Crowd Workers

Crowdsourcing and Human Computation

Instructor: Chris Callison-Burch

Website: crowdsourcing-class.org
Ethical questions about Mechanical Turk

- Who are the workers?
- Why would they work for pennies?
- Is it a digital sweatshop?
Ethical questions about Mechanical Turk

Amazon Mechanical Turk: Gold Mine or Coal Mine?

Karèn Fort*
INIST-CNRS/LIPN

Gilles Adda**
LIMSI/CNRS

K. Bretonnel Cohen†
U. Colorado School of Medicine/U.
Colorado at Boulder

Recently heard at a tutorial in our field: “It cost me less than one hundred bucks to annotate this using Amazon Mechanical Turk!” Assertions like this are increasingly common, but we believe they should not be stated so proudly; they ignore the ethical consequences of using MTurk (Amazon Mechanical Turk) as a source of labour.

Manually annotating corpora or manually developing any other linguistic resource, however multi-layered, requires a significant investment in human labour.
Here's an excerpt from an IRB application Chris Callison-Burch posted - "We will pay participants small sums of money to complete our tasks, ranging from $0.01 to $1. All participants can choose for themselves whether the compensation is fair, and opt not to do it if they deem the compensation to be too low. Amazon's Mechanical Turk has many other researchers and companies offering tasks, so we will offer compensation that is similar to what others offer."

He first refers to Amazon's Mechanical Turk as "an online labor market." And that, I agree with. It is an online labor market.

**Requesters like him**, and CrowdFlower, **collude**, explicitly or implicitly, **to keep wages at a substandard level** that is compatible with existence standard.

Unlike Jewels, I don't blame workers for taking low paying jobs. I can't blame a person for being needy enough to take what amounts to a crust of bread. I **blame Chris Callison-Burch, and others like him, for keeping the standard wage at crust of bread level.**

I feel like Maria in "Metropolis."
I tried one of those to see, I gave it up at 4 minutes in and about 2/3 of the way through. For the whole hit, I'd have taken about 6 minutes. 10 hits an hour - **$1.70 an hour.** Restricted to U.S. residents.

This is far too low to be considered a fair wage for a U.S. resident. My performance may be very far off from what others can do. Perhaps I took 4 times or more as long as an average worker would.

My complaint is that any U.S. requester knows what wage rate is required for a U.S. resident to survive. We may not agree on an exact number. But as they say, I know a fair wage when I see it, and this is not it.

Mturk is actually much smaller than what it can appear to be. Something close to requester monopoly has the power to keep wages low. Requester co-operation, explicit or implicit, reinforces this.

Chris Callison-Burch is not unaware, I think, of the mechanics of the wage structure of Mturk.
WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
The ongoing rise of human computation has created an environment where human workers are often regarded as nameless, faceless computational resources. Some people have begun to think of online tasks as a “remote person call”.

Unfortunately, as with any labor market, once humans and money are involved, a host of problems surface. From privacy breaches to unpaid or underpaid labor, there are real social risks that arise with the use of these technologies.

It is our responsibility to address them since it is designers, not ethicists or policy makers, who have the power to influence what is built and to mitigate risks before any harm is done.
MTurk for Workers
**Transcription of approximately 15 minutes of audio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>HIT Expiration Date</th>
<th>Reward:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amelia Jones</td>
<td>Sep 4, 2013 (1 day 21 hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Allotted: 24 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**By Invitation Only: Answer a few questions in a brief survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>HIT Expiration Date</th>
<th>Reward:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualtrics Survey</td>
<td>Sep 5, 2013 (2 days 23 hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Allotted: 8 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Take a geo-tagged photo of a landmark in North Dakota**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>HIT Expiration Date</th>
<th>Reward:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowdsourcing at Thomson Reuters</td>
<td>Sep 5, 2013 (2 days 16 hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Allotted: 3 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Dashboard - Chris Callison-Burch** (If you're not Chris Callison-Burch, [click here](#).)

