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Web Design and the Curation of User-generated Content

User-generated content and related practices of prosumption or produsage are often seen to pose a threat to cultural industry professionals. Axel Bruns claims that such practices reduce media producers 'to the level of all other participants in the networks' ((2008: 30). Yet the cultural industries are not all the same, and the range of activities which 'produce culture for the digital economy' (Terranova 2000) are also many and varied. This paper disputes the notion that the current era of participatory media represents a threat to the cultural industries, focusing specifically on the cultural labour of web designers. It draws on examples of the ways in which web designers talk about and conceive of user-generated content as something to be curated by web professionals, to argue that the professional-amateur distinction is not necessarily broken down by Web 2.0 practices, when it comes to the production of the web itself.