

**EXCH
w/
Turkers**

Dialogues with the human intelligence behind machines

Featuring Julio, Brianne,
Anand, Reylin and Sonia.

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Menard Editions

EXCH W/ Turkers

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Introduction

In March 2020, for a period of 22 days, we hosted a website which highlighted the role of humans behind Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as their working conditions. Our idea was to show how, although often presented as automatic and autonomous, AI depends on the work of many humans. In the chat windows of the website, it was possible to talk with some of the people who perform Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs), microtasks that are used, among other things, to build AI databases and check the results of their algorithms. This form of labour is characterized by a lack of labour rights and very low wages, usually no more than 2 US\$ / hour.

The start of the project coincided with the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The new coronavirus was discovered in December 2019, and on 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared an international emergency, leading several countries to take measures to try to contain the spread of the virus. Social isolation, quarantine, and remote work were situations that were seen globally, emphasizing the urgency of discussing the future of work and its conditions, including domestic and online labour in an increasingly digital world.

Who are Turkers? There are currently 500,000 to 1,000,000 people doing this kind of digital work on the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platform, which is maintained by the US giant Amazon. They are called Turkers in reference to “The Turk”, related to an eighteenth-century chess-playing machine – which was presented as automatic, but actually had a human inside, controlling its pieces. A survey by Difallah et al. (2018) shows that 75% of Turkers are from the US, 16% from India and the remaining 9% from other countries. It is estimated that 2,000 to 5,000 workers can be found on the platform at any given

time (Ipeirotis, 2018). In January 2020, we asked some of these Turkers to list HITs that they had recently performed. The list is as diverse as it is picturesque:

“Analyse images of zebras; play video games for 1 hour”; “repeat what the voice of Google and Alexa say”; “watch movies and rate them”; “identify flowers and fruits in Brazilian plants”; “categorize images from pornographic sites”; “draw boxes on lab rats in different pictures”; “mark body parts of people fighting”; “answer true or false on a questionnaire about marijuana”; “mark which employees in photos were wearing helmets”; “locate hard-to-find business addresses on their original websites”; “describe images of dead people, full of blood”; “make facial expressions on the computer camera”; “map furniture and floors in a kitchen”; “modify phrases in the imperative such as ‘play pagode [Brazilian genre] music’ to ‘press play to pagode music in the living room’”; “rate tweets on Twitter”; “push a button to send SMS to other people”; “transcribe commercial receipts”; “describe what you see in a photo of Tom Hanks”; “take pictures of one’s eyes”; “film 40 hand gestures”; “dance in front of the camera”; “count how many grains were in an image of a corn cob”; etc.

The mass of workers in this underworld of technological practices increases every day and is considered “the final telos of algorithmic labour” (Finn, 2017). This is the new achievement of the algorithmic capitalist economy, that of the “non-place” of work, a territory as diluted as it is difficult to regulate. We also consider that it is a practical case of what Marx calls externalisation (*entausserung*) that not only causes work to become something with

an external existence, but also that it exists outside the creator. Researchers use terms like “infoproletariat” (Antunes, 2019, in addition to Grohmann, 2018) to characterize this group of workers. The Turkers’ opportunity to get to know and establish contact with one another is practically nil, which prevents these workers from articulating around labour regulations, for example.

How did the Exch w/ Turkers work? To make the Exch w/ Turkers website, we published a call for participation on the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platform itself. From there, five Turkers of different backgrounds were selected and hired to work 30 minutes a day (except Sundays) answering questions from the public. This time was organized so as not to overlap with their regular workload, and the hourly rate was US\$ 16.

The structure of the website followed the logic of chats in the 1990s, a time when the Internet was not yet dominated by large platforms and “surveillance capitalism.” At any time, visitors could start a conversation with one

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Overview of the Exch w/ Turkers website.

of these workers. But, going against the current trend of immediacy, Turkers were not always on-line to respond to messages in real time.

Why does it matter? A considerable part of the idea of “automation” is only possible thanks to a wide exploitation of human labour – which allows us to affirm that part of AI systems is not, in fact, processes resulting from “intelligent” machines, but of machines **with** intelligent humans. While engineers, programmers, and other professionals in the field of AI are well-paid (or at least visible), the work of Turkers is obscured to the point of them being called “ghost workers” (Gray and Suri, 2019). Even if momentarily, we want to take them out of the abstraction of the “cloud” and radically rethink the world of labour in a technocapitalist society. For that, nothing better than dialoguing with those who structure this system.

What next? A publication? Yes. As soon as the project’s website was no longer interactive, we felt the need to create a second layer in the conversations carried out with Sonia, Julio, Anand, Reylin and Brianne. In e-mails exchanged with them, a week after the end of the interaction, Julio showed the following interest: “I would like to re-read everything I wrote and see where I could complement or even disagree with myself. Internet conversations tend to be very direct and superficial, even if they were special.” With that comment, Julio gave us the idea of building a second stage of the project: a publication that compiles the best parts of the conversations that took place on the website.

The idea, however, was not for it to be a traditional book, as it seemed too anachronistic and trivial to simply reproduce on paper a set of dialogues that happened within a

digital context. We see this publication as a new invitation to the participating workers. They were paid again, this time to read their answers, without haste, and insert footnotes where they considered necessary to complement their answers, to add new thoughts or even reconsiderations. Brianne, a Turker from the US, commented on the experience in an e-mail to us: “That was fascinating! On the website I had already felt valued. But now this is in an even greater power: a human being thinks, rethinks, corrects himself, remembers things that he had previously forgotten. It was delicious and very beautiful to re-read and complement me as a person, worker and Turker.” It is worth mentioning that the design proposed by designer Guilherme Falcão for this publication was built in dialogue with these same five Turkers.

Avoiding technophobia, as well as naive futurism, technology needs to be considered from its social and historical foundations. For this, we need to understand and highlight the “essence of the social being” in technology, what Brazilian theorist Alvaro Vieira Pinto called “the embodiment of technical practices.” What this publication aims to propose is that humans are the energy source of machines and “what effectively revolutionizes human existence is always the human himself.” (Pinto, p. 84, 2005). It was inspired by this that we decided to produce a publication that not only materializes humans, but also humanizes technology.

*Bruno Moreschi
with the help of Gabriel Pereira and Amanda Jurno.*

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ABOUT THE WEBSITE

The website Exch w/ Turkers was designed and developed by Bernardo Fontes, Guilherme Falcão, Gabriel Pereira and I, members of the Group on Artificial Intelligence and Art (GAIA) / C4AI, Inova USP, University of São Paulo. It was the result of an invitation by aarea, a curatorial platform for digital art projects by Marcela Vieira and Livia Benedetti.

An important part of the website's programming was carried out by Luciano Ratamero, whom we thank immensely for the commitment.