Your Worker ID: A23K02TP714KK2

### Total Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rewards You Have Earned</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved HITs</td>
<td>$44.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonuses</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Earnings</td>
<td>$44.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Your HIT Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Submitted</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Pending</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2, 2013</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

View more...

### HIT Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HITs You Have Accepted</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HITs Accepted</td>
<td>1303</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HITs You Have Submitted</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitted</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>1081</td>
<td>98.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pending</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### HITs You Worked On For September 02, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Gandolph (Speech)</td>
<td>You need a microphone on your computer - you will record a word or phrase in your own voice</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>Approved - Pending Payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Gandolph (Speech)</td>
<td>You need a microphone on your computer - you will record a word or phrase in your own voice</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>Approved - Pending Payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Gandolph (Speech)</td>
<td>You need a microphone on your computer - you will record a word or phrase in your own voice</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>Approved - Pending Payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Gandolph (Speech)</td>
<td>You need a microphone on your computer - you will record a word or phrase in your own voice</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>Approved - Pending Payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Gandolph (Speech)</td>
<td>You need a microphone on your computer - you will record a word or phrase in your own voice</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>Approved - Pending Payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>You need a microphone on your computer - you will record a word or phrase in your own voice</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Approved - Pending Payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What sucks about the MTurk worker interface?

- No way to search by expected hourly rate
- No way to estimate the difficulty or length of time that it will take to do a task
- No way to know how reputable a requester is in advance
- No way to know how long until they will pay
- Information asymmetry, imbalance of power
### Manage Batches

Click on the name of the batch to see more details

#### Batches in progress (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch Name</th>
<th>Created</th>
<th>Assignments Completed</th>
<th>Time Elapsed</th>
<th>Average Time per Assignment</th>
<th>Batch Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compression HIT - grammar/meaning 10</td>
<td>July 04, 2013</td>
<td>2,468 / 2,468</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>3 minutes 40 seconds</td>
<td>100% submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100% published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Batches ready for review (143)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch Name</th>
<th>Created</th>
<th>Assignments Completed</th>
<th>Time Elapsed</th>
<th>Average Time per Assignment</th>
<th>Effective Hourly Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Alignment - Trusted Workers - Dev 0.7</td>
<td>July 02, 2013</td>
<td>1,995 / 2,000</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>1 minute 58 seconds</td>
<td>$4.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read a group of sentences and decide how grammatical they are.

English, writing, editing, language, research, language, paraphrasing, paraphrases, summarization, summaries, text, comprehension, reading.

HIT Approval Rate (%) for all Requesters' HITs greater than or equal to 85 (Required for preview)

Number of HITs Approved greater than 100 (Required for preview)

Location is UNITED STATES (Required for preview)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worker ID</th>
<th>Work Time In Seconds</th>
<th>Lifetime Approval Rate</th>
<th>Input System Names 0</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1H1P4QSM08Y1</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>100% (59/59)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3O7D2TTK99UK5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12% (119/1007)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASB13NJKTGCYB</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100% (44/44)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1BM57TUNAQIXM</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>100% (3/3)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3445FTO62DGIX</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>100% (78/78)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYSX5GNO640MZ</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>13% (5/39)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A21U64TBRENETA</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>100% (17/17)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A23AFAXSEYH61S</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>100% (177/177)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1GYXHW4YCOJ0H</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>100% (77/77)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3O7D2TTK99UK5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12% (119/1007)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGRDUEDEUXUS</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>100% (12/12)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYSX5GNO640MZ</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>13% (5/39)</td>
<td>pos_control neg_control /export/common/SCALE13/...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workers rate Requesters based on a Requester’s:

- **communicativity**: How responsive has this requester been to communications or concerns you have raised?

- **generosity**: How well has this requester paid for the amount of time their HITs take?

- **fairness**: How fair has this requester been in approving or rejecting your work?

