



wetheeconomy

20 SHORT FILMS YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS

vulcan
PRODUCTIONS

IMPACT REPORT

AUGUST 2015

cinelan



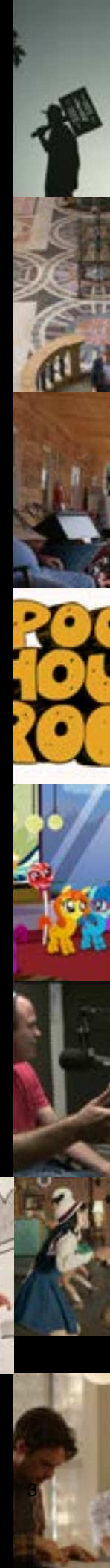
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WE THE ECONOMY IMPACT REPORT

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introduction

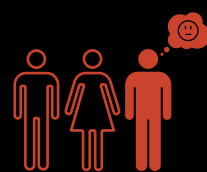
With lifetime giving totaling over \$2 billion, entrepreneur and philanthropist **Paul G. Allen** has spent his career tackling some of the world's hardest problems and pushing the boundaries of what's possible. In late 2014 — as the nation continued its recovery from the 2009 recession — Allen focused on addressing a new problem: the dearth of accessible information about our economy. As the following statistics reveal, the public lacks important information about the economy and its functioning. For example:



The average U.S. adult scores about 50% on personal finance questions related to U.S. federal income tax returns. ¹



Only about a quarter of Americans can name the chair of the US Federal Reserve Board and only about a third can correctly identify the current unemployment rate. ²



One in three adults believes that they make poor financial decisions as a result of his or her lack of financial literacy. ³

¹ Christian Science Monitor story based on NerdWallet Survey

² Pew Research Center Survey

³ Council for Economic Education



Vulcan Productions is dedicated to realizing the extraordinary power of stories to effect change. To address this lack of knowledge, Allen challenged his team at Vulcan Productions to use storytelling and media to explain our economy to a wide and broad audience. His directive was clear: make a complex and abstract

topic concrete and easily understandable. In sum, Vulcan Productions' mission was to provide information — in a totally fresh and appealing way — that would help people make more informed economic decisions in their daily lives and take better control of their economic future.

We set four specific goals:

- :01** To **demystify** the economy for the broadest possible audience by providing short-form content that would be accessible, entertaining and widely available where and how consumers want it.
- :02** To **inform** audiences with essential knowledge of the drivers of the economy so that as we enter any political cycle, people have a better understanding of the candidate's positions on economic issues.
- :03** To place recent economic events — including the recession and recovery — into **perspective**, while preparing people for the future.
- :04** To create distinct digital **toolkits** for consumers and educators to understand specific aspects of the economy.

:02

the project

As the Vulcan Productions team considered the creative direction for the economy project, it consistently thought of **Morgan Spurlock's** irreverent talent for bringing an ingenious everyman's perspective to some of the most important issues of our time. He and his team at Cinelan have an innovative approach to marketing and distribution that both captures the cultural zeitgeist of the moment, on a specific subject of interest, and moves the conversation about the topic forward. Consequently, we sought out a partnership with Cinelan.

During our meetings with Spurlock, we brainstormed about how we could turn the entire model of content delivery on its head and realize Allen's vision for a wide-reaching media initiative. We agreed that our collective mission required a new, possibly unpredictable approach and a counterintuitive format for presenting information about the economy. As we defined the *We the Economy* series, we agreed that application of an artistic approach to the content would be developed around a three-prong strategy:

:01 **Maximize our reach**, and, in the process, educate the greatest number of people possible through the project.

:02 **Create a trusted brand** that accurately conveys economic information.

:03 **Set the standard** for high quality, entertaining, and informative media about economics and public issues.

Filmmakers

We knew that we needed to take a creative and compelling approach to this topic so we invited award-winning film directors to bring their unique and creative vision to present the information.