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JULIO

I am 37 years old. I have a degree in Audio-visual Production, and I live in the interior of São Paulo, Brazil. I was out of a job in 2016, in the midst of a crisis. I have been working on MTurk for a year – it is a continuous learning process, since the tasks available are hardly repeated. Over time, you discover interesting work and others that are definitely not worth it, due to the likely back pain caused by long hours of bad posture in front of the computer. And, of course, for the terrible pay. Even after a year, I find myself discovering tactics to improve my performance and to dose personal and online life with the computer – always waiting for the next interesting task and my head not being able to focus on a film, because something good might appear on the MTurk any minute.

[brunomoreschi - 13/03/20 19:45:28] Do you remember the first time you went on MTurk? What was it like? What was your first impression?

[julio_turker_br -22:31:02] Wow! The first time was in 2016 or 2017. I applied to work, but they never replied. I don't think they accepted Brazilians at the time, I'm not sure. Last year, I decided to try again with another e-mail and – *bingo!* – they accepted me. It was hell at first, because I simply did not understand anything – but I already had experience on other online job sites like F8, Clickworker and Appen. That month I made US\$ 47 and I was super happy. The following month, I doubled the amount, and by the fourth month I was making over US\$ 300 a month. It's really practical.

[gabriel - 22:32:10] What's your routine like when you access MTurk?

[julio_turker_br - 22:41:13] I have an established ritual. I open the browser and with it all the MTurk tools with Hit Finder and Hit Catcher, I set it to search

for the tasks that I know will appear each hour and, specifically on Hit Finder, I set it to beep when the tasks of specific requesters that I have saved appear. After that, I make my coffee and start my routine¹.

[brunomoreschi - 23:22:05] Could you describe the main HITs you've done today?

[julio_turker_br - 14/03/20 01:20:00] Today I basically copied some receipts (which means extracting information such as codes and products from invoices). And I did a lot of identifying whether an advertisement was good or not in relation to a post, from a specific company.

[bernardo - 7:59:06] When I shared the project with friends, many of them didn't know what MTurk and HITs were... In your own words, how would you describe these acronyms and what you do for a living?

[julio_turker_br - 8:15:53] I would say that MTurk is like a marketplace of tasks (which we call HITs), or a shopping mall, since US and Brazilian people love shopping malls. You browse through the pages and see what tasks you want to do and what you don't, balancing between good work and good pay. When something like that comes up, you'll be working for hours on end. I realize that what I do for work is a bit difficult to explain, people have never heard of it. Usually saying I "work from home" satisfies people's curiosity. That's when I'm not comparing it to something like Uber – I say it's like doing Uber, but at home.²

[miguelar2 - 13:45:10] I wanted to understand your work better, not so much in terms of working conditions, but how exactly you feed the algorithms. Which algorithms do you train, how does it work? This is all very new to me.

¹ I mean coffee figuratively. When I wake up, I drink *mate* and that's all.

² Most of the time, people find this explanation a bit strange, it seems very far removed from their work reality. They always ask me: what do you mean at home? Without a formal contract? I think it all sounds a bit hipster to them, haha.

julio_turker_br

I would say that MTurk is like a marketplace of tasks (which we call HITs), or a shopping mall, since US and Brazilian people love shopping malls.

[julio_turker_br - 13:53:46] I'm going to answer you with a few assumptions, because the tasks actually come quite broken down for us, so we're not sure what exactly is being developed.³ There are, for example, simple tasks such as identifying whether the person in the photo is male or female. There are others where you need to identify several people in a photo, marking them with different coloured squares for men and women. There are (very laborious) tasks in which you receive a video and have to mark each element in the video, such as pedestrians, cars, crosswalks and sidewalks, with dots, by enlarging the images – I understand that this is related to the development of autonomous cars. It's not just companies, there is also a lot of work posted by universities.⁴ There are other tasks where you see a post and an advertisement and you have to define whether it's good or not (according to their guidelines), because the algorithm identifies something completely wrong. I think it's going to take a long time for AI to learn to get it right.⁵ Another frequent task is to listen to computer-generated audio and select the best one, or to mark words that are being read incorrectly, or to mark feelings that the voice emits. There are also many tasks of cataloguing posts on the internet – “Is it related to the Coronavirus?”, for example. If so, what are the feelings of the person who posted it? Are they for or against the vaccine? What's more, many tasks don't want a single answer. So, based on the answers of several Turkers, not just mine, the AI does a “best of 3” and memorizes the likely right answer. But anyway, these are all assumptions, I'm just a worker in this whole process.

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³ At first, I was annoyed that I didn't have more information about what I was actually training. Not anymore.

⁴ I've seen HITs from Harvard and Columbia University, for example.

⁵ Sometimes you click on the right answer, but the system tells you that you made a mistake. So, I often get it wrong because I know it's going to consider my mistake as supposedly correct. Some requesters are lazy and haven't changed the initial questions for years, haven't proofread their work and things like that. Just as we Turkers are prone to mistakes, so are requesters.

[brunomoreschi - 15/03/20 02:36:27] Your work often involves making choices – for example, stating whether or not an image includes an element; whether or not a piece of content complies with certain rules, etc. Choosing isn't just a rational process, it's also emotional and ideological. At any time when you were working on MTurk, did you realize that your choice was going to make a difference and so you answered in such a way as to introduce something of your own into the machine?

[julio_turker_br - 06:24:48] Yes. But most of the tasks have very strict instructions and test questions – if you get this wrong, they block your work. There are also tasks that make me wonder: there was one where you had to read the photo, whether the people had beards etc. But 99% of those photos were of white people. I was thinking that this AI will only work if the person has that skin colour...

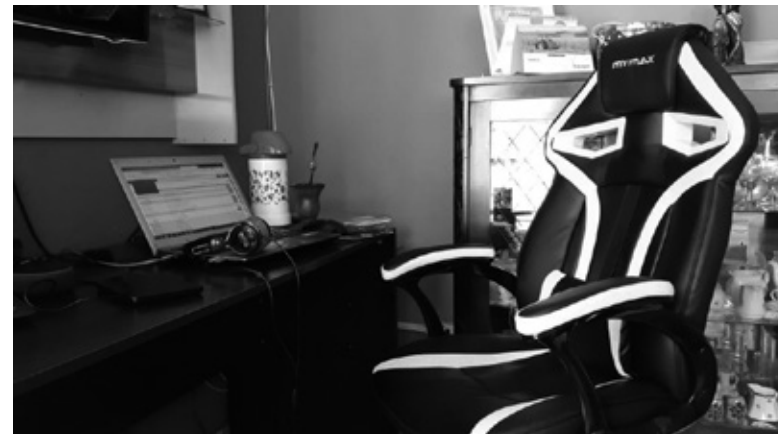
[silvan - 20:59:32] Have you ever done any work on MTurk that you suspected was related to military matters?

[julio_turker_br - 16/03/20 00:27:49] I've seen them, but they were only for US Turkers so I wasn't able to do them.

[marcelavieira - 19:45:22] I'm curious: can Turkers work via cell phone, or just on the computer?

