Crowdsourcing and User Generated Content

The article that I found to be the most thought provoking in this week’s readings was *The Blurring Line Between Amateur and Professional* by Timothy B. Lee. It is interesting to think about the evolution of media throughout the years, and how it is currently heading to a point where the average consumer can take on the role of professionals. The article begins with a statement from Charles Murray, a writer for the *New York Times*, about how user generated content has affected his work, as well as his payment for it. He stated that his most recent op-ed article for the *Times* had earned him no more than seventy-five dollars, which he attributes to the rise of amateur writers; “there is no shortage of people-- some of them quite knowledgeable and talented-- who would gladly write for the *Times* op-ed page for free...the *Times* could easily stop paying for op-ed submissions and it would have no difficulty filling its op-ed page every morning” (Lee, 2010). Reading about how professional writers are impacted by this transition first-hand really caused me to think about where the future of media is headed. Because that article was written in 2010, I am curious to know what changes have occurred throughout the past eight years. My guess would be that the number of amateur writers has dramatically risen, and that user generated content has created a prominent niche for itself within professional journalism. Since it is more cost efficient for media industries to utilize amateur writers rather than pay for professionals, it is quite possible that user generated content will monopolize the journalism industry in years to come.