The **filmmakers** who participated in the series:



Ramin Bahrani
99 Homes, Goodbye Solo



Bob Balaban
Gosford Park, The Exonerated



Joe Berlinger
Brother's Keeper, Paradise Lost trilogy



Jon M. Chu
Step Up, G.I. Joe: Retaliation



Marshall Curry
Street Fight, If a Tree Falls



Heidi Ewing & Rachel Grady
Jesus Camp, Detropia



Adrian Grenier
Entourage, How To Make Money Selling Drugs



Catherine Hardwicke
Twilight, Thirteen



Mary Harron
American Psycho, I Shot Andy Warhol



Chris Henchy
The Campaign, The Other Guys



Lee Hirsch
Bully, Amanda! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony



Albert Hughes
The Book of Eli, Menace II Society



Steve James
Hoop Dreams, Life Itself



Barbara Kopple
Harlan County USA, American Dream



Shola Lynch
Free Angela and All Political Prisoners, Chisholm '72



Adam McKay
Anchorman, Funny or Die



Jehane Noujaim
The Square, Control Room



James Schamus
Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, Brokeback Mountain



Morgan Spurlock
CNN's Morgan Spurlock: Inside Man, Super Size Me



Miao Wang
Beijing Taxi, Yellow Ox Mountain



Jessica Yu
Last Call at the Oasis, In the Realms of the Unreal

Economic Advisors

While creativity was prized, we also recognized in order for the series to be a trusted source of information, it was critical to bring non-partisan, editorially balanced content to the fore. We assembled a specialized team of top

economic experts to serve as advisors to the filmmakers. These experts included leading academics, analysts, journalists and historians, each a leader in his or her respective field.

The **economic advisors** who guided the series:



Dean Baker
co-founder, Center for Economic and Policy Research



Yoram Bauman
economist and author, The Cartoon Introduction to Economics



Jodi Beggs
educator and economics professor, Northeastern University



Adam Davidson
co-founder and co-host, NPR's "Planet Money"



John Steele Gordon
author, An Empire of Wealth



Greg Ip
chief economics editor, The Wall Street Journal, and author, The Little Book of Economics



Neil Irwin
senior economic correspondent, New York Times, and author, The Alchemists: Three Central Bankers and a World on Fire



Markus Koch
financial journalist, n-tv



Annalyn Kurtz
business and economics reporter



Diane Lim
VP, economic research, Committee for Economic Development



The Approach (The Films)

The economic advisors, working in partnership with Vulcan Productions, Cinelan, and the filmmakers, identified key questions about the economy that every U.S. citizen should be able to answer. They presented the questions to the filmmakers, who then addressed a single question in an original creative work, using his or her own independent voice and vision.

The **key topics** to address overarching themes:

- :01 What is the economy?
- :02 What is money?
- :03 What is the role of our government in the economy?
- :04 What is globalization?
- :05 What causes inequality?

:01

What is the Economy?

How did the economy get started?

title: **Cave-O-Nomics** *directed by:* **Morgan Spurlock**

How did the economy get started? Meet Ugg, Glugg and Tugg, three enterprising cavemen who accidentally invented trade, marketing and the base elements of the modern market economy.



Why is the law of supply and demand so powerful?

title: **Supply & Dance, Man!** *directed by:* **Jon M. Chu**

A whimsical tale of love, dance and the economic concept of supply and demand. Bored in class, Jonathan and Kristin are woken up by our friendly narrator, who helps guide them on an adventure in economics and... um... dance.



How do we measure the economy?

title: **GDP Smackdown** *directed by:* **Chris Henchy**

Two economists settle their differences- in the professional wrestling ring. Watch and cheer as Simon Kuznets and M. Joseph Meehan square off in a testosterone-fueled battle over how to measure the economy.



How does government regulate the economy?

title: **Lemonade War** *directed by:* **Ramin Bahrani**

In an idyllic suburban neighborhood, Jerry (Patton Oswalt) runs his big business lemonade stand and has the market cornered — until 10-year old Addie (Taylor Buck) opens her own stand across the street. Competition equals war, and both use - and abuse - a government regulator (Mo Collins) to try and win. In the end, one special customer (Werner Herzog) will decide their fate.



Are natural resources vital to the economy?

title: **A Bee's Invoice — The Hidden Value in Nature** *directed by:* **Adrian Grenier**

Why should nature be taken into account when looking at the economy as a whole? *A Bee's Invoice* uncovers and incorporates the hidden value of natural capital in the measurement of our economy.



:02

What is Money?



What is the real value of a dollar?

title: **That Film About Money** *directed by:* **James Schamus**

You think that a dollar bill is money and that banks are where your cash is stored and safeguarded. Well, you're wrong. Like, really wrong.