[julio_turker_br - 17/03/20 22:11:16] Some tasks work on both platforms – mobile and desktop. Copying and pasting, for example, are activities that, when necessary, work better with a mouse.⁶

⁶ To be honest, at first, I didn't even have a mouse. I bought one for 150 Brazilian reais, then a good chair and desk, changed the SSD [Solid State Drive, a part that speeds up computer storage] and all this increased my output. As a result, I've seen an increase of around 30%, 40% in the number of HITs I do on MTurk. Ideally, you should prepare as if you were going to become a gamer. I'm not a gamer, I didn't know all this. You know what would have been ideal? If Amazon had offered me a great discount on the purchase of these equipment.



[brunomoreschi - 22:26:47] Julio, I'm really enjoying your answers: very well thought out! I'm asking everyone this question: what's your workspace like at home? Could you describe it, please?

[julio_turker_br - 23:14:55] Thanks, Bruno. I work in the living room, with the window and doors wide open to let in the sunlight, I love it!⁷ I'll send you a photo. I used to work outside, with even more light, but my posture was terrible, I had to go to the chiropractor (and I still do, twice a week), because I couldn't walk for a week!⁸

[brunomoreschi - 19/03/20 00:40:30] What do you think about having an exhausting job, which happens to be on a platform owned by Jeff Bezos, one of the richest people in the world, with a fortune estimated at US\$ 200 billion in 2020? Have you thought about that?

⁷ The first thing I do when I wake up is... look at the computer. The last thing I do at bedtime is... look at the computer again. It's happened that I've brushed my teeth, was ready for bed and when I went to turn off the computer, a good HIT came up and I spent another 2 hours working – I made something like US\$ 30, because it was early in the morning and there were few people online. So, I went to sleep at peace, because the daily average I wanted was done. For this reason, considering a workplace other than my own home wouldn't be useful. Going to the bathroom and rushing back to the PC because a good HIT came up is already part of my routine.

⁸ Even though it was awful, I don't see the slightest possibility of holding Amazon responsible for the problem I had.

[julio_turker_br - 20:27:56] I'm aware of this, but I have no power to make changes. I see it as morally wrong. There's also the issue that he doesn't pay taxes in the US, right? Unfortunately, it's part of the game, but I worry that these super corporations, which own everything, will grow more and more by centralizing a lot of power – it's already happening. I see a lot of cases of MTurk accounts being cancelled and it really annoys me, because they cancel for no reason and people lose their payments that are still stored there. I end up thinking about how this makes the richest man in the world even richer.

[gabriel - 20/03/20 12:31:52] How many times have you had your work cancelled?

[julio_turker_br - 13:25:27] Having your work cancelled or denied is part of being a Turker. I have 58 rejections in a universe of 60,000 approvals – which results in an approval of 99.9%. This value is a qualification that is used on the site, several tasks ask you to have at least 99% approval, some ask for 100%.⁹

[Coronito - 14:51:31] Why is the work cancelled?

[julio_turker_br - 15:12:13] Look, it's difficult to say why. You receive a general e-mail stating that you've failed to respect the rules, and they can't specifically explain anything more than that.

[brunomoreschi - 16:02:17] How do you feel when MTurk uses the argument that it's not really an employer, just a way of connecting employers to workers?

[julio_turker_br - 16:18:38] Outsourcing seems to me to be a form of exemption rather than a good productive practice. I find it very similar to an old job of

⁹ What annoys me are the unexplained rejections. Staying above 99% is possible for me because I do a lot of repetitive tasks and this gives me a high number and percentage of HITs. Unlike surveys, which I honestly don't have the patience for. Having 100% approval, on the other hand, is impossible. You're always going to click on some task that's going to reject you at some point. Anyone who has 100% is either a god or a liar.

mine, where there were decisions I didn't agree with, but it was part of my job to be "the face" of the company, passing this on to the client. This current form is perhaps just a sophistication and institutionalization of this old practice of pretending to be responsible. It's better to live on a fixed income than to have to work, right? The difference is that in the world market, someone will always do it, no matter how low the amount.¹⁰ It's not like in a small town, where the employer ends up being bad-mouthed and, if he doesn't change, he can no longer find a good team to work with.

[kamer - 21/03/20 7:44:05] From 0 to 10 (where 0 is nothing and 10 is maximum), how much do you agree with this statement: "I am an essential person for the digital world and the fact that almost nobody knows of my existence is a strategy to cause the wrong impression that machines are smarter than they actually are."

[julio_turker_br - 9:22:15] I would say 5, because I don't think I am an essential person in the system. They can replace us very quickly; I am just another number in millions of possible workers around the world and, yes, the lack of knowledge about how it works makes people think machines are smarter than us. But also, so many people are saying the world is flat and not a globe, so maybe I am wrong, and machines are smarter? Machines are probably faster in math, but they don't think, which would be our part, but we also believe in so much crazy stuff... It's a fine line....

[didiana - 15:42:11] How do you feel doing a job in which you and your role are "invisible" to end users?

[julio_turker_br - 20:56:44] Honestly, it's not something that affects me, either positively or negatively. I think that since I spent years working in the industry, under the Fordist model, it's practically part of my "work-

¹⁰ Every day on MTurk there are low paying HITs that sit there for days and days, until the company that published it removes it, posts it again, increases the value and, only then, gets the task done. But this increase in value is insignificant, it doesn't improve much.

ing self.”¹¹ But, of course, since I split my time between this work and my actual profession (which is acting), I can live well with it. I’ve had to work on this aspect, because actors have a very high level of vanity, haha.

[digital_socialism - 22/03/20 19:42:59] Julio, I keep thinking about ways the Turkers can organize themselves better to put pressure on Amazon. If somebody proposed to you to be part of a union of Turkers, that would represent you and your work and put more pressure on Amazon, would you accept it? Turkers of the world, unite!

[brunomoreschi - 19:46:01] Turkers of the world, unite!

[julio_turker_br - 22:13:06] Hey, comrade! I am not sure if it would work. There are some projects in which there are apps for Google Chrome to help your work. You can scroll through tasks and see rates done by us, even the colour changes. So, there is something going on. Of course, the problem is always the global network. So, a job that a US-based worker would not do, I would do, because it’s okay for my rates. I used to use another platform called F8, their payments are too low, but people from Venezuela are doing it because of the exchange rates and the crisis there.

[não_sou_um_robo - 23/03/20 02:47:11] What do the people closest to you think of your work as a Turker? Also, have you taught anyone how to be a Turker?

[julio_turker_br - 06:31:19] At home I usually talk about what tasks I’ve done during the day, but with my parents it’s always a vaguer explanation. Basically, I say that I work on the internet for companies in the US. I make a little joke that I earn in dollars and everything is fine, haha. Regarding your second question, I’ve always wanted to help other Brazilian Turkers. I even created a

¹¹ My first two jobs in life were in shoe factories. It’s hard to compare with MTurk, but today I earn more than the people I know who work in that sector. There are many differences, though: they have working hours, health insurance, unemployment insurance. That’s why I think, at the end of the day, the whole thing breaks even.

