

Ardora is an authoring software focused mainly on the development of educational content for the Web. Its main purpose is that teachers focus their efforts on the methodological and didactic aspects of the curriculum and forget the technological ones. More than ten years in the Internet nowadays have made this software a collaborative effort of teachers who use it in their classrooms.

A. Minimum requirements

A **basic computer** (either 10 or so years old would be enough) with a Linux or Windows OS (versions XP, Vista, 7, 8 or 10) systems. At the moment it is being considered the possibility of creating a version for Mac as well.

A **recent browser** like Mozilla, Chrome, Chromium, Opera, ... since from Version 7, Ardora uses the latest standards HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript. It is not recommended to use Internet Explorer as it is not entirely adapted to the above mentioned standards.

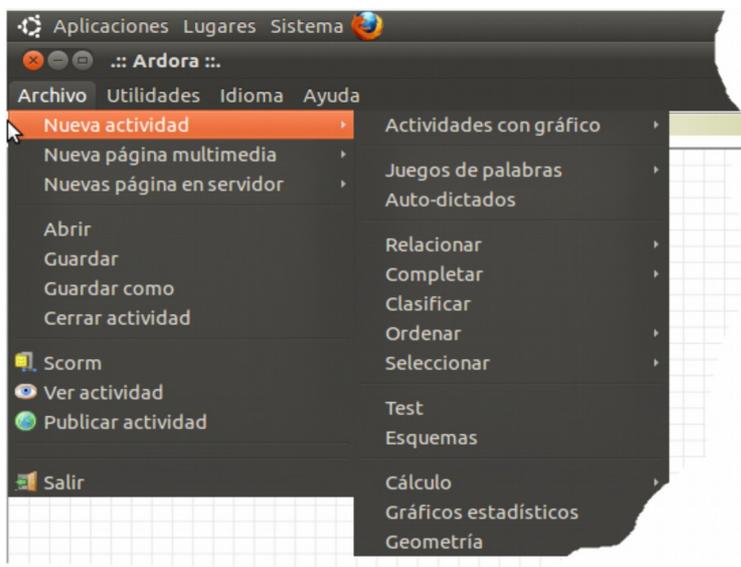
Due to the restrictions that some browsers, such as Chrome, make while some files are being executed "locally" (i.e: from the hard drive of your computer) it is highly recommended to use Mozilla Firefox as the default browser in the computer where you will create your content. However, have in mind that once the content is created and placed under a web server, it will be functional in any of the above mentioned browsers.

B. Content types

With Ardora you can create different material for your classroom: from simple solutions to, for example, the presentation of a topic to your students or the grouping of various existing resources with a single click, to more complex content and teaching units, collective work spaces for students and teachers and the creation of authentic digital books.

The first thing you need to know while working with Ardora are the three main areas of content that can be created:

1.- Interactive activities: Perhaps the most popular part of the software, they deal with a wide range of topics, grouped by "mechanical operations" (relating, calculation, etc.) and allow us to get an interactive page in which our students must solve a problem whose answer we have specified previously.



In this section you can perform exercises like completing a text, relating concepts, a quiz, a word search, indicating areas in an image, crossword puzzles, etc. On the Help section in Ardoras website you have a detailed explanation of each and every activity and a generic tutorial where you will learn how to control the time for the activity, which messages the students will

receive when, for example, they make a mistake, or when they solve the activity successfully, etc.

2.- Multimedia pages: They are useful for the explanation of a topic, organization of resources, processing texts in various formats, interactive images, media players, etc.

3.- Server Pages: designed for the collective work of students, the result is usually a "product" (website) that is built by everybody, an album with pictures and text from different sides of an issue, a timeline where each student brings part of his research, a system that allows teachers and students to share and view files directly on the web, ...

As the name suggests, these kind of activities need to be under "a web server" (not necessarily online) and they use a user management control system.

C. Beginning.

Our work will begin with the creation of the different parts you need to create the teaching material you want, so, for example, to perform a series of exercises for the strengthening of some specific concepts you should first create as many interactive activities as you consider appropriate, if you want to give the student a text on which they will get information about these exercises, you must create the multimedia page that allows you to show that text, you can even provide your students a proper content of the web 2.0 (Youtube , Calameo, Slideshare, etc.) To finish our unit, you can think of a task in which your students create collectively a glossary of terms. To do that, you must also create the appropriate server page.