What is the Federal Reserve?

title: **Fed Head** *directed by:* **Catherine Hardwicke**

When Federal Reserve Chairman Rob Rafaelson awakens with amnesia only moments before a big press conference, his children, maid and intern must explain the Fed to him using the only thing handy: the children's toys.



What causes a recession?

title: **Recession** *directed by:* **Lee Hirsch**

Choreographed by the Pilobolus dance company and narrated by economic historian John Steele Gordon, Lee Hirsch's *Recession* mounts an entertaining and educational look at what causes an economic recession and how recovery is stimulated.



How does Wall Street influence the economy?

title: **The Street** *directed by:* **Joe Berlinger**

On the heels of the financial crisis, Wall Street for some has become synonymous with corruption and greed. Director Joe Berlinger takes us to the epicenter of the financial world — the New York Stock Exchange — to learn how Wall Street really influences the economy and impacts all of our lives.

:03

What is the role of our government in the economy?



Why is our tax system so complicated?

title: **Taxation Nation** *directed by:* **Jessica Yu**

Teachers have long relied on educational cartoons with catchy songs to simplify everything from grammar to government. Can a cartoon conquer a challenge like today's tax system, with its ever-changing 75,000 pages of laws? With retro flair, *Taxation Nation* looks into how our tax system does — and doesn't — work.



Why do we have budget deficits and a national debt?

title: **An Amazing Animated Film About the Debt and Deficit**
directed by: **Marshall Curry**

In this free-wheeling animated film, you'll see how Congress and public officials use and manage debt, and why it matters to you.



Where do our tax dollars go?

title: **Your Tax Dollars at Work** *directed by:* **Barbara Kopple**

We Americans spend a lot of time arguing over how our tax dollars are spent. But do we focus on the right things? Or have we been misdirected? Two-time Oscar-winning director Barbara Kopple focuses her lens on answers that many may find startling.



Why does the U.S. fund foreign aid?

title: **The Foreign Aid Paradox** *directed by:* **Rachel Grady and Heidi Ewing**

The United States spends approximately \$37 billion dollars a year on foreign aid — just under 1% of our federal budget. *The Foreign Aid Paradox* zeroes in on food aid to Haiti and how it affects American farming and shipping interests as well as Haiti's own agricultural markets. The result: a surprising study in unintended consequences.

:04

What is Globalization?



What is the global trade system?

title: Globalization...Who cares?...You Do directed by: **Bob Balaban**

What does it mean to have a globalized economy? And is it good for us? Bob Balaban wrangles seven experts to break it all down, as a troupe of comedic actors enlivens the commentary.



What happens when jobs disappear?

title: City on the Rise directed by: **Albert Hughes**

Detroit has been the poster child for the loss of well-paid manufacturing jobs, but this trend has an impact on communities all over the country. How does a great American city bounce back?



Is China's boom good for our economy?

title: Made by China in America directed by: **Miao Wang**

Made In China By America turns a cinematic lens on the interconnected narratives of everyday workers, leaders and business executives, and local community members in South Carolina, providing a nuanced perspective on China's economic boom, version 2.0, and its promising impact on the U.S. economy.



What do human rights have to do with the economy?

title: Supply Chain Reaction directed by: **Jehane Noujaim**

As consumers in a rapidly growing world economy, we have an insatiable appetite for the next greatest electronic gadget, like smartphones and TVs. But can we consume cheap imported products without exploiting someone in the supply chain?

:05

What Causes Inequality?



Is inequality growing?

title: The Unbelievably Sweet Alpacas! directed by: **Adam McKay**

In a magical land inhabited by long lashed, multi-colored alpacas who, love lollipops, rainbows and friendship, there's a yawning divide in wealth distribution...what's behind the inequality gap?



What are the causes of inequality?

title: Monkey Business directed by: **Shola Lynch**

In *Monkey Business*, filmmaker Shola Lynch chats with economists from across the political spectrum to help explain the causes of economic inequality, with help from a couple of mammalian friends.



Why is minimum wage important?

title: The Value of Work directed by: **Steve James**

In 2013, Seattle became ground zero for the heated national debate about increasing the minimum wage to \$15-an-hour. *The Value of Work* gives voice to the supporters and the opponents, including the mayor, an activist city councilwoman, small business owners, and minimum wage workers affected by the unprecedented legislation.



