

# **Exploring the Pro-Am Interface between Production and Prodsusage**

Axel Bruns

Associate Professor, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

The emergence of Web 2.0 and social media sites and projects has highlighted the development of new forms of social organisation that facilitate online collaboration between peers. Major projects such as Wikipedia embody the fundamental principles of an approach to distributed and communal content creation that is best described as produsage (Bruns 2008) or commons-based peer production (Benkler 2006), and these principles – which trace their origins back at least as far as the emergence of open source software development, but have antecedents in the offline world, too – are beginning to promote innovation and change in an ever growing range of intellectual practices across the content industries.

Outside of the Wikipedia example, however, many such practices do not take place in non-profit environments that are free from corporate influence, but are carried out with the implicit or explicit support and participation of commercial entities: media organisations are embracing user-generated content (to a varying degree); product designers and developers are crowdsourcing ideas from their users; advertisers are instituting viral marketing campaigns; governments are exploring new forms of citizen engagement through ‘Government 2.0’ initiatives. As a flipside to the obvious concerns about the possible corporate exploitation of such ‘free labour’, which have already been widely discussed, this also raises questions about what models for a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership between both sides of the Pro-Am interface (Leadbeater & Miller, 2004) may be possible, and how they may reshape the relationship between the two groups that used to be professional producers and amateur users of content. This paper will explore these new models and outline possible avenues for further research.