

IN THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL BUSINESS, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO PEOPLE AND PROCESS, RATHER THAN CONTENT OR SPECIFIC FORMATS OR MATERIALS.

and clients. “Each student or client is paying for a specific solution to his or her problems and questions,” Mariana said. Rather than sell access to their content, they provide it for free and charge for the personalized services.

When they started, they offered a smaller number of courses designed to attract large audiences. “Over the years, we realized that online communities are more specific than we thought,” Mariana said. Ártica now provides more options for classes and has lower enrollment in each course. This means they can provide more attention to individual students and offer classes on more specialized topics.

Online courses are their biggest revenue stream, but they also do more than a dozen consulting projects each year, ranging from digitization to event planning to marketing campaigns. Some are significant in scope, particularly when they work with cultural institutions, and some are smaller projects commissioned by individual artists.

Ártica also seeks out public and private funding for specific projects. Sometimes, even if they are unsuccessful in subsidizing a project like a new course or e-book, they will go ahead because they believe in it. They take the stance that every new project leads them to something new, every new resource they create opens new doors.

Ártica relies heavily on their free Creative Commons–licensed content to attract new

students and clients. Everything they create—online education, blog posts, videos—is published under an Attribution-ShareAlike license (CC BY-SA). “We use a ShareAlike license because we want to give the greatest freedom to our students and readers, and we also want that freedom to be viral,” Jorge said. For them, giving others the right to reuse and remix their content is a fundamental value. “How can you offer an online educational service without giving permission to download, make and keep copies, or print the educational resources?” Jorge said. “If we want to do the best for our students—those who trust in us to the point that they are willing to pay online without face-to-face contact—we have to offer them a fair and ethical agreement.”

They also believe sharing their ideas and expertise openly helps them build their reputation and visibility. People often share and cite their work. A few years ago, a publisher even picked up one of their e-books and distributed printed copies. Ártica views reuse of their work as a way to open up new opportunities for their business.

This belief that openness creates new opportunities reflects another belief—in serendipity. When describing their process for creating content, they spoke of all of the spontaneous and organic ways they find inspiration. “Sometimes, the collaborative process starts with a conversation between us, or with friends from other projects,” Jorge said. “That can be the first step for a new blog post or another simple piece of content, which can evolve to a more complex product in the future, like a course or a book.”

Rather than planning their work in advance, they let their creative process be dynamic. “This doesn’t mean that we don’t need to work hard in order to get good professional results, but the design process is more flexible,” Jorge said. They share early and often, and they adjust based on what they learn, always exploring and testing new ideas and ways of operating. In many ways, for them, the process is just as important as the final product.