

# Week 2 Response

## *The Rise of Crowdsourcing & Exhausting a Crowd*

Jeff Howe's *The Rise of Crowdsourcing* explores the implications of crowdsourcing. I will investigate a work that uses crowdsourcing, Kyle McDonald's [\*Exhausting a Crowd - Netherlands \(2015\)\*](#), and connect it to the main topics discussed in Jeff Howe's reading.

*Exhausting a Crowd* is a collaborative experience in which users add commentary to live-streamed surveillance footage from seven locations: London, Netherlands, Birmingham, Gwangju, Beijing, Saintbrieuc, and Berlin. The work transforms the act of surveilling into a form of entertainment. Together, people craft a digital narrative based on strangers who are unknowingly captured on camera.

Howe describes crowdsourcing as cheap labour, while also differentiating it from outsourcing: "bringing people in from outside and involving them in this broadly creative, collaborative process." The difference between outsourcing and crowdsourcing is very prominent in McDonald's experiment because the participants are not bound to this experience with an end in sight; the feed that is being live-streamed will keep producing content, while the collaborative storytelling accompanies it.

When I'm adding commentary on the surveillance footage, I feel like I'm playing a game with other people. The commentary only lasts a few seconds as well, so the transitory message is like a secret that only people watching the stream know. This work demonstrates how people are willing to put in their time to partake in this crowdsourcing activity, and this project is effective because of the scale of user-generated content that comes in at once. As Howe discusses, these barriers to collaboration are broken down since participants "grew up in the Internet age and were designed to take advantage of the networked world", thus bringing about the "productive potential of millions of plugged-in enthusiasts." A single person is not able to create this massive amount of content. Howe similarly provides examples of how crowdsourcing surpasses the ability of a constrained number of people. For instance, the launch of InnoCentive, an online space that connects people from around the world to develop drugs and solve scientific problems, allowed companies to "turn to the crowd to help curb the rising cost of corporate research."

Below, I've taken screenshots of two instances during the live stream. One of the joys of participating in this activity is seeing the creativity and comedy behind each comment. Watchers must pay close attention to every second of the footage, grasping for an opening to comment and be part of something bigger.



