliar.

The latter, in addition to the opportunity to get involved as a participant in the implementation of a socially significant idea, can be motivated by a "personal story". So, Y. Korneva, who shot a documentary about the place where the children of the repressed lived during the Stalinist repressions (the film *Narym's Children*), said that with the help of digital platforms it is possible not only to raise funds for filming. Journalists find guides, expedition participants, things necessary for the expedition and even find the main character of the film (for example, a film about exiles in Narym was actively supported by people whose parents were exiled to the territory of the alleged filming). At the same time, as for even symbolic rewards (for example, in the form of credits after the film), often with the support of such socially significant and educational projects, sponsors refuse them and wish to remain unknown. However, the mention in the credits (for example, *YouTube* allows you to make titles of any scale) is important for some, because belonging to the project is one of the ways to publicly declare your civic position.

As experts noted, it is important to indicate the social significance of the project and why it will definitely succeed in the appeal on the platform:

- People like to be participants in something outstanding.

There are also subtleties regarding fundraising:

- it is better to collect not the entire amount, but for specific aspects of the project (for example, for camera traps and an expedition for the film operator);

- the main thing is to "get away from zero" on the site, you can even ask your friends to transfer the minimum amount, strangers, as a rule, do not want to be the first.

Interestingly, what Planeta.ru Recently, it has been expanding opportunities specifically for media projects, increasing their own production support and opening new thematic categories. During the pandemic, the platform for the first time opened not only project fundraising, but also allowed the media to raise funds for their current needs. The recently appeared category "Ecology" is another niche for a media video course about nature, animals and the corners of the planet untouched by civilization.

In general, the practice of media crowdfunding over the past two years has been successful. This is evidenced by the statistics for 2020, courtesy of the owners Planeta.ru to the authors of the article: fees in the category "Literature and Journalism") 43.7 million (from January 1 to December 20, 2020), 136 out of 437 projects are successful (30 %). The share of successful media projects from the total number of projects launched on the platform is 27.5 % (first place).

The fact that this practice will scale is evidenced by the fact that in the fall of 2021, the Alliance of Independent Regional Publishers (ANRI) opens a full-time crowdfunding school for journalists.

The success of crowdfunding for media projects in Russia is explained, in our opinion, by several reasons, in particular, a decrease in the number of media independent of the authorities and an increase in its audience. Analysts also note that "Media projects have both advantages and disadvantages when creating a page. The advantages are that the crowd project looks very similar to the material on the Internet resource ... It may be much easier for a person from the media to come up with a bright, engaging initiative title than for someone else: after all, this is his professional skill" (Kudinov, 2021). Perhaps it is precisely with the ability to "submit" a project and organize its informational promotion that the success of media projects is connected.

The most famous crowdsourcing platform today is the American development *Help a Reporter Out* (HARO), created in 2008 and serving today, according to the owners, more than 100 thousand subscribers, including 30 thousand media representatives.

There is an analog of such a platform in Russia named *Pressfeed*, developed by journalist K. Bocharsky, editor of the *Prospects* section of the *Secret of the Firm* magazine of the *Kommersant* Publishing House, who admitted in an interview that the launch of the American platform "blew up the journalism and PR industry" and prompted him to take action: "It was only in 2014 that I returned to the project again. In July, he began development, and in December he already launched it. After the sale of the *Secret of the Firm* to Rambler he said: "I no longer started looking for a job as a journalist and devoted myself entirely to *Pressfeed*. The journalist completed programming courses and in 2016 "rolled out the project to the market."

Today the Service *Pressfeed.ru* helps media, newsmakers and experts to find each other. With its help, journalists collect expert opinions of various specialists in order to refer to them in their publications. There, editors are also looking for authors who are ready to write full-fledged columns and speakers for TV and radio appearances. Although the service positions itself primarily as a PR opportunity, it provides an opportunity to express an independent, sometimes non-trivial opinion, its civic position and voice this position through leading media. Both sides benefit from such cooperation. The media receives exclusive content and insights. Newsmaker — wide coverage of the target audience and the opportunity to express their expert and civic position.

The experiment of working on the research site showed the effectiveness of the platfoma. Every working day at 10:00 and 15:00 (depending on the time stated during registration), the service sends to the experts a selection of journalists' requests, while not allowing them to communicate directly with the journalist, thereby protecting him from spam, intrusive and unsolicited communication.

The service also provides a number of additional amenities, for example, automatic termination of receiving responses after the deadline specified by the author. This cuts off the "long tail" of latecomers, which also makes the mailbox cleaner and eliminates low-value communication.

An important function is robotically informing authors about the acceptance or rejection of their expert comments and adding links to publications on the service. An interactive notification is also sent to the mail about these actions.