Why is healthcare so expensive?

title: This Won't Hurt A Bit! directed by: **Mary Harron**

This Won't Hurt a Bit! is a short film that tells the all-too-familiar tale of American healthcare. A patient enters a hospital with a migraine headache, unaware of the costs his visit will incur on the path to a diagnosis. He learns much more than he bargained for in this comedy on unaffordable care.

The Approach (Audience Engagement)

With the content strategy in place, the development and production of *We the Economy* accelerated, and the project was produced and launched within a four-month period in order to ensure that the films were available before the mid-term election season was underway.

Vulcan Productions also developed a digital toolkit as a companion piece to *We the Economy*. The toolkit provided pathways for viewers to actively engage and interact with the content. The toolkit was designed with the goal of augmenting the information in the films and promoting

a dynamic culture of inquiry, curiosity and constructive dialogue about the economy.

Finally, recognizing the value the films might have in formal educational settings, Vulcan Productions designed supplemental educational materials, including individual lesson plans based on Common Core Standards that were tied to each film, as well as a discussion guide for the overall series to be used in classrooms and for teacher professional development in schools across the U.S.



:03

maximize the reach

The first strategy was to maximize our informational reach and educate the greatest number of people about the economy as possible. We targeted the broadest possible audience for the high quality, accurate and easily understood films. We employed three different strategies to achieve this goal:

- :01** we assembled an exceptionally strong network of high-profile distribution partners,
- :02** we built a thoughtful and comprehensive website and social media presence; and,
- :03** we engaged the education sector and worked with partners in this field to promote the series.

Create a network of distribution partners

In order to reach the widest possible audience, the films were released day-and-date in October 2014 through a unique mix of theatrical, digital, broadcast and mobile platforms. Our goal was to saturate viewing platforms and make sure the films were freely and widely available.

When we began *We the Economy*, we set a goal of establishing **14 distribution partnerships**. Because there is such intense interest in the series, we dramatically exceeded our initial goal and continue to forge distribution relationships with more than **70 entities** to date.

These outlets were selected to ensure the broadest demographic reach across media including: movie theaters, television, mobile devices and digital. Distribution partners include some of the most highly respected and prominent names in digital media. Among them: CBS News, CNBC, Hulu and Netflix. We also created *We the Economy* channels on Youtube and Vimeo to ensure exposure among younger digital video viewers. Along with these two channels, our top performing platforms were CNN Money, iTunes, Yahoo and the *We the Economy* website.



Our approach turned the traditional distribution model on its head by eliminating pay walls and the typical model for a windowed release. We made the films simultaneously available to every American. This no-cost, universal day-and-date launch of the series was unprecedented in its volume of partners,

audience reach and instant availability. In fact, it garnered significant industry press attention focusing on the unique distribution model. And while the series' first launched in North America, it continues to expand with new distribution partnerships in China, the Middle East, and Latin and South America.

ON-DEMAND PARTNERS INCLUDE:



Additional On-Demand Partners: Ora.TV, The Scene (CondeNast), and Vutopia

CABLE AND TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION
PARTNERS INCLUDE:



MOBILE DISTRIBUTION INCLUDES:



WE THE ECONOMY Android and iPhone custom apps and MobiTV powered live TV and video products across U.S. tier 1 carrier partners.

To support our distribution model, we leveraged paid advertising to drive viewership and launched a robust press tour that leveraged star talent. A theatrical tour in the 20 top markets the day before the series launch — including a one-day theatrical release deal with Landmark Theatres in 20 major cities across the country — helped raise further awareness of the series.

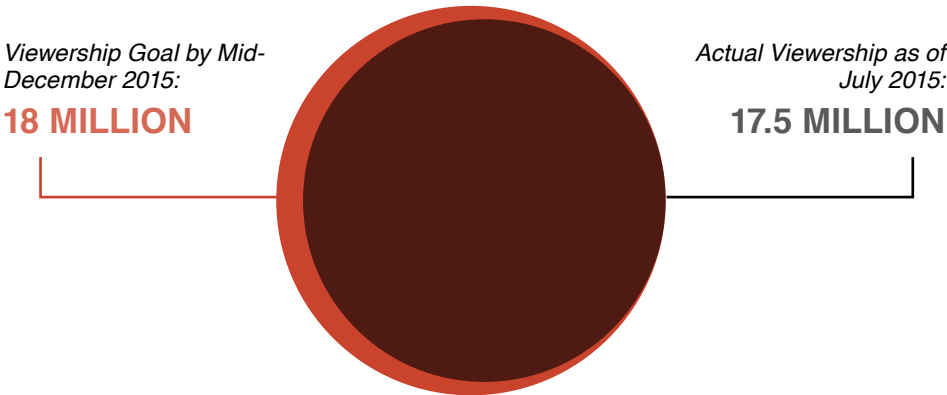
Our distribution strategy proved successful. We showed that you can bring instant attention to economic issues through the right mix of partnerships and easy accessibility. We also exceeded our total viewership goal for the series through June 2015 and are on track to achieve our goal of 18 million viewers by mid-December 2015.