- **promptness**: How promptly has this requester approved your work and paid?
Choose the best category for this government project (good english important)

Requester: The Public Group

HIT Expiration Date: Sep 10, 2013 (6 days)
Time Allotted: 60 minutes

Communicativity: 1.17 / 5
Generosity: 1.73 / 5
Fairness: 1.39 / 5
Promptness: 1.86 / 5

What do these scores mean?
Scores based on 81 reviews
Terms of Service violation flags: 0
Report your experience with this requester »

Took a leap of faith on this requester and was rewarded with a %50 reject rate and a broken search feature and no feedback. Would not recommend, even if you have thousands of HITs under your belt to cushion the inevitable rejections.

Aug 29 2013 | KBH19 | flag | comment

Arbitrarily rejected over half of the hits I submitted, and then banned me from submitting any more hits for them. I suppose that's a blessing in disguise though, as I had no intention of doing any for them again after the first batch of rejections.

Aug 21 2013 | bour...@g... | flag | comment

Their HIT is very unclear. There is an option to browse for the result, but it does not work.

Aug 20 2013 | jeff...@g... | flag | comment
For those of you who know Arabic, this is a very solid requester with a very fair pay. Highly recommended for those who want to make some real money. Payment usually take one week depending on the HITs you are doing.

don't waste your time trying to submit machine translated crap, or random answers to multiple choice questions, you will get blocked instantly.

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Jul 27 2013 | hala...@h... | flag | comment

Chris is one of the better requesters on MTurk, if you meet his qualifications and actually do the work as he requires. Glad to see that someone out there can finally work on those Arabic translation HITs that we've all seen for months now.

Jul 27 2013 baudelai...@m...

Good requester. Everything approved in a couple of days. I had no problems. This is a safe requester to work for.
Did about 50 of these earlier and was a little weary based on reviews. They all approved which was good for me, but I hope the requester doesn't do the majority rule thing anymore. It seems that's why many got rejected and he doesn't seem to respond to others so do at your own risk.

Jan 19 2016 | dancab...@y... |

**HIT(s):**
Determine whether or not sentences are true; Translation from Russian to English

I've done a few of the "Determine whether or not sentences are true" HITs for this requester, which were great, paid fairly, in my opinion and took just a couple hours to approve and pay. I also did many translations from Russian to English and all of them got approved. Pay on these varies because it's 4 sentences per HIT for 30c but sometimes sentences are very long, sometimes very short.
Turker Nation discussion boards

- A watering hole for Turkers to discuss MTurk and Requesters
- Has a Requester Hall of Fame / Shame
- Lots of engaging conversation
- Sometime people vent their frustration
I am developing a browser plug-in that will improve the MTurk UX for Workers.

The idea is to track and aggregate statistics across many workers, so that they have better information.

Academically, I am interested in these questions:

a) How much time does the average Turker spend working?
b) What is their hourly rate?
c) How reputable are requesters (what fraction of the HITs do they approve v. reject)?
d) How much time do workers spend searching v working?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TurkOpticon's qualitative attributes</th>
<th>CrowdWorker's quantitative equivalents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>promptness:</strong> How promptly has this requester approved your work and paid?</td>
<td><strong>Expected time to payment:</strong> On average, how much time elapses between submitting work to this Requester and receiving payment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>generosity:</strong> How well has this requester paid for the amount of time their HITs take?</td>
<td><strong>Average hourly rate:</strong> What is the average hourly rate that other Turkers make when they do this requester's HITs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fairness:</strong> How fair has this requester been in approving or rejecting your work?</td>
<td><strong>Approval/rejection rates:</strong> What percent of assignments does this Requester approve? What percent of first-time Workers get any work rejected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>communicativeness:</strong> How responsive has this requester been to communications or concerns you have raised?</td>
<td><strong>Reasons for rejection:</strong> Archive of all of the reasons for Workers being rejected or blocked by this Requester.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Discover

