WHO ARE THE CROWDSOURCERS?

Original Paper: Who are the crowdsourcers? Shifting demographics in Mechanical Turk. Joel Ross et all
- Marketplace for tasks requiring human intelligence
- Tasks that are difficult for humans but easy for computers
- Used for performing user studies, image labeling, natural language processing etc.
PROFILE OF THE TURKERS

- Success of AMT depends on human participation.
- Humans affect and are affected by the system.
- Learning Turker's profiles may help to categorize them into expert, moderate or novice users.
- We can assign confidence score to each user to improve accuracy of results
DEMOGRAPHICS

- Initially the workers were mainly in the U.S. and were mostly well-educated and female with moderately high incomes.
- But now, there is more of an international population, who rely on the income earned through the site and treat Turking as a part-time or full-time job.
- Specifically, there is an increase of Indian workers who are mostly male.

[Image source: Who are the Crowdworkers? Joel Ross]
AGE OF THE TURKERS

- Since Turkers are now mostly Indian, their average age is around 26-28 years as compared to US workers who are 33-35 years.
- Due to the changing demographics, the crowdsourcing population is more young and agile.

[Image source: Who are the Crowdworkers? Joel Ross]
MALE FEMALE RATIO

- Earlier turkers were housewives or other people mainly trying to supplement their income by doing HITs at their spare time.
- The equality of the male-female ratio shows that nowadays Turkimg is taken seriously.
- Possibly due to better HIT design or wider acceptance by society.

[Image source: Who are the Crowdworkers? Joel Ross]
- Since a majority of workers in India have incomes less than 10k, the average income of turkers has declined.

[Image source: Who are the Crowdworkers? Joel Ross]
- Earlier, Turking was a hobby that people used to do at their spare time.
- Nowadays since new Turkers make less than 10k a year, the dependence on Mturk as a primary source of income is increasing.
- An astonishing 27% of people in the survey said MTurk income is necessary to make basic ends meet.

[Image source: Who are the Crowdworkers? Joel Ross]
SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- The method of survey may have skewed the results

- People answer as to portray themselves in a positive light

- The questions asked may have been controversial

- Respondents may have falsified the answers

- The survey itself was in the form of a paid HIT.
IMPLICATIONS OF THE SURVEY AND SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

- Due to an increase in young educated people in the workforce, the design of HITs might have to be modified.

- Researchers may have to take into account that a lot of qualified, well educated people are doing the HITs.
SHOULD TURKERS BE ANONYMOUS

- Revealing identity may lead to exploitation.

- Requesters may offer lower, unfair prices on HITs if they know the demographics of the workers

- How to recognize minors?

[Image source: openclipart.org]
Relying on AMT for income

- There are communities on the web that rate requesters and jobs based on the money they pay to turkers. For example mturkforum.com
- Does this affect quality of work and selection of HITs?
- The communities discuss which are the easiest jobs to do for the least effort.
- Is Turking a business?
MINDS FOR SALE?

- Is the compensation that turkers receive on par with the work that they are expected to do?
- Cognitive labour?
- Reports of requesters rejecting answers after obtaining them in order to avoid paying turkers.
- Is this exploitation?
- Should there be a minimum wage for HITs?
WHAT LIES IN THE FUTURE?

- As jobs become scarce, more people will turn to MTurk for extra cash.
- This also means new legislation will have to be placed on what constitutes ethical behaviour on MTurk and what does not.
- Ultimately, the entities providing results are 'human beings' not 'machines' and need to be treated with due dignity.
MTURK IN FICTION

- Internet memes floating around (Bad Luck Brian)

- 'The Future of Mechanical Turk' movie.
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