

Reading response 2 - Crowdsourcing

In the article, the rise of crowdsourcing by Jeff Howe speaks about how regular people on the internet can be a big role in someone's project or company by simply just being connected to the network. It brings many scientific examples like how someone from their garage found a chemical solution for Colgate-Palmolive. But hence the article was written in 2006, crowdsourcing has changed the way we live completely. Instead of booking a hotel, we use Airbnb, instead of taking a taxi we take Ubers and instead of renting a car from car rental companies we use Turo and many more user-generated websites. All these examples fall under the term crowdsourcing. Users put their properties into use in exchange for money when they are not in use. That way of living has a lot of advantages for all three parties of the transaction, the company, the user, and the provider. But it also comes with its own disadvantages which might get a little bit immoral. A service like Amazon.com where they exploit their employees is an example of that. Amazon's reputation when it comes to treating their employees is very bad and get paid almost nothing for one of the biggest companies in the world. An example of crowdsourcing that I found very interesting is the project 10,000 cents by the digital artist Aaron Koblin with Takashi Wakahisa. Without being aware of the larger task, thousands of people working separately painted a little portion of a 100\$ bill. Through Amazon's Mechanical Turk distributed labour tool, each worker received one cent. The bill, the artwork, and everything involved all required a total of \$100 in labour. The project is meant to explore crowdsourcing but I looked at it from another perspective. How thousand people got paid a cent to make a 100\$ bill. Just like how Amazon employees get paid close to nothing to make the company's owner the rich man he is. Though a service like Amazon makes our lives way easier and is extremely convenient, there should be fairness. And that is what scares me about crowdsourcing.