

Coordination mechanisms employed by crowdworkers using AMT

Digital Labor and Data Science
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Primary interest: MTurk

Your Account HITs Qualifications

Introduction | Dashboard | Status | Account Settings

Mechanical Turk is a marketplace for work.
We give businesses and developers access to an on-demand, scalable workforce.
Workers select from thousands of tasks and work whenever it's convenient.
74,968 HITs available. [View them now.](#)

Make Money by working on HITs

HITs - *Human Intelligence Tasks* - are individual tasks that you work on. [Find HITs now.](#)

As a Mechanical Turk Worker you:

- Can work from home
- Choose your own work hours
- Get paid for doing good work

Find an interesting task **Work** **Earn money**

[Find HITs Now](#)

Get Results from Mechanical Turk Workers

Ask workers to complete HITs - *Human Intelligence Tasks* - and get results using Mechanical Turk. [Register Now](#)

As a Mechanical Turk Requester you:

- Have access to a global, on-demand, 24 x 7 workforce
- Get thousands of HITs completed in minutes
- Pay only when you're satisfied with the results

Fund your account **Load your tasks** **Get results**

[Get Started](#)

email: psxng1@nottingham.ac.uk

Quantitative work

- Best source: Panos Ipeirotis, blog:
<http://www.behind-the-enemy-lines.com/>
- Difallah et.al 2015 & Berg, ILO, 2016
- 2010: US 46.8, India 34.0, Other 19.2
Gender breakdown, education, incomes

- Now? Numbers are dwindling %-wise
Demographics <http://www.mturk-tracker.com/#/general>
- 80% of tasks done by 20% most active – 3-8.5 k
active users Fort et al. Goldmine or Coalmine

Qualitative Work

- Ipeirotis, Kittur, Bernstein, Bederson, Quinn
- Irani, Silberman and co
 - Haikus, Turkers Bill of Rights
 - Turkopticon – sharing ratings
 - Dynamo – helping organisation/advocacy
- Key Problems
 - Unfair rejection, slow payment, low pay, lack of communication, threat of suspension, requester scams, badly designed tasks, information asymmetry, lack/imbalance of power, lack of search tools/user configuration

Our Research interest

- So how do we design to support crowdworkers?
 - Better information
 - Better tools: search, interfaces, organisation, productivity
 - Positive market manipulation
 - How does/should this work across borders?
- Within our disciplines – HCI, CSCW – there is a long history of designing for the users and to empower the users: Information, advocacy and design

How did we conduct research ?

- **Ethnographic Studies of Turkers in their respective homes and places of work in India by Neha Gupta, UoN**
- Study involved Interviews (skype, phone and in-person), walkthroughs, observations, data capture through audio / video / screen recordings
- **Virtual ethnography of online forums like mturkforum and Turker Nation by Dr. Dave Martin (late), XRCE**
- Study involved deep reading of threads, collection of key threads/ posts, recurrent themes, exemplars

Workers are Not alone!

Almost every process from looking for a HIT, to working, sharing its details with friends, getting support from family members while doing work, getting paid, was collaborative

Coordinate – why, how?

Turker-requester coordination

Thank you, I will look into this issue. If that is the case I will reverse the block.

[- Show quoted text -](#)

★ Michael [redacted] Sun, Mar 24, 2013 at 5:11
To: [redacted]
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Hello,

I am still checking on the block issue. I don't want to cause anyone to be suspended.

I was unable to find what you are referring to about ProductRnR. The discussion about this requester which I could locate seemed to be negative, claiming that he rejects work too eagerly and is not willing to communicate. Do you have a suggestion for how I can prevent workers who I believe are not doing a good job from doing my HITs, without tarnishing their record?

I'm also considering paying more per HIT, after looking at TurkOpticon. If I increased the price to 2 or 3 cents per HIT, do you think it would be fair to increase the number of tweets per HIT as well? In other words, I wonder if 1 cent is too little for 5 tweets, or just too little for 1 HIT.

Thank you,
Michael

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★ [redacted] Sun, Mar 24, 2013 at 6:00
To: Michael [redacted]
[Reply](#) | [Reply to all](#) | [Forward](#) | [Print](#) | [Delete](#) | [Show original](#)

Hi

This requester (ProductRnR) tarnished his name by blocking huge number of workers (It is more than 3000). Now they brought a new system. If workers do more errors the system automatically disqualify working from this particular requester. Kindly see the following mail

Dear Worker,


Source: worker's personal communication

Supporting reputation management

How Turkopticon works:

Turkopticon adds functionality to Amazon Mechanical Turk as you browse for HITs and review status of work you've done. As you browse HITs, Turkopticon places a button next to each requester and highlights requesters for whom there are reviews from other workers. Bad reviews let you avoid shady employers and good reviews help you find fair ones. You can view reports made against requesters with a quick click.