The reporter and the source on the site have their own personal accounts. Request and response feeds are displayed there, statuses and additional information are visible. Reporters sort responses to "accepted" and "rejected", these statuses are visible to the source, which also makes the work more visual and transparent. In addition, sources see on the "main panel" the number of accepted responses for each relevant request and, assessing the "competition", they can decide whether they should offer their comment or not. It is clear that a comment is the work, often of several people, very busy. And no one wants to do this work in vain.

One of the biggest difficulties in the current work of a journalist is to get a reasoned independent opinion often on sudden problems of society from an expert, and the technical process of editorial offices requires doing this as quickly as possible. As our research has shown, the subject of requests depends on the political and economic conjuncture, as well as on a kind of media model. So, during our experiment, several editorial offices in one week requested comments on the topic of using feminitives in speech such as "blogger", "editor", and one of the authors of the article managed to publish two different comments in two leading media resources.

Every week, journalists make a lot of inquiries on topics such as retail, real estate, construction, finance, auto, transport and logistics, law, IT and telecom, personnel and management, which corresponds to the most powerful industry and thematic areas in the Russian media. In fact, the flow of requests is a reflection of which topics are most actively covered by the media.

Responding to a request about the statistics of the authors of the article, the platform reported the following: "We have about 100 thousand users, we are growing one and a half times a year. The service is used by more than half of media resources in the Russian Federation. We publish 60-70 new requests per day, their number reaches 1500 per month. Journalists, on average, accept 4 out of 10 comments sent. It is enough for an expert to log on to the platform a couple of times a week and respond to 2-3 requests in order to get mentions in 100+ publications within a year". Regarding the professions that journalists most often involve in cooperation, the following data is provided: "For the period from October 2020 to April 2021, journalists searched 2164 times for financiers who could comment on current market events registered on the service. They consulted top managers 1777 times. The opinion of doctors was interested in the media 1434 times.

In addition, the top 10 most media professions included lawyers (1370 requests), real estate specialists (1266 requests), retail (1004 requests), IT (1001 requests), marketers (938 requests), psychologists (811 requests) and political scientists (790 requests)."

The platform formulates its mission as follows: "to rid the market of ineffective PR communication by making the requests of editorial offices clear and open for companies. Protect journalists from PR spam and give them the opportunity to receive invoices and comments for their notes on request and on time."

The author of the study, having registered on the website, received a good result of the demand for comments from journalists (the results are 78 % responses for 6 months of 2021). As for using the platform directly as a training platform, it is possible in two ways: students perform "tasks" for the media in the "Freelance" tab, in which you can find tasks from writing a press release and editing articles for corporate publications or public publications to collecting information on topics of interest to users.

As for regional media, media education at the level of training of regional editorial offices increases their presence on the platform and opens up new opportunities for finding federal experts and creators of high-quality content by volunteers. After the seminar held in Veliky Novgorod, among the registered users were *Your News, Novgorod Portal, Steamship Online, Newsroom* and *TT Finance* (all represent the media of the region). At the moment, the portal is mainly used by federal media or media of cities with millions of people and their regional versions.

Thus, content crowdsourcing, carried out through a digital platform, is a new effective tool for experts, media and media education trainers.

## 5. Conclusion

The creation and support of independent media projects became possible in Russia through the active development of special digital platforms and are associated with an increase in the status of the audience in the media sphere. Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding is an actual media practice

of our time, actively involving an increasing number of digital natives. Digital platforms of this kind are an undoubted resource of media education both in terms of training for students and in the training of active journalists. Of course, the digital platforms studied by the authors are also not pure benefactors – they are intermediaries connecting the audience and the expert community with journalists, having their own financial interest. However, financial and textual activity of media addressees is a serious resource for supporting independent media and those aimed at a narrow target audience and its specific interests.

In this case, the media offers the audience that supports it some preferences and status names, not least related to the implementation of the civic mission of the press.

It is necessary to encourage the involvement of students in digital media platforms: whether it is their attempt to raise funds for their own startup or content participation in existing media, involvement in media projects as an investigation volunteer, a guide to a remote area for film crews, and so on.

The creation of high-quality content while minimizing costs due to the "wisdom of the crowd" and the potential of its civic activism are changing the system of relations in society that lie on the "power- audience-media" axis. The conviction of the authors of the article that media crowdfunding and media outsourcing are a prospect for civil activism in Russia is also confirmed by the crowdsourcing efforts of the authorities (in particular, the ASI initiatives).

A possible research perspective of the topic should include the study of the audience involved in financial and expert support of the media, as well as monitoring the social and economic effects of digital crowdsourcing and crowdfunding platforms in Russia.

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