Here are HITs that other Crowd Workers completed. You can sort by the hourly rate averaged across all workers, and other features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hitgroup name, description and keywords</th>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>HITs available</th>
<th>Hourly rate</th>
<th>Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents of 11- to 18-month-olds: Complete an online study with your child about intuitive probability!</strong></td>
<td>Lookit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$590.55</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go to MTurk page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For parents/guardians to complete with child aged 11 to 18 months ONLY: participate in a web-based experiment about how your child makes predictions. baby,babies,infant,children,child, parenting,kids,parents,causal,reasoning,probability,cognitive,development,learning,psychology,experiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website Content Review 6</strong> go to MTurk page</td>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$29.03</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search &quot;warburg pincus healthcare&quot;. List the 1st option in the top navigation bar, of the 1st search result for payment. warburg,pincus,healthcare</td>
<td>Elizabeth Harvey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>App Usage Study</strong> go to MTurk page</td>
<td>Gracy P.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$25.18</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing new apps for mobile devices over a 12-day period survey,apps,mobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website Content Review 43</strong> go to MTurk page</td>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$23.79</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search 'terrorism emerging markets, high yield fund! List the title of the 2nd option in the website navigation menu of the 1st search result for payment. terrorism,emerging markets,high yield fund'</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Advantage of a Clear View

TurkView is designed to bridge the gap between workers & requesters through data & communication.

**Wage Aggregate Tracking**

This is fairly straightforward: we take the completion time & the reward amount (where available) and calculate the average hourly rate for the task. We then apply that number to a simple range based on US minimum wage standards to color-code the data for easy to digest numerical data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Pay Range (Hourly)</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>&lt; $7.25 /hr</td>
<td>Hourly averages below US Federal minimum wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORANGE</td>
<td>$7.25 - $10.00 /hr</td>
<td>Hourly averages between Federal &amp; highest statewide (CA) minimum wages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>&gt; $10.00 /hr</td>
<td>Hourly averages above all US minimum wage standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Driven by TurkViewJS**

TurkViewJS is the engine behind TurkView. An efficient collection process combined with a user-friendly interface encourages more frequent worker input & allows for the refinement of aggregate data in real time.

Our API also allows users access to real-time data about HITs and requesters. Users can feel confident with the knowledge that our platform has vetted thousands of requesters who treat workers fairly.
Workers’ concerns

- Wage issues: unfairly rejected work, slow payment, and payments that do not fairly reflect the work that they performed
- No appeals process for unfairly rejected work. Requestors can unresponsive.
- Grass roots tools, user-maintained ratings/blacklist of requestors
Requesters’ concerns

- Quality: Workers may do substandard work or more blatantly cheat
- Cheating by randomly clicking or typing, using scripts to enter useless input, or giving answers that are not useful, but just relevant enough to get payment
- No ability to judge workers’ skills or qualifications in advance
- Often difficult to automatically judge the quality of work
System Design Guidelines

Bederson and Quinn (ALT CHI 2011)

- Provide **hourly pay** and disclose the expected wage
- **Value workers’ time** and optimize tasks to use worker’s time effectively
- Use **Objective quality metrics** to approve or reject
- **Give immediate feedback** to workers on their quality, and warnings to problematic workers
System Design Guidelines

Bederson and Quinn (ALT CHI 2011)

• Define **payment terms** including how quickly payments will be paid, and follow them.

• **Provide a grievance process** for workers who were treated unfairly. Removes the imbalance of power.

• **Provide task context**: Makes work more satisfying to workers, and lets them make informed ethical choices about what work to do.

• **Limit anonymity**: Anonymity of requestors enables them to reject work with impunity. Anonymity for workers enables them to cheat with nearly no risk.
Who are the Turkers?

- Requesters are given very little information about Turkers - basically just a serial number
- No names, no demographic information (like what languages they speak)
- Who are these people who work for us?
Implications for anonymity of crowd workers

• Cannot assume that they have a particular set of skills
• They should be treated as non-experts
• It important to design tasks to be simple and easy to understand
• Quality control is a significant challenge
Who are the Turkers?

