

Joyfullibrium
a seekjoy community initiative



A Brief *Intro*

The overall **mission** of the SEEKJOY project is to catalyze the work of independent artists, activists, social entrepreneurs and small-scale non-profits working towards social and environmental justice.

A catalyst, by its scientific definition, is “a substance, usually used in small amounts relative to the reactants, that modifies and increases the rate of a reaction without being consumed in the process.”

In other words... SEEKJOY, through its community initiatives, is endeavoring to modify the rate of change towards a more sustainable, socially and environmentally just world.

Art, in all of its various forms, is something we believe to be a key component in this “reaction.”



The *backstory*...

Over the years, SEEKJOY has **evolved**.

In the early days back in 2010, SeekJoy Productions LLC was incorporated to manage expenses while its founder, Eoin M. Small, was in production of a snowboard film called “Rookie Status” featuring a variety of passionate local Minnesota snowboard-riders.

This project led to other projects, and Eoin soon began producing a variety of media content for a plethora of local small business, non-profits and artists in and around the Twin Cities from promotional videos to documentaries, websites, snowboard competitions, eCommerce stores, brochures, business cards, t-shirts ... If it involved the use of the Adobe Creative Suite, Eoin and/or SEEKJOY has probably tackled something like it for somebody somewhere.

The main interest of Eoin, and therefore SEEKJOY, was to support artists, non-profits and small businesses because he found those involved in this category the most passionate & dedicated to their work. That said, this is also a “market” which typically has a budget of zero dollars and it became an on-going battle to try and do good work for good humans while keeping the lights on. This path led the SEEKJOY project down an unsustainable road, eventually leaving it in a state of “hiatus” for several years in 2014/2015.

The first call back to action came when SEEKJOY launched the “No Dakota Access Pipeline SEEKJOY Standing Rock Initiative” (#NoDAPLSSRI) which brought SEEKJOY back into the field, entrenched in the Oceti Sakowin Camp occupying Federal lands outside the Standing Rock Reservation south of Bismarck, North Dakota. Having been relatively dormant for the couple years prior, SEEKJOY began supporting the movement via onsite media production & communication which lasted for 6 months during the winter of 2016/17.

All of the work done by SEEKJOY as part of this initiative was “free” with financial support to keep the “solar” on coming from a handful of humans who had made financial contributions via fundraising efforts at seekjoy.co. What became clear is that this line of work is exactly where SEEKJOY belongs and the focus since has been to figure out how to continue sustaining this work in a good way that is neither completely reliant on donations, nor generating revenue from a source that comprises the integrity of the project.



Art...

We're of the mind that art has the capacity to cross social and cultural boundaries to reach people in ways journalism and other forms of communication cannot.

We've become so divided as a species on the basis of policy, income, ethnicity, gender and so forth that we're distancing ourselves further and further from a collective understanding of what it means to be a human being and therefore acting as such.

We have our social media pages, but who's *following* them? Those that already support what the page is doing.

We have our news sources, but who's *reading* them? Those who already support the tone of the reporting.

What's the problem here? Well, let's take #StandingRock as an example.

It is not the hearts and minds of the First Nations that need to be influenced when it comes to putting oil underneath main waterways. It is, however, the heart and mind of the pipeline executive who is very consciously engaging in a business model that threatens the future existence of our own species on this planet that could use some changing.

But, is the rig worker to blame for providing food for his/her family? No. Will this human most likely be following the stories and songs of the Great Sioux Nation who are simply pleading to have the Federal Government acknowledge any one of the treaties that clearly define this part of the country as "belonging" to them and as something they are to protect? No, they probably are not going out of their way to hear these stories and songs.

So, how can we break through this barrier?

We believe, whole-heartedly, that ART is what breaks this barrier.



The “Starving Artist”

We’ve all heard the term “starving artist”. Why do artists starve and pipeline workers don’t? Usually, from our experience, it is because many true artists (and we’re going to extend this to activists as well), have found that their work comes through most pure when money has nothing to do with it.