TOP FIVE PERFORMING PLATFORMS *As of July 2015*

Vimeo	4.3M
We The Economy Site	2.5M
YouTube.com/WTE	1.6M
CNN Money	1.1M
iTunes	496K

PROJECTED VS. ACTUAL VIEWERSHIP



TOP FIVE VIEWED FILMS *As of July 2015*

The Unbelievably Sweet Alpacas!	1M
Cave-o-nomics	870K
The Value of Work	714K
Your Tax Dollars at Work	705K
Lemonade War	726K

Create a Thoughtful Website and Social Media Presence

Prior to launching the series, the *We the Economy* team completed a landscape analysis to understand where and when economic conversations were happening in the digital space, what real-world events were driving them, and who was having these conversations. Our analysis exposed demographic details and related interest groups who were potential audiences for the series. We used this information to expand the series’ reach beyond economic news followers.

With the landscape analysis in mind, we built a content-rich website that was the permanent destination for viewing the films and where our viewers could access additional topical and film-related content. Native apps were created to complement the website.

WEBSITE DETAILS

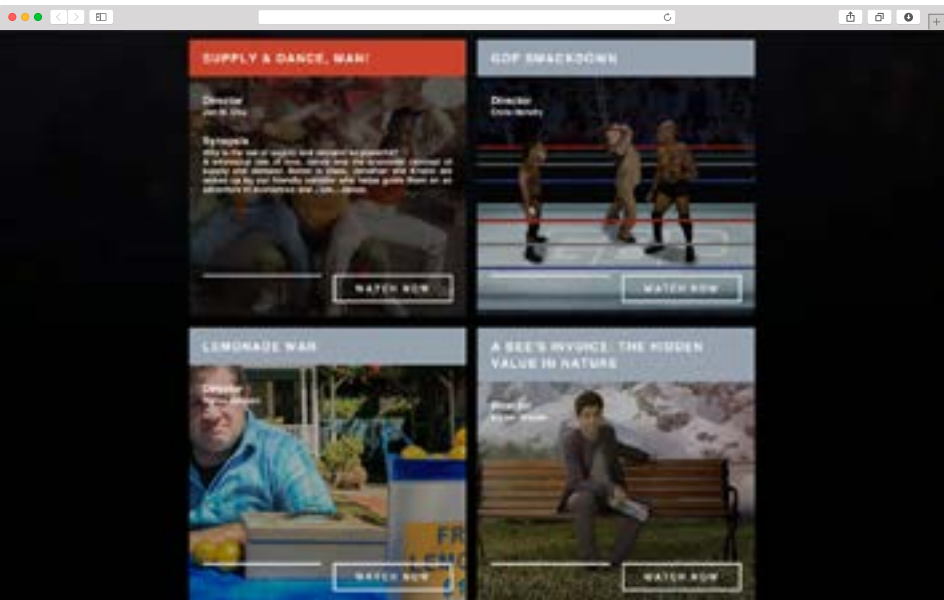
The website and apps provide ancillary content, including: quizzes, sharable factoids, infographics and curated content from the most trusted economic sources. Altogether, these features create a digestible toolkit for more deeply

Through hashtags gleaned from the landscape analysis, our digital properties automatically filter and surface real time social conversations to ensure the films are continuously presented in fresh and relevant ways. In short, the site is flexible and allows us to promote different films and ancillary content in our most prominent areas depending on the news of the day or relevant, topical discussions around the *We the Economy* series. This, in turn, provides returning users with a new experience on each visit and surfaces content they may not have seen before.