[julio_turker_br - 21/03/2020 9:22:15]

They can replace us very quickly; I am just another number in millions of possible workers around the world and, yes, the lack of knowledge about how it works makes people think machines are smarter than us.

WhatsApp group that had as many as 180 people, but I gave up because in this bubble, I was one of the first to have an account and, as nice as it is to help, I also needed to work and people are quite lazy. One day they came into the group and asked how to sign up on MTurk – 3 times, 3 different people, and the first one had already been answered, so everyone could see it. Several people there also started sharing test answers outside the group and I thought that was very wrong. Helping is one thing, but if you can't read messages in a group or simply use Google... then I'm sorry, but MTurk isn't for you. After a while, I deleted the group.¹²

[silvan - 20:57:57] I'd love to hear more about your experience creating a WhatsApp group for Turkers. What was that like? What was the positive side?

[julio_turker_br - 24/03/20 00:27:49] It was frustrating. I find the objective interesting, the use that the group can have. But I gave up because I'm very anxious and things always need to be in order. My e-mail inbox is always empty – I never leave anything half-finished. My WhatsApp needs to have all the messages read and replied to. Seeing groups with hundreds of messages without me reading and replying makes me extremely anxious – that's one of the reasons I cancelled the group.

[FORABOZO - 18:31:53] Have you ever recommended the profession to someone you know?

[julio_turker_br - 19:32:47] To some people who needed it, because they were unemployed. But nobody adapted to it or liked it. There's also the barrier of it being in English, so a lot of people have to install an extension called Late to translate the pages, which doesn't

¹² A lot of people sent me private messages on WhatsApp asking why I'd done that. In fact, I think I left the group and the following week they told me they had deleted it. But what can you do? I either work or I help clueless people. If I was in the US or still working as an actor, it would be easier, because the MTurk money would be beer money – as people say in the US. I think that would change the way I approach work, with less pressure.

work very well. I understand that it's not easy. For me, it took much more than a year to adapt, to get to know the options, to practice, to get to know the tools that really help. You have to change your behaviour, accept certain conditions. I don't want to romanticize it, being a Turker is really bad.

[bomfim.art - 22:22:09] What is the relationship between the demand for services and competition?

[julio_turker_br - 22:31:39] I usually only do jobs that I like and, of course, new ones come along every day. But the list of favourites is small, so some days there are more than 900 jobs available, but not necessarily any that I like, or that pay well. I have a list of requesters who often post interesting HITs. Every time one of them appears on MTurk, an extension called HIT Finder alerts me. The competition is fierce. Good tasks, when they appear, usually disappear from the platform within minutes (10, 12 minutes maximum) and you need to do as many as possible in that time. So, it's not a job where you decide: okay, now I'm going to sit and work for four hours. You can sit for 4 or 5 hours with nothing worthwhile to do, or 2 to 3 good tasks can come up in the same 15 minutes and you'll have to choose a single one. That's precisely why my computer is on all day with alerts. When that word appears on the page (the name of the requester), it beeps, and I rush to do that HIT.¹³

[staysafe - 22:59:17] Do you ever feel addicted to MTurk? Like, you can't stop doing it for the day, like a videogame. Or is it like physical exercise, which for me I just want to get through it?

[julio_turker_br - 23:15:10] Yes, almost every single day. It's like a disease, when I have to go outside, I always think about all the money I will lose. It's quite bad.

¹³ I turn off the computer to go to sleep. I hear the sound in my dreams even when the computer is off, imagine if it were on... My sleep is very affected, as is my anxiety. You can change the sounds if you like, but what's the point?

[svenancio - 23:29:24] I understand that Turkers from outside the US only receive Amazon credits as payment. What's that like for you? Can you tell us what kind of products you buy, or if you have any other way of exchanging these credits for money?

[julio_turker_br - 23:38:35] That's right. It's bad. Very bad. First of all, you're stuck because you can only shop on the US website – I can't even shop on Amazon Brazil!¹⁴ The prices are terrible, you can't buy a lot of products because they're only sold by Amazon Brazil to us, so we can't use our credit. For example: I wanted to buy an iPhone and found the model I wanted for US\$ 250. However, Amazon in the US charged an extra US\$ 250 for shipping, not to mention import taxes. One option is to use redirectors, because the shipping cost is much lower and sometimes you aren't taxed.¹⁵ There are several practices that Turkers of other nationalities do to get around this absurdity: one of them is to sell their gift card credits in online game credit auctions. But to do this, you need to find someone who will buy the credits from you. Last year (2019), Amazon announced that it was testing new payment methods, but I don't believe it. This situation brings Amazon customers to the US store, why would they hand these consumers over to other stores? It may continue this way because many US people use MTurk as an extra source of income, to "make a quick buck." In other words, they only use MTurk when they want to buy something specific on Amazon. But the world is much bigger than the United States.

[svenancio - 25/03/20 02:46:57] Got it. And is it easy to find people who buy gift cards? I would imagine that you resell them for cheaper than Amazon – or is that not the case?

¹⁴ Amazon profits twice over: from our work and from our purchases. If they made it possible to buy from Amazon Brazil, it wouldn't be so bad.

¹⁵ Redirectors are intermediary companies that I can use to buy products abroad. They give me an address, like a P.O. Box in their warehouse in the US. I can make a purchase using this address on any website outside Brazil. Then, when they receive it, they send it to me at a price determined by the weight of the merchandise. It's cheaper than US Amazon shipping, but still very expensive.

[julio_turker_br - 03:04:53] It's not easy at all. There are some websites for this, but you lose at least 15% to 20% of the value in the process. So, if you make US\$ 500 a month, you'll have about US\$ 400 left over. Because you have to give a discount to sell at these online auctions. In addition, there's a website fee, another fee for transferring to the bank, and the dollar is paid at a much lower rate than the official one. Some days I say to myself: today I only worked to pay the fees. In practice, I work longer to pay foreign taxes than I do to pay taxes in Brazil – and Amazon doesn't even give me a Unified Health System (like SUS in Brazil)!

[mrmontanari - 5:06:07] I was reading over the chat conversations and it made me think about the artistic power of this work and I want to know what you think about that. What do you think about this experience from an artistic point of view?

[julio_turker_br - 8:36:06] I've spent a long time thinking about your question, but I still don't have a clear answer. This work is just a source of income for me, there are tasks that I will do and others that I don't like and won't do. The development of AI is undoubtedly focused on the subjectivity of the individuals who program it, and this is probably the highest point of subjectivity possible on MTurk. I see AI like any machine that has appeared in the past, which can bring problems, such as eliminating jobs, but which will also bring good things, such as freeing people from repetitive work.¹⁶ We are not machines and I think that in the future there will be an awakening of our subjectivities. It's a dream, really. This is where art comes in, representing the individual much more than the production process. I use Alexa at home, and it annoys the hell out of me – there's still a lot of room for improvement.¹⁷ I'm an actor and I identify with the field of improvisation, so I know that AI won't have that capacity, at least not during my lifetime. I don't know where else to take the matter.

