

CROWDSOURCING: IL PRECARIATO DIGITALE

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OUTLINE

- 1 GRATUITOUS AND TOTALLY UNAWARE CROWDSOURCING
- 2 MECHANICAL TURKS
- 3 CHEAP, PARTIALLY AWARE CROWDSOURCING
- 4 EXPENSIVE, PROVIDENCE BASED CROWDSOURCING
- 5 DIFFERENCE FROM FREE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE
- 6 CONCLUSION

INTRODUZIONE E SCUSE

Questa e' una pubblicazione prematura, seppur incoraggiata dal mio supervisore Antonio Caronia, della mia ricerca di dottorato presso il **Planetary Collegium (Universita' di Plymouth) M-Node**

La ricerca che sto svolgendo viene documentata in inglese, mi scuso per la fretta, ma queste slides non sono ancora tradotte in italiano.

CROWDSOURCING

Il termine crowdsourcing¹ (da crowd, gente comune, e outsourcing, esternalizzare una parte delle proprie attività²) è un neologismo che definisce un modello di business nel quale un'azienda o un'istituzione richiede lo sviluppo di un progetto, di un servizio o di un prodotto ad un insieme distribuito di persone non già organizzate in un team. Questo processo e' virtualizzato, avviene attraverso degli strumenti web o comunque dei portali su internet.

¹ citazione da Wikipedia Italia

² Marialuisa Pezzali, Crowdsourcing: quando la rete... trova la soluzione. «Il Sole 24 ORE», 2009.

GRATUITOUS CROWDSOURCING

- Gratis
- Unaware
- Working class

FREE ESP GAMES

Use the computational power of humans to perform a task that computers cannot yet do by packaging the task as a “game”.

“5000 people playing simultaneously an ESP game on image recognition can label all images on google in 30 days. Individual games in Yahoo! and MSN average over 5000 players at a time.”³



³von Ahn, 2006

- MMORPG



- World of Warcraft
- Second Life
- OpenSIM
- etc.
- Virtual reality architecture
- Virtual miners

ELECTRONIC DESIGN AUTOMATION (EDA)

Complex problems are broke up into modules where the I/O of logic circuits is tested against combinations computed by humans.

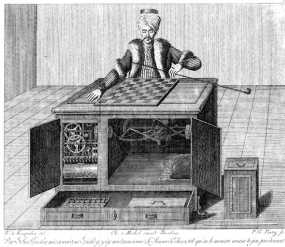
Problems can be solved by humans who are not even aware of how their problem solving skills are then grouped and capitalised, while they are assigned points that, once again, are worth nothing (see ESP games).

- players unawareness
- aleatory value
- occult farming possible on SN (XSS and clustering on JS)

HISTORICAL DIGRESSION

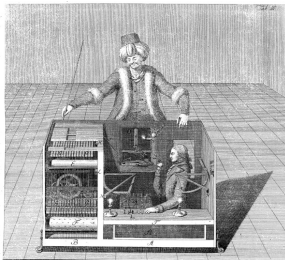
- Mechanical Turks
 - von Kempelen
 - Maelzel

VON KEMPELEN'S MECHANICAL TURK



On an autumn day in 1769, a Hungarian nobleman, Wolfgang von Kempelen, was summoned to witness a conjuring show at the imperial court of Maria Theresa, empress of Austria-Hungary. So unimpressed was Kempelen by what he saw that he impetuously declared that he could do better himself. The following year Kempelen presented a mechanic man sitting behind a table: fashioned from wood, powered by clockwork, and dressed in a Turkish costume, it was capable of playing chess.

MAELZEL'S CHESS PLAYER



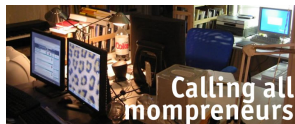
"Yet the question of its *modus operandi* is still undetermined. Nothing has been written on this topic which can be considered as decisive — and accordingly we find every where men of mechanical genius, of great general acuteness, and discriminative understanding, who make no scruple in pronouncing the Automaton a pure machine, unconnected with human agency in its movements, and consequently, beyond all comparison, the most astonishing of the inventions of mankind."⁴

⁴Poe, E. A. (1836) Maelzel's Chess-Player



- artificial artificial life
- repetitive tasks that will be automated in future
- humans are behind pseudo-automation
- serialised silly tasks

MOMPREENEUR



- Employees are contractors passing uniform tests
- Menu to choose where to go and act with your headset
- Menu option starts expanding as their success is proven
- Problems
 - Problematic applications are hidden
 - Increasing false positive cases
 - Fatal errors

"REHABILITATION" / BRAIN SCOOPING



- Samasource provides work for people in “refugee camps”
- Work that can be done on existing infrastructure
- Look in a screen and push buttons for 1 penny
- Problems
 - peripheral fordism exploitation
 - human alienation

ART WITH MTURKS

- The Sheep Market
 - 10.000 sheeps created by online workers
 - <http://www.thesheepmarket.com/>

THE FACES OF TURKS



PRIZE BASED

- Expensive
- Top down
- Centralized

INTERNAL PRIZE



- Best wins selection
- Project to be produced by the company giving the prize
- No risk for winning participants
- smaller prizes
- Problems
 - Deregulated appropriation
 - Enclosure

EXTERNAL PRIZE



- Declared as philanthropic
- Investment to win results cost only partially
- Future revenue comes from independent distribution of product
- Problems
 - High cost failure

THIS IS NOT FREE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

The dynamics of Free and Open Source Software⁵ are fundamentally different, since they apply logics of collaboration to **sharable goals and products** that can be adapted and redistributed infinitely in different contexts, in a **decentralized fashion**.

- Free cooperation vs. proprietary competition

The coalitions of those humans that are investing labour and the groups connected to them are aimed primarily at the quality of their **cooperative efforts** and the peer review of those who are adopting them.

The redistribution of the (digitally reproducible) artifacts is left uncontrolled, creations can spawn recursively and multiply their virtue.

⁵as defined by the GNU Project and the Free Software Foundation

REFERENCES

There isn't much literature yet around the issue of labour politics in the digital environment, an exploration is offered by this book:

- Zittrain, J. (2009) The Future of the Internet, Yale Press

The dyne.org network and the research publication The Next Layer offer good insights to understand the condition of **digital natives** in these and more scenarios.

FUTURE SCENARIOS

- Global dimension of labour, i.e. User Labor markup (ULML)
- Exasperated import/export labour regulations
- Human exploitation in virtual environments
- Financial factors hit global labour markets

SALAAM/SHALOM/SHANTHI/DOROOD/PEACE

Jaromil's musings on <http://jaromil.dyne.org>

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