The website metrics listed in the table below underscore the breadth and reach of our online presence.

understanding the key economic topics underlying the films. And, for those who are interested in the filmmakers and actors, there is a treasure trove of behind-the-scenes content available to explore.

website screenshots



WEBSITE ANALYTICS *As of July 2015*

Total sessions	1.5M
Total unique visitors	620K
Total page views	4.7M
Total film views	2.5M
New visitors	40%
Return visitors	60%
Average session duration	7:31

Social Media Approach

Along with building a website, we fully leveraged social media to broadly promote the series, synergize posts, and amplify the films through relevant current affairs and social conversations. Audience feedback, as well as external research, suggests that the series is relevant, informative and educational, that viewers learn more about the US economy after watching the films, and that the videos are effective in communicating about economics.

Like the website, the *We the Economy* team also focused on developing a robust and engaging social media presence. We experienced the highest levels of social media engagement from October 2014 to December 2014 with engagement slowing in January 2015, following the end of paid ads and appearances by celebrities associated with the films. Altogether, the series had nearly **9,500 Facebook and Twitter followers**. Key social media metrics are listed in the table below.

FACEBOOK As of July 2015

Total reach (via ads)	5.6M
Total film views	340K
Followers	7K
Gender split	62% men / 38% women

TWITTER As of July 2015


Followers	2.5K
Mentions	2K
Retweets	1.8K
Gender split	61% men / 39% women

Impact Panel by Participant

Early in the project, we engaged Participant and Nielsen Research to conduct focus groups with 229 randomly selected viewers — across all age groups — and to test our assumption that the films were informative and could demystify key economic concepts. The

researchers who conducted this impact panel determined that the films clearly achieve this goal. The researchers found that audiences perceive the films as “relevant, educational and factual” and that they are “interested in becoming more educated” around economic

issues after watching them. Younger audiences, those between 18 and 34, are especially likely to share the films with friends. And, perhaps most interestingly, this group of viewers is “also likely to prioritize economic issues when voting after watching these videos.”



Promote the Series and Supplemental Educational Materials

In conjunction with the development and launch of the series, we also created educational support materials to help teachers use the films in their teaching. Vulcan Productions then undertook a small-scale promotional effort to promote the films and materials among educators

by establishing partnerships with nine different organizations that are leaders in education, economics or children’s media. Like our general distribution partners, we focused on securing relationships with high-profile and trusted educational leaders.

Student Testimonial

“Hello, My name is Nicholas. I am currently a junior in high school...[and] I would like to extend my gratitude to every individual involved in this project. As a student in seven other classes, learning economics in my spare time didn't seem like a plausible scenario, but then I came across your video series... [T]he WTE series is educational and entertaining. We are young adults, and the videos are not too simple but also not too sophisticated. They are a tool that I will be advising the economics teachers at my school to use to supplement their teaching...”

—Unsolicited email to Vulcan Productions, April 2015

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS



These nine partners made a significant investment in promoting *We the Economy*. Collectively, they worked to bring the films to the attention of over 126,000 Facebook and nearly 57,000 Twitter followers. Prestigious organizations such as the American Economic Association endorsed the films as a useful resource and the National Association for Media Literacy honored them through its annual Media Literacy awards. These promotional efforts no doubt enhanced *We the Economy*'s credibility as a teaching tool and helped boost the reputation of the series and its accompanying curriculum among educators.

NUMBER OF FILMS USED BY EDUCATORS *As of July 2015*

1 to 2 films	25%
3 to 5 films	37%
6 to 10 films	23%
More than 10 films	15%

Although our promotion of the educational materials was relatively modest, there were still more than 1,200 downloads of the discussion guides and lesson plans. Similarly, our evaluation reveals that no film was used by less than 10% of respondents,

To help inform our work, we completed an external evaluation of the *We the Economy* educational materials and we found that they are valuable and useful to educators, primarily with 12th grade and college teachers. Our evaluation also clearly suggests that teachers are making substantial use of the films. In fact, as the table that follows shows, the large majority of teachers we surveyed used at least three films in their courses.

which suggests that all of the films have at least some appeal to educators and are relevant to their content needs. The table below identifies the five most frequently used films by educators.