That is, with Ardora you must initially create each of the "pieces" that will form your work, once created (or as they are being created), Ardora provides several ways of organizing all that content in a single block (It will be explained later in this manual).

D. Preview, save and publish.

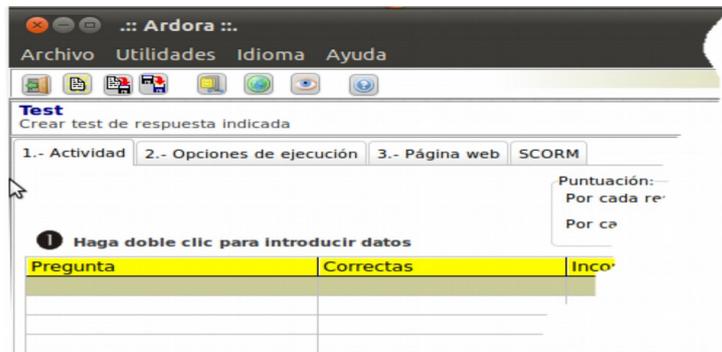
When creating content, it is advisable to "see" how our activity works; the button with the icon of an eye gives us the possibility of displaying in your default browser the interactive activity or page you are designing, that way you can fix bugs, add or remove items, see the dynamics of our activity, control is the time given is enough, etc. 

In all the sections inside Ardora there is the possibility of saving your work together with the files you have provided (images, audio, video) to this work in a single file. Through the "File" menu or by clicking the icon with a floppy disk you may save this file, which will have the name you specify and by extension the letters "**ard**". This file will allow future changes in the design of your activity. 

Once everything is "as you desire" you will get the "final product"; this product will be a folder with a series of subfolders and files necessary for its execution, so we must "**publish**" our content by clicking on the button with the globe icon. After entering a name, the program will create the mentioned folder. 

C. A simple example. Creating a test.

Lets suppose you want to create a quiz with a series of questions about a particular topic with a multiple choice format.



This is an interactive activity, so we need to go to "File" - "New Activity" and select "Test". The application to create this test will appear on the screen.

On the first tab "1. Activity" we must introduce the questions and the possible answers and, if

appropriate, the images that can accompany each of the questions, audios related to those questions or determine specific error messages for each of the questions. See the specific tutorial for this activity for more detail.

On the second tab, you can write messages for the activity itself, such as a congratulations message if the students have correctly solved the test; you can also determine how many mistakes you will allow your students to make or if there will be a specific amount of time to complete the activity. See the tutorial "*Points, time, messages and heading*".

On the third tab you will introduce the relevant explanations to solve the activity (heading). Throughout this process we can do different "previews" and interact with the test itself so that everything is as you wish.

When you believe everything is correct, if you have not done it before, we have to save the activity and publish it, when doing it, you will get, in the place you have indicated, a folder with the name given, for example if you typed "testUnit1" (TIP: remember the material you have created is to be used "on the web" so, and to avoid later problems, it is important that in these filenames you **do NOT use non English characters, as written accents, , or blank spaces**) in your computer there will be a folder named testUnit1", and, within it, you can find a file with the same name but extension "htm", ie "testUnit1.htm"; by double-clicking it, your browser will open and the activity will appear.

This test can already be used, for example by uploading it to your virtual classroom (you have a detailed explanation about how to include an assessment system, SCORM, which "passes" your students marks to the e-learning platform) or by linking it from your blog, or by placing it in your schools intranet or on the Internet, etc.

IMPORTANT:

DO NOT modify the contents of the already published folders. If you want to make changes, open the "ard" file, correct it and then "publish" it again.

DO NOT insert other folders or files into the published folder.

Mainly for Windows users, it has been observed that, randomly, when including files (jpg, mp3, ...) inside some pages and activities, the program gives an error while showing the preview with the message File. Not found. While it is not solved, it is important to place these files in a folder or folders **which do not contain non English characters (do not use , written accents or blank spaces in the folders name).**

A recommended practice is that you create a folder in your computer, for example, "ActivitiesUnit1" where you can publish the different activities and pages that you create.

It is also likely that your work goes beyond a simple exercise and you want to create some more exercises to test your students knowledge about the same topic. So, you should consider creating a new activity and publish it again, therefore you'll get a new folder containing that activity.