¹⁶ Well, there's a contradiction in what I wrote. Perhaps the correct expression is not to free, but to prevent millions of people from doing repetitive work, to the detriment of others (the Turk-ers) who will do these more boring tasks. Does that make sense?

[mrmontanari - 25/03/20 10:22:45] I like your answer, Julio. I find it interesting to think that the artist has a certain advantage, after all it's very difficult to lose your role to AI.

[julio_turker_br - 10:23:56] You see, I'm a mere Turker who does a little reading from time to time. If I'm not mistaken, there's an author called Mangabeira Unger who writes things related to the fourth industrial revolution – how AI will be used for repetitive tasks and we humans will have other capacities. But it's not my area of study, it was just a text I read once. There might be better theorists in this area, but I mentioned this one because I think what I ended up saying was kind of inspired by this article I read. Anyway, I'm only justifying this because my area of training is the audio-visual field and, in this area, yes, I can recommend experts.¹⁸ As for work and AI, I'm totally dependent on common knowledge.

[insidethesystem - 12:24:45] Julio, I'm using Google Translate and I believe I understood a large part of your answers in Portuguese [originally this chat was in Portuguese]. I just have a question: Are you an actor, too? Or did I get it wrong in one of your previous answers? You can answer in Portuguese, no problem – I even prefer it, so I learn a little :)

[julio_turker_br - 15:30:01] Let's practice Portuguese, then. *Sim, sou ator e, como não trabalho com muita frequência na área, encontrei esse trabalho online como um amortecedor – um plano B. Nas artes, o trabalho acontece esporadicamente, geralmente nos finais de semana. Portanto, ter esta opção MTurk acabou por ser um complemento perfeito.*

¹⁷ Alexa annoys me because she doesn't understand many sentences. I've had to change the names of playlists for her to understand what I'm saying. I just did a test with her, asking her what she knows about Turkers and MTurk. She answered: "Hmmm... I'm not sure about that." Hahaha!

¹⁸ I love Deleuze, for example! S2.

[tecgirl - 16:13:51] Wow, you're an actor too? What have you done? What roles do you enjoy playing? Would you tell me more, please?

[julio_turker_br - 17:52:59] Yes, I'm practically a MacGyver,¹⁹ I do everything, hahaha. I'm an actor,²⁰ but in small towns, so I haven't done any well-known work. Since it's outside the big cities, like São Paulo, you're always on call for events, projects created through incentive laws, and there's never a constant flow of work. I like improvising a lot, I played a character here in town on a TV commercial for a capitalization bond. So, every week I went to deliver the prizes to people's homes.²¹ It was pure improvisation, it was really cool! But after a while and at a certain age (I'm now 38), you're no longer interested in doing just any project. Basically, I became more selective, so working from home turned out to be more stable, giving me the freedom to do what I really like. After graduating in audio-visual studies, I ended up distancing myself from the stage and preferring to stay behind the camera.²²

[humano - 18:16:53] That's great. If someone asked you to act in a movie about a Turker, would you do it? How would you like this character to be?

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¹⁹ The character in this television series is a good definition of a Turker, because you do everything. You start the day by copying data from purchase receipts, then you evaluate AI voices, tag people, animals or objects in photos, analyse video quality, then find physical addresses, websites or e-mails of companies or professionals on Google, and so on. Whatever comes up, you have to deal with.

²⁰ I like more artistic work, less related to the culture industry. Gaspar Noé, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and TV series with lots of women in the cast, like *Big Little Lies* and *Feud*, things that are deeper and more interesting. Regarding acting, perhaps the most difficult was actually a classic – an amateur staging of a Shakespeare play. As much as I like it, I don't have the patience to spend a long time, months, doing the same static thing.

²¹ That was before I became a Turker. People recognized me in the street, in the market, I had no idea that television still had so much power over people. The prizes were weekly: one, two, three cars, 300,000 Brazilian reais and so on. It was a lot of fun.

²² Staying behind the scenes is so related to being a Turker, isn't it? I need a few more sessions with my psychologist to think this through, haha.

julio_turker_br

I turn off the computer to go to sleep. I hear the sound in my dreams even when the computer is off, imagine if it were on... My sleep is very affected, as is my anxiety. You can change the sounds if you like, but what's the point?

[julio_turker_br - 19:30:07] I admit that I don't have much patience for movies that include technology, like *The Social Network* (2010) and so on. But if the pay was good, why not? Maybe it would have to be something like the *Mr. Robot* series, which I think is brilliant – a hacker makes for a better story than a Turk.

[oi - 23:28:50] What does being human mean to you, Julio?

[julio_turker_br - 26/03/20 00:31:06] Let's get philosophical: it's everything that machines and AI will never be, because that's what makes us human; it's a deeper reading of a situation, in every sense. A human can dribble like a football player, while AI can score a goal at most. I'm not a fan of football, but I've seen people complaining about the VAR check and I think that's it, the human is what happens without the video. Does it lead to fights? Yes! But there are also many more things that happen that an AI has no idea about.

[Coronito - 2:06:02] What do you think of the theory that AIs will turn against us humans?

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[julio_turker_br - 2:51:27] I think it makes for great fiction films. In the 3 - 4 years I've been working with this (as a labourer, not a programmer), I've realized that AI is trying to become something like a juicer in a kitchen, or a machine in an industrial production area. It doesn't think. Of course, if you program a machine with AI and tell it to kill all the men in the area, it will identify the individuals and carry out the order, but that's not thinking. As I've already said, I have an Alexa at home and, with all due respect to my boss (Jeff Bezos²³), she's very dumb, hahaha.

[brunomoreschi - 4:36:45] Julio, you always seem very certain in your answers – that humans and machines are completely different things and that total automation will never be a threat

²³ This is a recurring joke of ours in our work WhatsApp group: calling them "boss."

to humanity. But, what about a machine that is intelligent thanks to many Turkers working for it in a way that is invisible to society? Isn't this already the case? Do you think it's a problem?

[julio_turker_br - 7:03:43] I'm not sure I understand your question or where it will lead me, but I see a lot of uncertainty in the air and problems with AI. Just yesterday I saw a post by a guy from an LGBTQIA+ YouTube channel complaining that his videos are always taken down. Of course, it's not taken down by people, but by the AI, which is probably misreading it, thinking it might be offensive content. So, on that basis, I see several possible problems. My biggest fear is that today's institutionalized fascism and racism will simply migrate to AI. There is a lot of work going on to prevent this, but we still don't know where it will lead.²⁴ People really think that there's someone online who works for these big companies, and who deletes their tweets, that's the general impression. I hope and think that several actions are necessary in this construction, but since our sad reality is anti-scientific, I don't know how that will be possible.

[lucasnseq - 16:25:31] How is the work of Turkers being affected by the pandemic? Is the number of workers on the platform increasing?