MOST FREQUENTLY USED FILMS BY EDUCATORS *As of July 2015*

Morgan Spurlock's Cave-o-nomics	59%
James Schamus's That Film About Money	55%
Ramin Bahrani's Lemonade War	45%
The Second Part of That Film About Money	55%
Chris Henchey's GDP Smackdown	40%



04

creating a trusted brand

Our second strategy was to build name recognition and broad awareness of the films as a trusted source of information by engaging top economic advisors and “A-list” filmmakers. *We the Economy* achieved intense proliferation and exposure through media engagement, extensive digital distribution and viral sharing. The total media impressions for the series, as of January 2015, are estimated at over 1 billion. These impressions were generated from approximately 287 strategic media placements.

From the commencement of media engagement in May 2014 through the culmination of phase one of the series at the end of that year, exposure and impact revolved around six key announcements. Each announcement introduced news and information, which was utilized to progressively amplify media exposure for the series. Media engagement crossed print, online, radio and television and the editorial categories of entertainment, general news and current affairs.

In addition to the six news announcements on *We the Economy*, general launch media coverage on the series was generated from October 2014 to January 2015. Approximately 175 additional media placements generated 823,123,878 total impressions in this category.

The series received significant exposure in high-profile news media that aligned with our focus on creating a trusted and credible brand. The series was featured in a large number of news outlets, including: Time Magazine, Business Week, Variety, New York Times, Washington Post, On the Money and Fox News Radio. Directors and other members of the team were featured in television and radio interviews on: Morning Joe (MSNBC), Now With Alex Wagner (MSNBC), Good Day New York (WNYW — Fox) Al Jazeera America, Marketplace Radio (American Public Media), Fox News Radio, CNBC Closing Bell, national FOX and NBC affiliates.

The media campaign was particularly successful in leveraging celebrity talent associated with the series. This was achieved by organizing media junkets in New York and Los Angeles, which were well attended by both talent and media. This strategy of leveraging the physical presence of highly sought after celebrity participants was particularly effective in gaining television coverage.

Also of note, is the prominence of the short film “The Unbelievably Sweet Alpacas!,”

by director Adam McKay, and featuring the voices of three of the most currently popular comedy entertainers: Amy Poehler, Maya Rudolph and Sarah Silverman. The film went viral, trended in social media, and generated more media hits than any other individual film. The film’s popularity was due to its parody of the “My Little Pony” series. The film’s quality, star power, and focus on income inequality all struck a popular chord and helped it reach a very wide audience.



05

setting the standard

Vulcan Productions' third strategy was to create a film series that would help set the standard for effectively communicating economics information in an understandable and entertaining way. The series has been consistently honored by the media industry as delivering on this goal. The long list of awards *We the Economy* has received lends the series credibility and has helped provide it with even greater audience exposure. It also proved that complex information could be communicated in an entertaining, high-quality and popular short film format. Among the honors received in 2015 are:

- **Webby Award:** Winner for Online Video: News & Politics (Series); Official Honoree for The Unbelievably Sweet Alpacas! in Online Video (Animation); Official Honoree for *We the Economy* series in Websites (Best User Experience)
- **New York Festivals World's Best TV & Films:** Gold for Television (Online / Online Educational Program) and Silver for Film and Video (Film Productions / Short Films)
- **National Association for Media Literacy Award:** Award winner
- **Shorty Award:** Winner for Best Mobile App
- **Telly Award:** Silver Award for Online Video (Education), Bronze Award for Online Video (Information); Bronze Award for Online Video (Social Responsibility)
- **Cynopsis Media Social Good Award:** Winner for Integrated Campaign for a TV Series or Special Programming
- **Remi Award:** WorldFest Houston: Gold for Web Series (3 or more episodes)
- **CINE Golden Eagle Awards for Professional Media:** Winner for Nonfiction Content, Series or Mini-Series (Episodes of 30 minutes or less)
- **BANFF Rockie Awards:** Winner for Best in Digital Unscripted Series



06

key learnings

As Vulcan Productions considers its future direction and potential topics for media treatment, we reflect on the lessons learned during *We the Economy*:

Successes: *We the Economy* has garnered numerous awards, media recognition and a high volume of viewership on nearly 70 unique distribution platforms. This success was driven by leveraging celebrity talent to achieve a high degree of media penetration, especially for an unusual and challenging topic. In addition, the broad distribution coupled with a no-cost-to-consumer model made the series widely available to the general public. As a result, *We The Economy* greatly exceeded our goal of reaching 10 million views by June 2015. **Total views to date are 17.5M.** Our 2015 year-end goal is to reach 18 million views.

