

Daniel Armand-Ugon

ConectaGames



“ I saw an opportunity to connect the world with games. ”

COUNTRY	Uruguay
INDUSTRY	Technology
EMPLOYEES	10
YEAR SELECTED	2012
PARTNER	Nicolás Batlle
WEBSITE	www.conectagames.com

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Ever wished you could recreate those rainy days when you stayed indoors with friends and family playing your favorite board game? Since 2009, cousins Daniel Armand-Ugon and Nicolas Battle have allowed gamers to do just that. Their company, ConectaGames, creates multiplayer Facebook and mobile versions of the most popular board and card games, reaching over 3 million users in over 10 countries with a myriad of games and resulting in over 600,000 Monthly Active Users and 25 million monthly page views. The company has expanded around the world from the cozy confines of Uruguay in an effort to increase its page views 20-fold.

As young boys in Montevideo, Uruguay, Daniel and Nicolas developed a love for technology that has stayed with them to this day. After receiving degrees in theoretical physics from Uruguay's University of the Republic and the University of Vermont in the US, Daniel co-founded Web2mil, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and website creator for large corporations. The company, which became an incubator of sorts for IT-related projects in the country, was largely responsible for the early adoption of IT and dialup Internet access and services in Uruguay. In fact, one of its projects, Intercanal (a dial-up ISP), was the only company in the southern hemisphere selected by NASA, Sun Microsystems and Silicon Graphics to participate in the first global webcast (that of the Mars Pathfinder mission in 1997). In 2002, Nicolas, who had been the IT manager of a small offshore bank in Uruguay and of the Uruguayan stock exchange, bought out Daniel's co-founder and joined Web2mil. There, he leveraged his degree in computer science from the University of Engineering of Uruguay to help shape Web2mil into an innovative IT solutions provider.

In an effort to boost Intercanal's revenues by keeping people connected longer, the entrepreneurs decided to make a traditional Uruguayan card game, Truco, available to players on a standalone website. As Facebook games began to appear in 2009, the entrepreneurs realized that a re-furbished Facebook version of the game would be a good way to engage clients outside of Uruguay. The company hired a developer and launched an Argentine Facebook-based version of the game in 2010. Within four months, the game had 1 million users. Excited by the huge demand, the entrepreneurs decided to seriously pursue this new online social gaming trend. With funding from the government to accompany personal savings, ConectaGames was born as a Web2mil company, and a programming framework was developed that is now used to create all of the company's games.

Today, ConectaGames offers more than 15 high quality multiplayer games on Facebook, of which many are also available on the iPad. The company allows users to conveniently connect with anyone in the world to play the games they grew up with and to provide businesses with unique advertising opportunities to very specific cultural demographics. Although many gaming companies have digitized popular games, ConectaGames has found a niche market by going country by country and identifying the most culturally popular offerings. In doing so, the company has been able to rely on pre-existing connectivity and interaction amongst people in order to make its games viral. Many of the company's games have gone on to achieve the highest ranks in their app category ("card and board games") and were among the top 2-5 most downloaded applications in the "games and overall" categories of the Apple store in Argentina, Venezuela and Uruguay, and Portugal.
