

Human-assisted Computation: Crowdsourcing

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Solving the web's image problem

By Angela Saini
BBC News

Every year, video game enthusiasts fritter away billions of hours in fruitless fun, earning little more than sore thumbs and a sense of satisfaction.

But to Luis von Ahn they represent an opportunity not to be missed.

The computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh developed a game in 2003 that uses gamers to actively improve the web.

"We're trading entertainment for labour," says Prof von Ahn.

His Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) Game reveals the same image to two players and asks each to guess what the other person has written to describe it. If they agree, that word or phrase is then used to annotate the picture.

Repeating the same image with other pairs of players, the computer eventually builds up a detailed label.

100m pictures have already been labelled in this way, prompting the popular search engine, Google, to buy a licence from Professor von Ahn's team to create its own version of the game.

Google have bought a licence for the ESP Game



The Story of
Luis von Ahn's
ESP Game -
part of Games
with a Purpose
(GWAP)

<https://www2.cs.duke.edu/courses/cps296.3/spring07/ieee-gwap.pdf>