That week in the studio where the rest of the world has faded and the work is most pure is rarely compensated for the average artist. Whether or not the “work” from this session finds its way to a market that could offer some form of compensation later is another story.

Maybe the work goes up on Etsy?

Now we’ve added “business-person” to the requirements of being an artist.

Maybe it goes up for sale on a personal website?

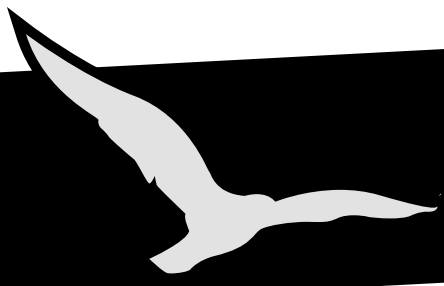
Now the artist is a web designer/developer.

Oh, maybe we can just tour and earn our keep on the road doing shows!

Now the artist is a tour manager, booking agent, promoter, ad-hoc tour bus driver ...

In all of the above, we’ve introduced a whole other set of responsibilities for the average artist on top of simply creating beautiful art. A common outcome of all this is to have a “job” that can pay the bills and cover the overhead, but now we’ve sliced out 40+ hours a week from potential creative time. Whatever the case, it’s a balancing act that some have found a way to sustain, but many, in our experience, have not.

This is where SEEKJOY hopes to come in.



But... how?

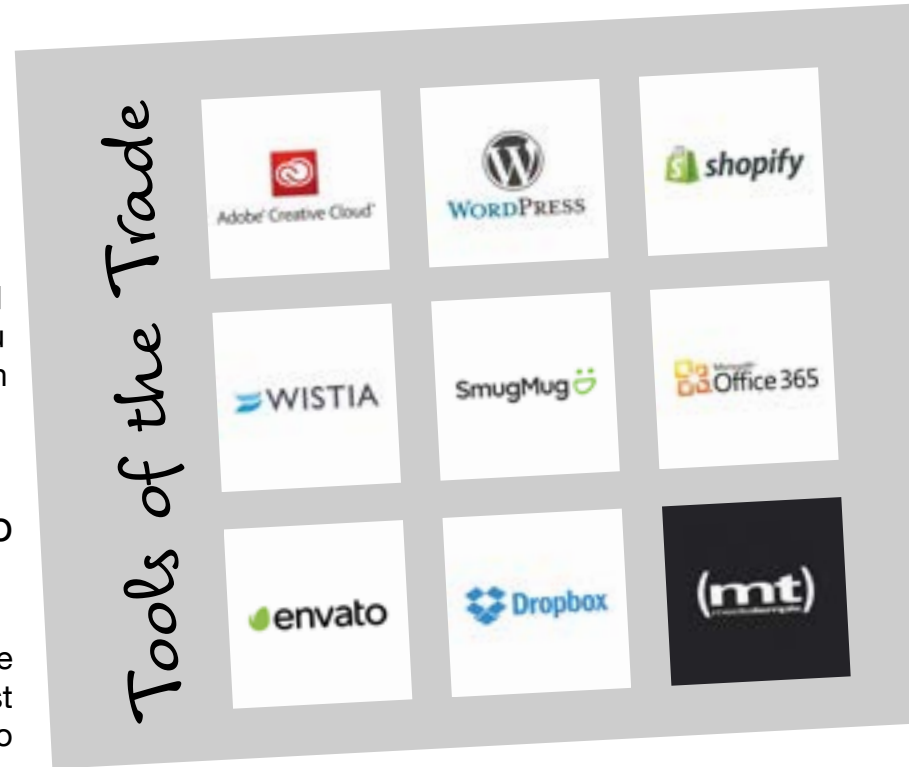
First and foremost, the premise we've adopted is that ultimately, none of this should be necessary. Each and every human should have the unrestricted ability to eat good food, drink clean water, and pursue that which brings them joy. That said, this is not the way we've gone about organizing ourselves as human beings on this planet.

So, we need to find a balance. With a background in media & communication, SEEKJOY has tools in place to facilitate 9 of 10 things that are needed for anyone trying to ditch the "job" concept and focus on their art, and/or activism, full time.