[julio_turker_br - 18:28:07]
I haven't noticed any changes yet. I've come across several studies on the topic, but I've only participated in one because the others were for US Turkers only. I'm expecting a drop in the flow of work,²⁵ because companies and universities will close and so will the projects that require Turkers.

²⁴ And I honestly don't think that fighting fascism and racism is the responsibility of Turkers – we already earn so little! That's up to the engineers and the way they formulate AI. There's no way I can help with that, as only photos of white people appear on my MTurk. The problem started before me.

²⁵ Now that some time has passed, I can tell you more about it. There was a sudden drop in work and, in April, Amazon blocked many of my acquaintances' accounts, including mine. Luckily, I started using my husband's because he hasn't been using it, otherwise I'd be starving in the middle of the pandemic!

[bernardo - 22:27:35] And how do you feel while working on Coronavirus-related tasks?

[julio_turker_br - 27/03/20 00:38:23] In these cases, I don't even pay much attention to the money. I'd rather take my time and express all the points I think are necessary. I usually put observations at the end that I think are important and that I felt the survey didn't ask me about. Perhaps it's a moment when I feel more heard than by our illustrious politicians.²⁶ Being able to criticize something in an app that really bothers me ends up serving as motivation, because I feel like I'm being considered. Even knowing that there is a chasm between the results of a survey and the decisions of a CEO. There is a variety of research, such as on airlines and my willingness to travel, my perception of events such as the Olympics, on fake news and information on the internet regarding Covid-19, and even whether I stocked up on food or smoked weed to stay calm during quarantine. Scientists from many fields are studying us. I feel responsible, I have to give a proper answer.

[humano - 15:18:58] And who do you love most in your life?

[julio_turker_br - 16:31:20] As I see it, there are several types of love. But the first person that comes to mind is my husband.²⁷ ;-)

[kamer - 16:49:18] Have you ever had a loving relationship with someone virtually?

²⁶ The reality isn't quite like that, of course: I'm never sure exactly what the HITs are for. When I do a HIT marking people crossing the street, I imagine it might be so that the AI of a self-driving car can learn to identify people. There are new HITs every day, with different purposes and needs. The most important thing is to learn English.

²⁷ I've been with him for 7 years. He supports me more than I support myself. I made an MTurk account for him, but he's hardly done any work because he's already doing too much. He's always studying and already has a full-time job as a teacher. Which is something that also allows me to work: a balance between something as stable as the civil service and my unstable job as a Turker.

[julio_turker_br - 17:23:38] Hey Kamer! Something like that. I met my husband online, but things got real quite fast.²⁸ :-) :-) :-)

[julio_turker_br - 27/03/20 18:16:02] Well, I think that's it, thank you for your questions. I ended up thinking about things I hadn't even considered in relation to my work and I also started to "see" my work in a different way – as a job. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I hope I've helped to show you a little more about the Turker world which, it seems, will be increasingly present for workers all over the world.

²⁸ I met my husband on MSN Messenger :)

BRIANNE

40 years old, married and mother of two, Canton, US. I put my hard work sitting here and trying to catch jobs in MTurk from 7 am to 1 pm, mornings are a great time to catch good HITs. I often come back in the evenings after I have made supper, cleaned the house, and got the kids taken care of for the day.¹ I usually try to reach a goal every day of making at least US\$ 25 on weekdays and US\$ 10 on weekends. I love doing this job because it gives me the freedom to work when I want to and if I don't work I don't have to answer to anyone else.² If I want to take the morning off to run errands, I can do that, or if I want to work at night instead, because I was occupied during the day, I can feel free to do so. The things I don't like about MTurk is the fact they keep hiring more people when it's already difficult to catch jobs as it is.

[kamer - 13/03/20 7:35:29] What is your favourite food? And your favourite movie?

[brianne_turker_us - 12:52:39] Nachos with lots of guacamole. My favourite movie is *Almost Famous* (2000).³

¹ My children are 6 and 12 – my youngest was about 2 years old when I started in MTurk. The demands of working, keeping the house in order, and now homeschooling my children (because of the pandemic) is very challenging. I put a lot of use into planners and checklists to make sure I get everything done. My husband travels for work, so he is only home on the weekends. So, everything during the week is done by me. I don't believe we (mothers) deserve special treatment: it was our decision to have kids, with all the challenges that come with parenthood.

² At the same time, I have an anxiety of knowing that there are always jobs to be done on MTurk when I am not working online. It's hard for me to step away from the computer, sometimes, especially if there are a lot of good paying jobs up there. But I do try to set times apart from the computer to spend time with my family, and not sit and work all day. The only time I get out of the work routine is when I am not able to work, usually if someone in the family or myself is ill.

³ The characters in this movie are amazing, and the music to match makes the story even better. I have not read the book, I would love to. But it's expensive.

[staysafe - 13:00:09] Do you ever eat food while you are turking? Or drink? If so, what do you eat / drink? I like to eat gum-my bears while writing, for example. It helps me get through it! I also drink wine... hahaha.

[brianne_turker_us - 14:12:09] Haha. I don't normally eat. I usually take a break when it's mealtime here. I always associate my iced coffee with working, for sure. It's my morning ritual. In the afternoon, I usually have water or an energy drink. It depends on how tired I am.

[brunomoreschi - 14:24:34] What is your workspace like at home?

[brianne_turker_us - 15:55:59] I work in my dining room. I have my desk in here, with our dining room table. I'm here by myself during the day since my kids are in school. Here is an image of the place.⁴



⁴ As you can see, I have a large dining room. My kids are now being taught from home, so I do that at the same time I work. But normally, yes, I would work the whole time they are in school. My husband is a truck driver, so he's only home on the weekends (as I said before), and I don't work while he is here. Unless I have follow-up work that needs to be done immediately. Also, I love my pink keyboard. It has style!

[humano - 1:18:30] Who is the person you love the most in your life?

[brianne_turker_us - 2:07:23] For sure my children and my husband.

[gabriel - 5:04:53] Have your kids ever asked you about what you work with on the computer?

[brianne_turker_us - 16/03/20 12:01:19] Yes, they have. I tell them I help out people doing research, usually college kids. And, when I do receipt invoicing HITs, I tell them I am helping companies make sure the data someone uploaded is correct.

[gabriel - 12:28:00] Is there any kind of work that you really hate doing on MTurk? If yes, why?

[brianne_turker_us - 16:11:43] Ones that have unclear instructions, or ones that have multiple threats about rejecting your HIT, which can severely impact my ability to work.

[tecgirl - 21:48:20] Can you reveal the name of requesters that you have had problems with? – such as unpaid or late payments, poor explanations for carrying out the work etc.

[brianne_turker_us - 17/03/20 01:18:07] The only ones I have had problems with rejecting work are Panel (previously Brelig), P9R and a few random people who have put out surveys. Generally, my problem with Panel and P9R is with their approval system. I know sometimes it has errors, and that it will reject your work even if it's right.⁵ P9R will answer you back and will fix it, but Panel never even responds to our messages. As for people who put out surveys and give out rejects,

⁵ Rejections affect your approval rating – it brings them down. I think Amazon should kick off requesters with low approval ratings. There are systems out there that Turkers will grade and review bad or good workers, so if we visit those sites, we can see how much they approve and reject work. Why doesn't Amazon create a requester rating system in the MTurk itself? That is a question I always ask myself.

