

He fell into this role by, naturally, seizing a random opportunity a friend alerted him to seven years ago—an event called Fun-A-Day, where people are supposed to create a piece of art every day for thirty-one days straight. He was in need of a new project, so he decided to give it a try by writing and posting a song each day. He added a video component to the songs because he knew people were more likely to watch video online than simply listening to audio files.

He had a really good time doing the thirty-one-day challenge, so he decided to see if he could continue it for one year. He never stopped. He has written and posted a new song literally every day, seven days a week, since he began the project in 2009. When he isn't writing songs that he is hired to write by clients, he writes songs about whatever is on his mind that day. His songs are catchy and mostly lighthearted, but they often contain at least an undercurrent of a deeper theme or meaning. Occasionally, they are extremely personal, like the song he cowrote with his exgirlfriend announcing their breakup. Rain or shine, in sickness or health, Jonathan posts and writes a song every day. If he is on a flight or otherwise incapable of getting Internet access in time to meet the deadline, he will prepare ahead and have someone else post the song for him.

Over time, the song-a-day gig became the basis of his livelihood. In the beginning, he made money one of two ways. The first was by entering a wide variety of contests and winning a handful. The second was by having the occasional song and video go some varying degree of viral, which would bring more eyeballs and mean that there were more people wanting him to write songs for them. Today he earns most of his money this way.

His website explains his gig as “taking any message, from the super simple to the totally complicated, and conveying that message through a heartfelt, fun and quirky song.” He charges \$500 to create a produced song and \$300 for an acoustic song. He has been hired for product launches, weddings, conferences,

and even Kickstarter campaigns like the one that funded the production of this book.

Jonathan can't recall when exactly he first learned about Creative Commons, but he began applying CC licenses to his songs and videos as soon as he discovered the option. “CC seems like such a no-brainer,” Jonathan said. “I don't understand how anything else would make sense. It seems like such an obvious thing that you would want your work to be able to be shared.”

His songs are essentially marketing for his services, so obviously the further his songs spread, the better. Using CC licenses helps grease the wheels, letting people know that Jonathan allows and encourages them to copy, interact with, and remix his music. “If you let someone cover your song or remix it or use parts of it, that's how music is supposed to work,” Jonathan said. “That is how music has worked since the beginning of time. Our meme, mine-mine culture has undermined that.”

There are some people who cover his songs fairly regularly, and he would never shut that down. But he acknowledges there is a lot more he could do to build community. “There is all of this conventional wisdom about how to build an audience online, and I generally think I don't do any of that,” Jonathan said.

He does have a fan community he cultivates on Bandcamp, but it isn't his major focus. “I do have a core audience that has stuck around for a really long time, some even longer than I've been doing song-a-day,” he said. “There is also a transitional aspect that drop in and get what they need and then move on.” Focusing less on community building than other artists makes sense given Jonathan's primary income source of writing custom songs for clients.

Jonathan recognizes what comes naturally to him and leverages those skills. Through the practice of daily songwriting, he realized he has a gift for distilling complicated subjects into simple concepts and putting them to music. In his song “How to Choose a Master Password,”