It's important to recognize that the biggest impact of technology on creative endeavors is that creators can now foot the costs of creation and distribution themselves. People now often have a direct route to their potential public without necessarily needing intermediaries like record labels and book publishers. Doctorow wrote, "If you're a creator who never got the time of day from one of the great imperial powers, this is your time. Where once you had no means of reaching an audience without the assistance of the industry-dominating megacompanies, now you have *hundreds* of ways to do it without them."[5] Previously, distribution of creative work involved the costs associated with sustaining a monolithic entity, now creators can do the work themselves. That means the financial needs of creative endeavors can be a lot more modest.

Whether for an individual creator or a larger endeavor, it usually isn't enough to break even if you want to make what you're doing a livelihood. You need to build in some support for the general operation. This extra bit looks different for everyone, but importantly, in nearly all cases for those **Made with Creative Commons**, the definition of "enough money" looks a lot different than it does in the world of venture capital and stock options. It is more about sustainability and less about unlimited growth and profit. SparkFun founder Nathan Seidle told us, "*Business model* is a really grandiose word for it. It is really just about keeping the operation going day to day."

---

This book is a testament to the notion that it is possible to make money while using CC licenses and CC-licensed content, but we are still very much at an experimental stage. The creators, organizations, and businesses we profile in this book are blazing the trail and adapting in real time as they pursue this new way of operating.

There are, however, plenty of ways in which CC licensing can be good for business in fairly predictable ways. The first is how it helps solve "problem zero."

## Problem Zero: Getting Discovered

Once you create or collect your content, the next step is finding users, customers, fans—in other words, your people. As Amanda Palmer wrote, "It has to start with the art. The songs had to touch people initially, and mean something, for anything to work at all."[6] There isn't any magic to finding your people, and there is certainly no formula. Your work has to connect with people and offer them some artistic and/or utilitarian value. In some ways, this is easier than ever. Online we are not limited by shelf space, so there is room for every obscure interest, taste, and need imaginable. This is what Chris Anderson dubbed the Long Tail, where consumption becomes less about mainstream mass "hits" and more about micromarkets for every particular niche. As Anderson wrote, "We are all different, with different wants and needs, and the Internet now has a place for all of them in the way that physical markets did not."[7] We are no longer limited to what appeals to the masses.

While finding "your people" online is theoretically easier than in the analog world, as a practical matter it can still be difficult to actually get noticed. The Internet is a firehose of content, one that only grows larger by the minute. As a content creator, not only are you competing for attention against more content creators than ever before, you are competing against creativity generated *outside* the market as well.[8] Anderson wrote, "The greatest change of the past decade has been the shift in time people spend consuming amateur content instead of professional content."[9] To top it all off, you have to compete against the rest of their lives, too—"friends, family, music playlists, soccer games, and nights on the town."[10] Somehow, some way, you have to get noticed by the right people.

When you come to the Internet armed with an all-rights-reserved mentality from the start, you are often restricting access to your work before there is even any demand for it. In