I always message them and I am polite. If they don't answer me, or are incredibly unprofessional and rude, I just block them and make a note not to do any work for them, any longer, on my computer.

[bernardo - 17:34:43] Going in the other direction, are there HITs you enjoy working on? If so, what determines a good HIT for you? Is it the payment, the work itself or what?

[brianne_turker_us - 17:43:50] I really enjoy doing "invoicing type" HITs or data entry. I also enjoy surveys, but usually only work on those in the mornings.⁶ A good HIT for me is one from a reliable requester with a good approval rating. For surveys, the payment is usually #1 for me, and then how long the HIT will actually take me. When it comes to invoicing or data entering the payment isn't as important for me, because I'm a pretty quick typer.

[não_sou_um_robo - 18:48:45] Do you usually take a nap between jobs on MTurk?

[brianne_turker_us - 19:04:20] Nope. I have two kids at home so, any time I'm not working is spent doing something for them.

[dojomaster - 18/03/20 17:35:10] I wonder if you had to describe your work through a sound... what would be?

[brianne_turker_us - 17:58:47] That's interesting. To me it's one of the sounds that come off the script I use that helps me catch HITs. I don't know how to describe it, but every time I hear it, it reminds me of MTurk.⁷

[svenancio - 18:38:35] Can you tell us about how you got into MTurk? What reasons made you choose it? Also do you plan to work as a Turker for a long time, or is it temporary for you?

⁶ The most common type of surveys right now is all Covid related, and politics since it's an election year here in the US.

⁷ The sounds are different according to the pay. At times while sleeping, I have heard these sounds.

[brianne_turker_us]

It was a major adjustment working from home, primarily. It can get lonely sometimes not having co-workers around. I live in a small town where there aren't many job opportunities.

[bernardo - 22:29:32] I read in the “Only Turkers” chat that turking is your main job now. Did you work with something else before? If so, how was the change from your previous job to MTurk?

[brianne_turker_us - 19/03/20 6:11:18] Yes, MTurk is my main job now. I worked as a human resources manager at a Kmart (a US retailer of electronics, toys, clothing, home decor) where I live. Then, the company closed multiple stores and, unfortunately, mine was one of them. It was sad because I really enjoyed my job.⁸ It was a major adjustment working from home, primarily. It can get lonely sometimes not having co-workers around. I live in a small town where there aren't many job opportunities. I had a baby and a pre-schooler at the time, and I needed some kind of work from home option.⁹ So, I researched on the internet about working from home opportunities and found MTurk.

[brunomoreschi - 19:46:30] Do you remember the first time you joined MTurk? How was it?

[brianne_turker_us - 20:51:00] I do. I had just lost my job and I was looking into something to work from home. I came across a lot that were bogus or a scam.¹⁰ I found MTurk and I was excited that it was legitimate, and I made decent money a few hours a day. It took a few weeks of learning before I got it down, but I eventually got the hang of it.

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⁸ I'm sad to remember this happened in 2016 and my previous job made way more money than I do now on MTurk so I took a pretty significant pay cut. My coworkers and me, we were like a family, and I miss that social connection sometimes. The loneliness can be difficult and it's worse during a pandemic. I try to stay connected to family and friends through video chat and occasionally talk to neighbors from a safe distance. I know some workers chat through forums but it's not something I like because it distracts me from working.

⁹ OMG, working on MTurk and taking care of the baby at the same time was very challenging. It was difficult to make money, and I ended up working very odd hours.

¹⁰ I am proud to say that I have never been tricked, once I did further research and investigated them.

[Coronito - 20/03/20 8:13:41] Do requesters explain beforehand what kind of content you're going to work with? (i.e.: do they warn you about "violent content"?)

[brianne_turker_us - 9:59:48] Well, some requesters are good about warning about content, and that it may be disturbing. They will even mention resources you can contact in case it affects your mental health.¹¹ But this is not a rule: in MTurk you can find the best and the worst in the world, you need luck.

[didiana - 15:44:09] How do you feel about the invisibility of your work to the final user? Would you like to have more interactions with the final users of the data you work with?

[brianne_turker_us - 19:49:42] Some requesters will show you the results of the study if you give them your e-mail. I have done it on a few studies where I was interested in the data, but I don't do it that often.¹²

[tecgirl - 20:15:45] What is your opinion about MTurk? What would you change?

[brianne_turker_us - 20:37:50] I really like it and I like the flexibility I have in being able to work whenever I want. The only thing that would make it better for me is to stop adding more and more workers, so the work gets more and more scarce.¹³ And better payment would be wonderful.

¹¹ The resources they suggest are usually mental health hotlines or websites.

¹² I like to see how things turned out if it was an interesting survey, and I'm curious about the outcome. But in general, I don't often need to know. I wouldn't want my name credited, because I prefer to remain anonymous. I think they do a pretty good job usually of telling you what the results are used for. But this is an exception. In the world of technology, we, Turkers, are NOTHING.

¹³ I've been noticing it in the last couple years. I think there should be a cut off for how many workers are allowed on the platform at any time, but I know Amazon doesn't care about that at all.

[brunomoreschi - 21/03/20 02:41:26] If you could change the MTurk rules, how would you choose to be paid? Do you think you should have any labour rights? What kind of labour rights do you think you deserve in this type of work and why?

[brianne_turker_us - 12:03:47] I like the way I am paid. It goes right into my bank account every 3 days, and usually the same day it transfers out. The only thing I would like to see less is requesters who take advantage of workers and reject them for ridiculous reasons.

[brunomoreschi - 21:18:46] Do you consider yourself an Amazon worker?

[brianne_turker_us - 22/03/20 01:13:22] I really don't. I do think of myself more as a contract type worker. But if people ask me, I usually say I do online work for Amazon, because it can be complicated to explain to others what I do, I have found.¹⁴

[humano - 15:17:51] Have you met any other Turker personally?

[brianne_turker_us - 23/03/20 2:07:13] I never have, with the exception of my brother. He worked for a bit when he was between jobs but then he stopped.¹⁵

[brunomoreschi - 3:55:23] Have you ever considered the possibility (in the hypothetical future or not) of a strike by the Turkers for better working conditions and payments? Do you think that one day the Turkers will be organized to the point of claiming for improvements and rights, collectively?

[brianne_turker_us - 12:03:13] I know a lot of people who want better pay, I think it's mostly US people

¹⁴ I see it causes a good impression, but they usually look confused, so you must explain it to them. I think Amazon is amazing, but I know some in America have a bad vision of them because of the way their workers are treated in distribution centers. But I don't see the problem myself. And I only believe in what I see.