The model we're proposing here is to work with artists & activist as a back-end helper (catalyst) trying to balance this equation using modern tools that you could use, but on the premise that your time is needed elsewhere so we can bring good into the world as artists and activists before it's too late.

So, are we offering a proprietary platform we want you to buy into?

No. We've just been around this block for just about a decade now and have found certain good, productive ways of doing things that many artists & activist must do as part of their day-to-day and want to provide a way for them to benefit you, and us, together.





The Community Marketplace

We use the Shopify platform for anything that involves eCommerce. Our online store is located at seekjoy.myshopify.com and has been setup with a section called “Community Goods” which is meant to serve as our way to help artists & activists working towards social and environmental justice offset the financial side of things.

The concept here is that SEEKJOY will work through a little process of getting to know you, your work, and your vision about how you’d like to go about things if you were 100% sustaining your financial needs your way. If we both (you and us) think it’ll be a good fit to collaborate together, we’ll begin working towards building a way to make this happen. There’s no single “type” of artist that we cater to, it can be anything from music to the studio arts to performance ... absolutely doesn’t matter, as long as you’re somehow aligned with the idea of doing your work, and being compensated for your work, in an effort to bring about social and environmental change.

If you have “works” that could be sold, we will work together to capture “product images” that can be used in the online store and will go about capturing the story of you and/or the piece that can go alongside. Instead of putting this up in an online store like Etsy.com (which you’re still welcome to do), we put the work up in the Community Goods sections of the SEEKJOY Online Marketplace at a price we agree upon with a small revenue share going to the SEEKJOY Community Fund.

With our Shopify store, we’re on the hook for the standard credit card processing fee of 2.9% + 30 cents. Basically, as a basis for the Community Goods platform, we’re proposing to add a commission structure on top of the industry standard credit card processing fee that can be used to offset SEEKJOY’s work to help showcase & sell the work of community artists.

The exact percentage for the commission structure has yet to be determined. Overall, based on feedback from the artists & activists we’ve discussed with, a 20% overall commission is where what we’re basing everything on at the moment. From the 20%, we take the burden of the processing fee of 2.9% + 30 cents, so it really hovers at around a 17% “commission.”



Working Together

In our preliminary discussions with you as an artist, we'll discuss this together and see if it fits, but typically what we'll suggest is that if you were thinking a piece of "work" should be sold at \$100 in the Community Goods section, we'll suggest that we list the price at \$120 and then receive part of that difference so you end up with something that is overall the same.

We are endeavoring to curate a market here that KNOWS they are supporting an intentional group of humans working towards building a sustainable mechanism for full-time social & environmental change work, so overall we're not really trying to be the "Cheap Guy" on the block.

For our "commission" we'll be, if you'd like us to, helping manage the "Business Side of Creativity" through the creation of the photos, videos, and web promotional material that goes along side getting the "work" online for sale, facilitating the transaction, and promoting the marketplace by means of a wide network of brand ambassadors, many of which are artists and activists as well. Any proceeds made via the commission structure are strictly, and transparently, used to help sustain this initiative and our mission.

All in all, the idea here is to play a role in encouraging you, as an artist/activist, to do more of what you do best. As with everything, this will be a constantly evolving initiative and we'll be working over the coming weeks & months to refine this overview and get it in the hands of more people that may be interested.



Next steps?

If you like what you're reading...

We'd love to start collaborating with you whenever you're ready. The first step is to [submit our basic form online via the Community Network](#) and we'll get a phone call setup to talk things through and explore options. Once we have an idea of what you wanna do, we'll tailor our "Joyfullibrium Roadmap" (get it, joyful equilibrium?) the best we can to align with your ideas, come to an agreement on how to proceed, and start the process of working together.

If you'd like to talk any of this through, give Eoin (pronounced Owen) a call on his cellphone at 612-423-3880. If email works better of you he can be reached via eoin@seekjoy.co.

If you made it this far, thank you :) We're looking forward to improving the concepts behind this platform based on your feedback!

Sending love,

The SEEKJOY Team