

## TON BELIEVES IF YOU DON'T MAKE CONTENT USING YOUR TOOLS, THEN YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING.

funding campaigns, Francesco told us the Blender Institute has found some limitations in the standard crowdfunding model where you propose a specific project and ask for funding. "Once a project is over, everyone goes home," he said. "It is great fun, but then it ends. That is a problem."

To make their work more sustainable, they needed a way to receive ongoing support rather than on a project-by-project basis. Their solution is Blender Cloud, a subscription-style crowdfunding model akin to the online crowdfunding platform, Patreon. For about ten euros each month, subscribers get access to download everything the Blender Institute produces—software, art, training, and more. All of the assets are available under an Attribution license (CC BY) or placed in the public domain (CC0), but they are initially made available only to subscribers. Blender Cloud enables subscribers to follow Blender's movie projects as they develop, sharing detailed information and content used in the creative process. Blender Cloud also has extensive training materials and libraries of characters and other assets used in various projects.

The continuous financial support provided by Blender Cloud subsidizes five to six full-time employees at the Blender Institute. Francesco says their goal is to grow their subscriber base. "This is our freedom," he told us, "and for artists, freedom is everything."

Blender Cloud is the primary revenue stream of the Blender Institute. The Blender Foundation is funded primarily by donations, and that money goes toward software development and maintenance. The revenue streams of the Institute and Foundation are deliberately kept separate. Blender also has other reve-

nue streams, such as the Blender Store, where people can purchase DVDs, T-shirts, and other Blender products.

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Ton has worked on projects relating to his Blender software for nearly twenty years. Throughout most of that time, he has been committed to making the software and the content produced with the software free and open. Selling a license has never been part of the business model.

Since 2006, he has been making films available along with all of their source material. He says he has hardly ever seen people stepping into Blender's shoes and trying to make money off of their content. Ton believes this is because the true value of what they do is in the creative and production process. "Even when you share everything, all your original sources, it still takes a lot of talent, skills, time, and budget to reproduce what you did," Ton said.

For Ton and Blender, it all comes back to *doing*.