- Post a HIT to interview them!
- Panos Ipeirotis has a nice demographic survey on his blog “A Computer Scientist In Business School”
- Age, Gender, Education Levels, Marital Status, Household Income, Weekly earnings. Why do you it?
- India versus USA
Weekly hours, earnings

- <1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-4 hours
- 4-8 hours
- 8-20 hours
- 20-40 hours
- 40+ hours

- <$1
- $1-5
- $5-10
- $10-20
- $20-50
- $50-100
- $100-200
- $200-500
- $500+
Why do you do it?

I use MTurk to kill time

Primary source of income

I participate on MTurk for fun

Secondary source of income or for pocket change

Fruitful way to spend free time and get cash (instead of TV)
Survey Methodology

• Ask 1000 Turkers to fill out questionnaire
• Pay them each $0.10 for ~3 minutes
• Do you think that the methodology was good?
• Do you think it yields an accurate sample of Turkers?
• Any bias?
Should same-sex couples be ALLOWED to marry, or do you think they should NOT BE ALLOWED to marry?

Is there something that would make you vote for a Republican presidential candidate? Please list as many reasons as you can think of.

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you / you and your family are BETTER off or WORSE off than you were a year ago?
Demographics

57% Female
43% Male

79% White
8% Black
3% Asian
3% Hispanic
3% Other
Employment status

- Working: 58%
- Unemployed: 12%
- Students: 16%
- Homemakers: 8%
- Retired: 2%
- Other: 2%
- Disabled: 2%

Had a job in last 6 months?

- Yes: 73%
- No: 27%
My jobs have always consisted of customer service, cashier at a gas station, grocery store, etc. Currently, I am not employed. I stay at home and care for my disabled son.

My last regular job was for the U.S. Census Bureau. My job involved going door to door in my town and neighboring towns in my county and interviewing residents.

I am an event planner for a non-profit organization. I plan events, coordinate auctions, solicit donations from corporations and individuals.

My last job was at Walgreens. I was a cashier overnight. Now, I am unemployed and I make very little money on mturk.

My last job was working in a subshop called Jimmy Johns. My duties were to make subs, as well as cleaning up during my shift and at close.

I am an energy efficiency analyst working at a utility. I oversee evaluation of our energy efficiency programs so that their impact can be accurately estimated.
Plans to vote / Party Affiliation

- **64%** Will Vote
- **23%** Voted early
- **13%** Will not vote

Democrat: **49%**
Independent: **29%**
Republican: **19%**
Other Party: **4%**
Obama Landslide if only Turkers voted
Turkers accurately predict their states
Ethnographic Study of Turker Nation

Observation: 40% of US-based Turkers said they did it for fun. (Ipeirotis study)

Conclusion: Turkers do HITs because they like them, regardless of what the pay is
Turking for Fun?

danturker
This attitude would be requesters dream come true. The workers come here to have fun and play and the lousy pay for work is not an issue. This attitude helps create low pay for the AMT work force that does care about fair pay.

larak56
I agree with most everyone here. While I do find some of the HITS fun and actually learn an incredible amount by doing HITS, I do it for the cash.
Assumption: MTurk is a pure form of market that falls into a fair equilibrium. Bad employers and workers are rooted out as their poor actions become visible. Wages or pricing settles to a ‘natural’ level.

Conclusion: "apparently half a million people find work at pay rates they’re entirely happy with but pay rates that are below minimum wage"

–Tim Worstall, Forbes blogger
Pay Expectations

jimtexan79
I was hoping to make at least $3,650.00 (you know, 10 bucks a day) but, alas, I fell short. I blame all those summer months that I slacked off. :[
So, how much didja make? Was it what you hoped?

mwanza57
I made $1,179. Would love to double that for next year.