The series received 12 awards to date and several honorable mentions, in competition with other prestigious media organizations like Mother Jones, VICE News and Reuters TV. The educational programs have been widely promoted in the nation's leading economic and educational resource platforms and received positive feedback from both students and teachers. Given the public's general apprehension to engage with economic topics, this series proved

successful in its attempt to break the ice, and to break through misconceptions, opening the doors to casual conversations and a wide mass media discourse around a subject normally seen as complex and uninviting.

Opportunities for Improvement: While we were successful in executing a robust ramp up and series launch, which saw significant media attention, we also experienced a drop in viewership three months after the series' debut. While this is typical for entertainment properties in the post-launch window, we observed that this was likely caused by a decline in investment in earned media outreach and paid media advertising as we moved away from the launch date. With future projects, we learned that we need to implement sustained press, social media and paid advertising strategy that maintains the media momentum into post-launch phases of distribution with a focus on long-term audience building. Such a strategy should encompass the following:

- Satellite pitching strategies around individual films
- Long-term planning for key articles and media exclusives to publish after launch in a staggered and sustained manner.
- Banking of key assets, such as celebrity interviews, or an entire film, to enhance post-launch exposure

- Providing a longer lead time before launch to build audience anticipation through earned editorial media, partner promotion, social media and advertising
- Diversifying the content to include additional elements, such as (podcast, blogs) photo sharing forums, etc.
- Timing any educational efforts to closely align with the series launch in order to leverage momentum and reach the largest educational markets. The accelerated timing on the roll-out of the series posed challenges in allowing enough time to properly implement our educational activities within schools and among educators.

Additionally, upon review of the media coverage, while a generous amount of earned media was generated in general news and entertainment editorial categories, we see that there was an opportunity for increased engagement with business and economic media. We believe that a strategy inclusive of more direct contact and pitching to economics reporters, expert economic content within press releases, and story angles related to breaking economic news, could have been more rigorously deployed.



:07

background

About Vulcan Productions

Founded by philanthropist, entrepreneur and Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen and his sister, Jody Allen, Vulcan Productions produces compelling feature films, television series, specials, digital content and outreach initiatives designed to inspire people to take action on the critical issues of our time. Vulcan Productions is committed to supporting projects of significance that ignite progress and motivate audiences to generate measurable impact on the world. As part of a comprehensive relief campaign to stop the spread of Ebola, Vulcan Productions produced the #ISurvivedEbola campaign and co-produced *Body Team 12*, about Liberian Red Cross workers fighting Ebola on the ground, which won the award for Best Documentary Short at the 2105 Tribeca Film Festival. Vulcan Productions is a co-producer of *Unseen Enemy*, a feature documentary that explores the global impact of pandemics.

The new documentary *Racing Extinction*, premiered to great acclaim at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Vulcan Productions is currently producing an innovative outreach campaign for *Racing Extinction* that drives awareness and action around the core issues in the film, including carbon emissions, ocean health and mass species extinction. The company also produced *We The Economy*, which is the winner of numerous awards including the Webby Award, the Shorty Award and the Cynopsis Social Good Award. Vulcan Productions' projects have won numerous awards, including the George Foster Peabody Award, the Emmy Award, the Grammy Award, Wildscreen Panda Award and the Sheffield Doc/Fest Green Award. Acclaimed films and series from the Vulcan Productions group include *Pandora's Promise*, *Girl Rising*, *Success at the Core*, *Hard Candy* and *The Blues*.

About Cinelan

Cinelan produces and distributes award-winning film programs that influence audiences by fulfilling the fundamental human desire to experience a good story. Cinelan recently completed FOCUS FORWARD - Short Films, Big Ideas, an award-winning series of thirty 3-minute films that reached audiences around the

globe with over 140 screening events across all seven continents and over 75 million film-views from 150+ countries online. Founding partners are Morgan Spurlock, Damon Smith, David Laks, Douglas Dicconson, Jack Myers and Karol Martesko-Fenster.



1

day-and-date

20

city theatrical tour

70+

distribution partners

17.5M+

total views as of July 2015

12K+

education downloads

28M+

social media reach

622K+

unique website visitors

4.7M+

unique website page views

1B

media impressions

12+

awards and prizes



wethe**economy**

20 SHORT FILMS YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS