

market transaction. It leaves open the possibility of connection.

Being **Made with Creative Commons** not only demonstrates values connected to CC and sharing. It also demonstrates that something other than profit drives what you do. In our interviews, we always asked what success looked like for them. It was stunning how rarely money was mentioned. Most have a deeper purpose and a different vision of success.

The driving motivation varies depending on the type of endeavor. For individual creators, it is most often about personal inspiration. In some ways, this is nothing new. As Doctorow has written, “Creators usually start doing what they do for love.”² But when you share your creative work under a CC license, that dynamic is even more pronounced. Similarly, for technological innovators, it is often less about creating a specific new thing that will make you rich and more about solving a specific problem you have. The creators of Arduino told us that the key question when creating something is “Do you as the creator want to use it? It has to have personal use and meaning.”

Many that are **Made with Creative Commons** have an express social mission that underpins everything they do. In many cases, sharing with Creative Commons expressly advances that social mission, and using the licenses can be the difference between legitimacy and hypocrisy. Noun Project co-founder Edward Boatman told us they could not have stated their social mission of sharing with a straight face if they weren’t willing to show the world that it was OK to share their content using a Creative Commons license.

This dynamic is probably one reason why there are so many nonprofit examples of being **Made with Creative Commons**. The content is the result of a labor of love or a tool to drive social change, and money is like gas in the car, something that you need to keep going but not an end in itself. Being **Made with Creative Commons** is a different vision of a business or livelihood, where profit is not paramount, and producing social good and human connection are integral to success.

Even if profit isn’t the end goal, you have to bring in money to be successfully **Made with Creative Commons**. At a bare minimum, you have to make enough money to keep the lights on.

The costs of doing business vary widely for those made with CC, but there is generally a much lower threshold for sustainability than there used to be for any creative endeavor. Digital technology has made it easier than ever to create, and easier than ever to distribute. As Doctorow put it in his book *Information Doesn’t Want to Be Free*, “If analog dollars have turned into digital dimes (as the critics of ad-supported media have it), there is the fact that it’s possible to run a business that gets the same amount of advertising as its forebears at a fraction of the price.”

Some creation costs are the same as they always were. It takes the same amount of time and money to write a peer-reviewed journal article or paint a painting. Technology can’t change that. But other costs are dramatically reduced by technology, particularly in production-heavy domains like filmmaking.³ CC-licensed content and content in the public domain, as well as the work of volunteer collaborators, can also dramatically reduce costs if they’re being used as resources to create something new. And, of course, there is the reality that some content would be created whether or not the creator is paid because it is a labor of love.

Distributing content is almost universally cheaper than ever. Once content is created, the costs to distribute copies digitally are essentially zero.⁴ The costs to distribute physical copies are still significant, but lower than they have been historically. And it is now much easier to print and distribute physical copies on-demand, which also reduces costs. Depending on the endeavor, there can be a whole host of other possible expenses like marketing and promotion, and even expenses associated with the various ways money is being made, like touring or custom training.