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Tool Accurately Predicts Whether A Kickstarter Project Will Bomb

At about 76 percent accuracy, a new prediction model is the best yet. "Your chances of success are at 8 percent. Commence panic."

By [COLIN LECHER](#) OCTOBER 16, 2013

Well, here's something either very discouraging or very exciting for crowdfunding hopefuls: a Swiss team can predict, with about 76 percent accuracy and within only four hours of launch, whether a Kickstarter project will succeed.

The team, from the university École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, laid out a system in [a paper](#) presented at the Conference on Online Social Networks. By mining data on more than 16,000 Kickstarter campaigns and more than 1.3 million users, they created a prediction model based on the project's popularity on Twitter, the rate of cash it's getting, how many first-time backers it has, and the previous projects supporters have backed.

A previous, similar model built by Americans could predict a Kickstarter project's success with 68 percent accuracy--impressive, but the Swiss project has another advantage: it's dynamic. While the American model could only make a prediction before the project launched, the Swiss project monitors projects in real time. They've even built a tool, called [Sidekick](#), that monitors projects and displays their chances of success.

Other sites, like [Kicktrag](#), offer similar services, but the predictions aren't as accurate as the Swiss team claims theirs are. If you peruse Sidekick, you can see how confident the algorithm is in its pass/fail predictions: almost all of the projects are either above 90 percent or below 10 percent. Sort of scary, probably, if you're launching a project.

Although there's always a chance you could pull yourself out of the hole, it's like a genie asking if you want to know how you die: *Do you really want that information?*

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