bubbles
$14,476.93 Hoping to do better this year.
It is a full part time job for me. I can turk during slow periods at my day job and from 4-10 during the week I turk. Because of pay cuts at my day job I would have to be working a part time job outside the home if I did not turk. And yes, my boss is aware of my activities and when they cut our pay the last time, he openly told us that if we can find other work that he would be flexible in allowing it. Just trying to hold on until the housing market rebounds and keep the company in business. It is cool of him to allow it, but I would much rather have my salary back and drop turking.
I am having a hard time. Mentally, spiritually, physically, and especially financially. My roommate has been out of work for almost 2 months, and ran out of money a few weeks ago... I have to come up with $$ if he can't to keep this roof over my own head. And he does now have a job that he is in training for--tho he will not see any money from it for a few MORE weeks. In the meantime, rent is due today, and I don't have all of it. I am going to have to beg the office to take what I do have, and let me pay the rest next paycheck. I could stand that, if that were all there was, but the power and internet need to stay on, or NEITHER ONE OF US will have any income. I paid the power right before cut off last time--that means it can't be long before cut-off notice comes a-knockin again. I know the internet bill is like that too now... I have been beating my head in trying to do more turking, more anything online [... rest of post omitted...]
Jobs in the sharing economy
In Search of Uber’s Unicorn

The ride-sharing service says its median driver makes close to six figures. But the math just doesn’t add up.

By Alison Griswold

An Uber driver waits for customers in his car in Beverly Hills, California.
UBER DRIVERS

Read here about an important lawsuit brought by Uber drivers to recover the tips they should have received and reimbursement for expenses

Uber drivers have filed a class action lawsuit claiming they have been misclassified as independent contractors and are entitled to be reimbursed for their expenses that Uber should have to pay, like for gas and vehicle maintenance. The lawsuit also challenges Uber’s former practice of telling passengers that the gratuity is included and not to tip the drivers, even though (until 2017) you were not getting a tip!!

LATEST NEWS:

In September 2018, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the District Court’s decision which had certified a class of most Uber drivers in California and had declared Uber’s arbitration clause to be unenforceable. As a result of the Ninth Circuit’s decision, all Uber drivers who are covered by an arbitration clause cannot be part of the lawsuit in court but instead can only pursue their claims through individual arbitration. (We expect our court case will continue to include drivers who are not bound by Uber’s arbitration clause.) We are pursuing arbitrations for thousands of Uber drivers. If you are signed up with us to pursue an arbitration if it became necessary, please watch your emails for any updates from us related to your arbitration.

In order to join our contact list of drivers interested in the case who want to receive updates, please email us at uberlawsuit@llrlaw.com and tell us your name, email address, and location where you have driven for Uber.

The attorneys representing the drivers are:
Uber drivers have filed a class action lawsuit claiming they have been misclassified as independent contractors and are entitled to be reimbursed for their expenses that Uber should have to pay, like for gas and vehicle maintenance. The lawsuit also challenges Uber’s former practice of telling passengers that the gratuity is included and not to tip the drivers, even though (until 2017) you were not getting a tip!

LATEST NEWS:

In September 2017, a California District Court’s decision on the class of drivers in California’s Proposition 22 case who are covered by the court but instead will have to be arbitrations. (We expect our court case will continue to include drivers who are not bound by Uber’s arbitration clause.) We are pursuing arbitrations for thousands of Uber drivers. If you are signed up with us to pursue an arbitration if it became necessary, please watch your emails for any updates from us related to your arbitration.

If you want to receive updates, please email us at uberlawsuit@llrlaw.com and tell us your name, email address, and location where you have driven for Uber.

The attorneys representing the drivers are:
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF CALIFORNIA

DYNAMEX OPERATIONS WEST, INC.,

Petitioner,

v.

THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
LOS ANGELES COUNTY,
Respondent;

CHARLES LEE et al.,
Real Parties in Interest.