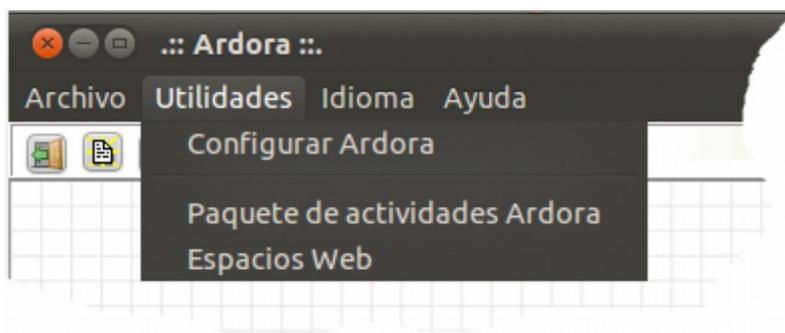
D- Now, I have several pieces for my project.

Once you have created the activities and / or pages for a topic, we should give them a similar appearance making them "work" as a single unit. To do this, Ardora offers several possibilities:

1. Package of activities:

They would be the equivalent to the students workbooks, problem sets, ...

You can find it in the "Utilities" menu; It allows us to create a set of activities and / or multimedia pages (no pages under a sever are admitted here) with an identical appearance for all the activities; optionally a navigation system between those activities may be included; there is also



the possibility of including links to external material on the Internet that may help them carry out the activities, a system of self-assessment or an assessment report of all the activities in an e-learning platform.

2. Web Spaces:

You can also access to this too from the Utilities menu. This tool is ideal to focus on a single screen, for example, all the resources and activities required for a teaching unit or a digital book on a particular topic.

It offers the possibility of creating two different types of menus from which you can "launch" any content that can be viewed in a Web browser (even if that content were not created with Ardora), links to web pages, sample images, any kind of content developed with other authoring tools, different types of files that can be viewed on a web browser, as a "pdf". It also allows you to specify the location in which the content will be displayed, for example we can show a text on the main screen and open a package of activities with a reading comprehension on that text in an overlay window so that students can minimize it to see the text and then get back to the activities again easily.

For these two types of tools, you had better review the utilities section tutorials.

3. Multimedia Pages:

Some multimedia pages also allow including external resources, for example, if we include an image in the "Image Gallery", we can listen to an audio if we click a certain area, or display the "wikipedia" page related to that topic, or watch an embed video, or show some extra information, ...

For more details, please have a look at the tutorials of the different multimedia pages, mainly the "Text and images", "Tabs / Accordions" or "interactive Panoramic viewer".

In all these cases, whenever you publish the activity, you will have a folder with your htm file that will make the contents appear in the browser; this folder contains everything you need (the software creates all the necessary files)

E.- I've got everything. Now, how do I take my work to the classroom?.

There are several options to do this depending on both the content created and the media where we will place our material (On the Internet, just in our school...)

1. Copy to physical media.

You should take into account that except for the "pages under a server", any other content created with Ardora can be viewed directly from different media such as USB drives, hard drives, a CD, etc. ("locally"). Obviously this is the least recommended way, as we would need those contents to be installed in each and every computer in our classroom, and that task can be really tedious. But it may be useful, for example, in situations where we need a series of images and existing resources on the Internet for our explanation or introduction of a certain topic; in that case, you may want to develop a page on which all these elements are at a single click distance, and avoid wasting time searching them on the web.

To do this, we just need to copy the folder created by Ardora to our device; Whenever you need to run it, you only need to open the htm file inside.

2. Virtual classroom:

Although we are not used to working with e-learning platforms, this may be an easy and convenient way to make the content available to our students. On Ardoras web there are several tutorials on that topic.

3.- As a link from a blog:

We can place the folder with our project in our own "cloud" (eg Dropbox) and then insert a link to the .htm file in our blog, There is also a detailed tutorial explaining how to do that in Ardoras website.

4.- Intranet:

An intranet is a private network created using www software; more simply, our computer connected to the network centre, which has installed a web server and which allow us to upload our content in one of your folders; immediately, all the computers in your school that are connected to the network will have access to this content. See the corresponding manual on the website of Ardora, It is much easier than it may seem at first sight. As a **big advantage**, the access speed is the internal network speed of your own school (the most basic and standard speed is 100 Mb) regardless of the traffic or the Internet speed you may have. Obviously, the main disadvantage is that it is only accessible from computers that are in the same network that has the web server installed.

5.- Internet:

If your school has a website, you will probably have a hosting service. Uploading the contents would be as simple as uploading the folder created by Ardora Internet to our server (FTP); with this, our material would be available from anywhere in the world with an Internet connection.