

MIND, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

Seminar Series

UC MERCED, Fall 2016

Daren Brabham

University of Southern California

Public Sector Crowdsourcing: Realities, Possibilities, Pitfalls

The term 'crowdsourcing' was coined just a decade ago, but it has already been embraced by countless businesses, nonprofits, and governments. Government agencies hope to leverage the collective intelligence of online communities for the public good, from citizen engagement activities for urban planning and public health campaigns, to citizen science efforts and homeland security concerns. As crowdsourcing matures and becomes commonplace—and as a professionalized layer of tech companies and consultancies emerges to connect governments to citizens—there is both optimism and skepticism regarding the potential for crowdsourcing in the public sector. This talk explores the current state of public sector crowdsourcing efforts; possibilities for crowdsourcing in large-scale, coordinated public health, citizen science, and homeland security applications; and the inevitable challenges that emerge, from concerns over free speech and the preservation of democratic ideals, to the politics of tech platforms and communication strategies for mobilizing citizens.

Daren C. Brabham, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism at the University of Southern California. The first to publish scholarly research using the term 'crowdsourcing,' his work focuses on crowdsourcing for the public good. He is the author of Crowdsourcing (MIT Press, 2013), Crowdsourcing in the Public Sector (Georgetown University Press, 2015), and more than 20 articles, chapters, and reports on crowdsourcing and crowdfunding. He earned a B.A. from Trinity University and an M.S. and Ph.D. in communication from the University of Utah.



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3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

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