S222732
Ct.App. 2/7 B249546
Los Angeles County
Super Ct. No. BC332016

Under both California and federal law, the question whether an individual worker should properly be classified as an employee or, instead, as an independent contractor has considerable significance for workers, businesses, and the public generally. On the one hand, if a worker should properly be classified as an employee, the hiring business bears the responsibility of paying federal Social Security and payroll taxes, unemployment insurance taxes and state employment taxes, providing worker’s compensation insurance, and, most relevant for the present case, complying with numerous state and federal statutes and regulations governing the wages, hours, and working conditions of employees. The worker then obtains the protection of the applicable labor laws and regulations. On the other hand, if a worker should properly be classified as an independent contractor, the business does not bear any of those costs or responsibilities, the worker is not entitled to none of the numerous labor law benefits, and the public may be required under applicable laws to assume additional financial burdens with respect to such workers and their families.

Although in some circumstances classification as an independent contractor may be advantageous to workers as well as to businesses, the risk that workers who should be treated as employees may be improperly misclassified as independent contractors is significant in light of the potentially substantial economic incentives that a business may have in mischaracterizing some workers as independent contractors. Such incentives include the unfair competitive advantage the business may obtain over competitors that properly classify some workers as employees and that thereby assume the fiscal and other responsibilities and burdens that an employer owes to its employees. In recent years, the regulatory agencies of both the federal and state governments have declared the misclassification of workers as independent contractors rather than employees is a very serious problem, depriving federal and state governments of billions of dollars in tax revenue and millions of workers of the labor law protections to which they are entitled.

See United States Department of Labor, Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations (1994) page 64 ["The single most important factor in determining which workers are covered by employment and labor statutes is the way the line is drawn between employees and independent contractors"] <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/key_workplace/2/> (as of Apr. 30, 2018).

See United States Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division, Misclassification of Employees as Independent Contractors <https://www.dol.gov/whd/workers/misclassification/> (as of Apr. 30, 2018).

California Department of Industrial Relations, Worker Misclassification <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/worker_misclassification.html> (as of Apr. 30, 2018).
like independent plumbers or electricians, who have traditionally been viewed as *genuine* independent contractors who are working only in their own independent business.

For the reasons explained hereafter, we conclude that in determining whether, under the suffer or permit to work definition, a worker is properly considered the type of independent contractor to whom the wage order does not apply, it is appropriate to look to a standard, commonly referred to as the “ABC” test, that is utilized in other jurisdictions in a variety of contexts to distinguish employees from independent contractors. Under this test, a worker is properly considered an independent contractor to whom a wage order does not apply only if the hiring entity establishes: (A) that the worker is free from the control and direction of the hirer in connection with the performance of the work, both under the contract for the performance of such work and in fact; (B) that the worker performs work that is outside the usual course of the hiring entity’s business; and (C) that the worker is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same nature as the work performed for the hiring entity.
Misclassification of employees as independent contractors is found in an increasing number of workplaces in the United States, in part reflecting larger restructuring of business organizations. When employers improperly classify employees as independent contractors, the employees may not receive important workplace protections such as the minimum wage, overtime compensation, unemployment insurance, and workers’ compensation. Misclassification also results in lower tax revenues for government and an uneven playing field for employers who properly classify their workers. Although independent contracting relationships can be advantageous for workers and businesses, some employees may be intentionally misclassified as a means to cut costs and avoid compliance with labor laws.

The Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division (WHD) continues to receive numerous complaints from workers alleging misclassification, and the Department continues to bring successful enforcement actions against employers who misclassify workers. In addition, many states have...
Summary

On September 18, 2019, Governor Newsom signed California Assembly Bill 5 (AB 5) into law – codifying and expanding the California Supreme Court’s decision in the Dynamex case and the "ABC test" for determining if a worker may be classified as an independent contractor, instead of an employee.
Uber and Lyft Drivers in California Will Remain Contractors

The victory of Proposition 22, the most expensive initiative in the state’s history, could help gig companies remake labor laws throughout the country.

Drivers and other gig workers urging voters to reject California's Proposition 22 outside Uber’s headquarters in San Francisco last month.  Jim Wilson/The New York Times