

contexts and that they couldn't possibly know all of them in advance, so they built an API with a lot of flexibility. Knowing that most API applications would want to use the icons without giving attribution, the API was built with the aim of charging for its use. You can use what's called the "Playground API" for free to test how it integrates with your application, but full implementation will require you to purchase the API Pro version.

The Noun Project shares revenue with its international designers. For one-off purchases, the revenue is split 70 percent to the designer and 30 percent to Noun Project.

THE NOUN PROJECT'S SUCCESS LIES IN CREATING SERVICES AND CONTENT THAT ARE A STRATEGIC MIX OF FREE AND PAID WHILE STAYING TRUE TO THEIR MISSION—CREATING, SHARING, AND CELEBRATING THE WORLD'S VISUAL LANGUAGE.

The revenue from premium purchases (the subscription and API options) is split a little differently. At the end of each month, the total revenue from subscriptions is divided by Noun Project's total number of downloads, resulting in a rate per download—for example, it could be \$0.13 per download for that month. For each download, the revenue is split 40 percent to the designer and 60 percent to the Noun Project. (For API usage, it's per use instead of per download.) Noun Project's share is higher

this time as it's providing more service to the user.

The Noun Project tries to be completely transparent about their royalty structure.² They tend to over communicate with creators about it because building trust is the top priority.

For most creators, contributing to the Noun Project is not a full-time job but something they do on the side. Edward categorizes monthly earnings for creators into three broad categories: enough money to buy beer; enough to pay the bills; and most successful of all, enough to pay the rent.

Recently the Noun Project launched a new app called Lingo. Designers can use Lingo to organize not just their Noun Project icons and symbols but also their photos, illustrations, UX designs, et cetera. You simply drag any visual item directly into Lingo to save it. Lingo also works for teams so people can share visuals with each other and search across their combined collections. Lingo is free for personal use. A pro version for \$9.99 per month lets you add guests. A team version for \$49.95 per month allows up to twenty-five team members to collaborate, and to view, use, edit, and add new assets to each other's collections. And if you subscribe to NounPro, you can access Noun Project from within Lingo.

The Noun Project gives a ton of value away for free. A very large percentage of their roughly one million members have a free account, but there are still lots of paid accounts coming from digital designers, advertising and design agencies, educators, and others who need to communicate ideas visually.

For Edward, "creating, sharing, and celebrating the world's visual language" is the most important aspect of what they do; it's their stated mission. It differentiates them from others who offer graphics, icons, or clip art.