As you review HITs you've completed, are there HITs you weren't fairly paid for? Turkopticon adds a button that lets you review requesters from your "Status Detail" page.



The screenshot shows a requester's profile with a dropdown menu displaying review metrics. The metrics are as follows:

Metric	Score	Max Score
communicativity	1.00	5
generosity	2.57	5
fairness	2.86	5
promptness	2.00	5

Additional information shown in the dropdown menu includes: "What do these scores mean?", "Scores based on 7 reviews", and a link to "Report your experience with this requester »".

Source: <http://mturkforum.com/showthread.php?2163-For-New-Turkers-Introducing-TurkOpticon-A-great-Tool-to-kick-the-bad-requesters>

Supporting reputation management

REVIEWING TURKOPTICON INFORMATION

The screenshot displays the Turkopticon interface with the following details:

- Navigation:** 'All Reviews' (selected), 'Classified By You', 'Your Reviews', and 'Order by edit date'.
- Table Headers:** 'AMT Requester', 'Rating (Info)', and 'Description'.
- Review 1:**
 - AMT Requester: Research Tasks, A1CEBF7WRZ74YK
 - Rating: 4.75 (Green bar)
 - Description: HIT(s): Live Q/A about an image (With Captions). The hits themselves were easy. But they are very time consuming! Not worth it. The pay should be doubled and then they would be gold! (Sep 13 2016 | Big Joe)
- Review 2:**
 - AMT Requester: Research Tasks, A1CEBF7WRZ74YK
 - Rating: 1.75 (Red bar)
 - Description: HIT(s): Live Q/A about an image (With Captions). The pay is 1.00-3.00\$ an hour. 3.00\$ if you get really lucky with partners and 1.00\$ an hour if unlucky. 15 cents is pitiful pay for what it is. The job itself isn't bad, I did 20 in a little over an hour... and realized, what a waste of one \$ really is. A shame a decent hit is runned by slave wage requesters. (Sep 13 2016 | lalad...@y...)

- Fair** - related to rejections
- Fast** - related to speed of approvals
- Pay** - related to pay for HIT
- Comm** - related to contact w/ requester
- *****
- Description is free text
- Civility guidelines exist
- Requesters can reply on this forum
- Commenting abilities are by request

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp7mA7eyYfc>

Social and collegial support

- Family and community collaboration: sociality
 - Word of mouth, Facebook groups, forums: finding work, finding a platform.
 - Sharing accounts, training
- Minimum English and some keyboard skills required
 - Lower skilled do simple and intuitive tasks
 - Danger of misunderstandings
- Infrastructure challenges, bricolage and back-ups
 - Juggling, sharing devices

Turkers' coordination

Bala (India)

There are 8-9 friends I know through Facebook who are listed in my phone contacts too, out of which there are 3 close friends from my previous workplace. [...] We mostly call each other and say there is so and so job, have a look, it has location in India so I'll open and see if it's an easy task or is it really tough. [...] once they say something about a task I won't ask them for details I'll have a look myself, they'll just tell me the name of the requester.

Turker coordination in generating trust

Rahim (India)

The turkers who are new turkers, they approach me. They are requesting me to give the training that how you are doing the work and everything [...] tell about something any kind of logic, shortcuts.

Some reasons why: Invisible Turkers & their hidden work

- AMT as a labour market:
 - Easy for requesters to devalue/ignore workers
 - Invisibility accentuated by anonymity, distance, digital interaction
- The work to make the Turking work:
 - Work of searching, learning, optimising, organising. hidden, no monetary compensation
 - Discussing best practices with fellow-turkers, supporters & requesters
 - Pressure, risk & uncertainty

Some reasons why: Design of the platform

- Mturk's set-up promotes rumour, misapprehension, and distrust *but* we see a lot of sharing, altruism and cooperation amongst Turkers through personal networks, forums (TurkerNation, MTurk forum, Reddit, Facebook)
 - Discussion of what tasks are for and how to do them as quickly as possible
 - How much is available, how often and when – rhythms and cycles of market
 - How to influence the operation of the market: targeting/ withholding labour
- Experienced Turkers use suites of tools to optimise grabbing and doing tasks
 - Tools that automatically identify and grab tasks
 - Have optimised browsers, shortcuts and so forth through plug-ins etc.
 - The weight of unintegrated tools and the use of scrapers causes crashes or they are frozen out by Amazon so managing the tool-set takes some juggling
 - This adds to market speed and volatility
- Hidden markets and connections managed by the qualification system

Technical support

The screenshot shows the homepage of 'turk@alert'. The header includes the logo 'turk@alert' and the tagline 'We Watch mTurk... So You Don't Have To!'. There are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'About', 'FAQs', 'Advertise', 'Contact', 'Blog', 'My Watchlist', 'My Blocklist', and 'My Account'. A 'Compare' button is visible. The main content area features a section titled 'Get E-mail Alerts When Your Favorite Requesters Post HITs.' with a numbered list of steps: 1. Sign up for a free account, 2. Add your favorite requesters, and 3. Receive e-mail alerts. Below this, it says 'With Turk Alert, now you can.'

The screenshot shows the 'Your Watchlist' page. At the top, there is a form to 'Enter the Requester ID of the Requester You Want to Watch:' with an 'Add Requester!' button. Below this is a table of requesters:

Watchers	Requester Name	Requester ID	Subscribed?	Unwatch(Un)Subscribe
125	Amazon Requester Inc. (Product Ads)	AALZYJEWCVBZB	✓	✗
74	Art Glenn Work	AZY357C4VTD3OZ	✓	✗
41	DataJam LLC	AZ480LLD4MTK2H	✓	✗
32	David Kriegman	AZ2VFTXXONLCOS	✓	✗
18	James Ormiston	A3W2UIP663UVD7	✓	✗

On the right side, there is a profile for requester '11223344' with a bio: 'Do you have a good eye for detail? Are you good at finding the exact item you want when shopping online? Our HITs are for you! Help us name and find replacements for items lost in disasters.' Below this is a section 'Requesters: Want to be featured here? Click here to learn more.' and a 'Most Watched Requesters' list:

- 1. CrowdSource (642)
- 2. Two Lakes Research (601)
- 3. NetMSI (474)
- 4. Oscar Smith (424)
- 5. CrowdFlower (376)
- 6. John Gaddy (362)
- 7. Andy K (360)
- 8. Classify It (345)
- 9. Product Listings (343)
- 10. PhotoMod (300)

The screenshot shows a Firefox notification box with a monkey icon and the text: 'MTurk Worst Case Scenario Calculator' installed successfully. Below the notification is a website banner for 'MTurk Worst Case Scenario' with a purple geometric pattern.



AutoPager 0.8.0.8

by Wind Li

AutoPager automatically loads next pages when you reach the end of a page. It works on a ton of sites, Google, Yahoo..

It works well with most other add-ons adblock plus, WOT and most of the greasemonkey scripts.

You can also try AutoPagerLite.

[+ Add to Firefox](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)



Experiencing market inequality

Sumita (India)

Sometimes you accept the survey, but inside after you open it says that if you belong to India you cannot do it, but that is very bad—why we cannot do?

Rafiq (India)

I know that U.S people have more maximum number of HITs compared to us. I know that. Second point is, I know that US people has a very good source of earning a lot in surveys rather than us. If we earn \$5 in a day through surveys, the same thing the U.S people can earn \$20-\$30 in a day in surveys [...]. Sometimes we sit idle.

Experiencing market inequality

evelynonline (US)

(Masters qualification) It is a random lottery give away that some of us attained with no clue how. We work for the same money as non-masters, but the requesters pay more to list so in essence, no one really gains anything extra. Every once in a while we have less competition on certain jobs

- Could be perfectly legitimate reasons for restrictions e.g. for particular survey samples
- But opacity of HITs that they find, would like to work on, which show 'You are not qualified to work on this HIT' without further explanation fuels this

Building Turker-Requester Relationships

- U.S. Turkers like anonymity and flexibility, Indian Turkers don't mind anonymity but prize relationship with American requesters
- Turker-Requester Relationships as well as relationships within the worker community
- Turkers want productive relationships with requesters
- They want fair pay for fair work: decent wages, fairness in judging work, timely payment, respect and relationship



Thank you!

Enjoy the papers.

1. Martin et al. Turking in a global labour market. 2016
2. Gupta et al. Turk-life in India. 2014
3. Martin et al. Being a Turker. 2014
4. Gupta et al. Understanding Indian crowdworkers. 2014
5. Upcoming book chapter 'Understanding The Crowd: ethical and practical matters in the academic use of crowdsourcing', Springer 2017

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