¹⁵ My brother did it for a while when he had moved to a new city, before he found a job. It really wasn't his thing, and he didn't enjoy it. He likes more physical labor type jobs, so sitting home and working wasn't his thing.

though. I see some people overseas that are perfectly fine with working for a penny, which is why some requesters don't raise up wages, they know someone out there will do.¹⁶ It would be great to see Turkers work together for change, but there seems to be some contentions between workers because they are so competitive.

[brunomoreschi - 14:32:04] So, do you think the reason for the low pay is due to non-US Turkers? Can you explain a little bit more about this? And why do you say that Turkers are competitive? Why do you have that impression?

[brianne_turker_us - 14:51:50] Some Turkers on online forums are not willing to help others or give them guidance. They don't share information about good requesters to work for. I always try to be friendly to questions and answer them kindly. A few can be quite rude to others, because we are all fighting over the very few tasks we get daily. US people have a certain standard, I think, for what they deem a living wage, and it's different compared to other countries. It seems that workers that are not in the US are willing to work for way less payment.¹⁷

[brunomoreschi - 16:29:30] Workers outside of the US work for less, but wouldn't it be because their conditions are often worse than those of US Turkers? They have a harder time getting paid for their HITs, some are from countries with very bad economic situations, etc. I would like to better understand your point of view: do you think there is a relation between the existence of underpaid jobs with non-US Turkers? As if this situation was the fault of non-US Turkers and not of Amazon (and the requesters)?

[brianne_turker_us - 24/03/20 17:04:26] Well, yes, that is all probably true for workers outside the US. I know they have a harder time being paid by Amazon, and

¹⁶ I think HITs should have minimum pay and it should at least equal our minimum wage, which in the US is 7.25 an hour at least.

¹⁷ Also, I think the competition could be minimized if MTurk was not continually hiring new people, while there are still plenty of workers on the platform.

that often they have to work for gift cards. It seems that Amazon could come up with something more feasible for them, or just not allow them to work on the platform. I think some requesters pay such low amounts because they know there is some people out there who will do it, so they have no reason to raise up their wages.¹⁸

[digital_socialism - 19:39:14] I want to politicize these conversations more! :]) Don't you think you should be paid like a teacher in a rich country? You are also a teacher! You teach a machine to do human work. If this machine is not well trained, the digital society will not work well. Our future depends on you, and on workers on MTurk and other platforms. This work should not be regulated by a company, but by the State. This seems so obvious to me! Our future is being determined by you.

[brianne_turker_us - 25/03/20 15:11:59] I don't really consider myself a teacher. I have honestly never thought of it in that way, but it's definitely an interesting concept, the way you phrase it.¹⁹ I would love to make more money from it.

[oi - 18:30:02] What does it mean to be "human" to you?

[brianne_turker_us - 19:08:12] Being able to learn from my mistakes and evolve and change.²⁰

¹⁸ I don't know if those outside the US should necessarily stop working on MTurk, but I don't have a good suggestion for how to manage the problem. Some Turkers from India are very friendly, and they are here to work. But there has been an overwhelming amount that will message you asking if they can buy your established MTurk account, so they can use it and work. I find this so dishonest and wrong, and I think it makes me think a little differently about them.

¹⁹ "Machines with intelligent humans" instead of "intelligent machines" is a better phrase, I think. Very good to think more about my role in the world of technology. I had never reached that sophisticated level of understanding.

²⁰ I think machines can learn from their mistakes too, but it seems a human would still need to be involved to let them know it was wrong. In this case, the human is me or other Turkers.

[silvan - 20:51:38] Do you consider yourself the human side of a machine?

[brianne_turker_us - 22:06:52] A little bit. Particularly when it comes to verifying receipts someone sent in. I'm not completely sure how it works, but it seems I'm verifying what the computer couldn't.

[tecgirl - 22:43:19] I see a contradiction when I think that AI automatism exists largely because of Turkers ... if it is done by humans, then it is not automatic, it is not autonomous. Wouldn't it be correct to think that Turkers are responsible for causing a false automatism effect on machines – an effect that isn't real? Automation may not yet exist at all.

[brianne_turker_us - 27/03/20 00:52:54] I've never thought about it that way, but you make a great point. It really isn't automated completely yet.

[Dkcozmico - 28/03/20 8:58:43] Do you think that in some cases the other side (requesters) are automated machines of some sort? If so, how do you react to that?

[brianne_turker_us - 9:05:57] I do think of that, especially when I am transcribing receipts that someone has sent into an app, via a smartphone, and I seem to be on the other end verifying their information. I don't mind it.

[silvan - 10:00:50] Have you ever done any service on MTurk that you suspected was related to the military field?

[brianne_turker_us - 11:07:35] Possibly, but I'm not sure if it was this country's military or not. I have done jobs where I needed to look at satellite pictures and verify military vehicles in the image!²¹

[Coronito - 12:17:02] Do you think that AI will enslave us, humans?

²¹ It was very intriguing: I needed to look at satellite pictures, though I'm not sure what country it was, and check for military vehicles. I only did them a few times, because they were so difficult to see. I am also not a big fan of wars and conflicts.

[brianne_turker_us - 13:37:35] I don't know about enslaving, but I think they will take a significant amount of jobs from humans, eventually.²²

[mrmontanari - 14:10:53] What is your opinion about this experience from an artistic point of view? How do you understand your participation in the "Exch w/ Turkers" project, what are your motivations, what is the experience like?

[brianne_turker_us - 15:23:41] I am not sure I have ever thought about MTurk from an art point of view. My motivations for participating are to help people better understand this line of my work and help any others who have questions or misconceptions about it. I like doing this and I have enjoyed answering questions and giving or getting advice from other MTurk workers. I wish this was a daily thing for me to participate in.

[mrmontanari - 16:09:51] That's nice to know. The exchanges in this platform are very interesting and informative.

[brunomoreschi - 16:14:30] I am asking everyone this question: how is working on MTurk in this coronavirus period? More or less work? Also, how are you feeling and dealing with this period of world crisis?

[brianne_turker_us - 16:52:11] I have actually been making more money than I have in quite a while. Since I'm home, I'm working a lot more and making much more money. I did have one study cancelled that they mentioned was due to the pandemic. They were kind, though, and went ahead and paid the bonus that I would have received for the HIT. I am following the guidelines and staying home, washing hands more frequently if I do need to leave and come home. I am a little nervous about the food supply chain, because

²² I really dislike this probable future, because it will put so many people out of work. I think the only way to deal with it is to not turn everything over to AI. But I know that most companies want to go that route, because it's cheaper. It is impressive (not necessarily in a good way) how everything is regulated because of money, economy and productivity.

the grocery stores are so wiped out. I'm not concerned about myself or anyone in my house having trouble with the virus. But I am concerned about some of my family members, because of their age or underlying conditions.²³

[brianne_turker_us - 17:53:00] Hi! Is the project over? It was all very good! Thank you!

23 Now (August 2020), I think the quarantine was critical for how well my state did in controlling the virus. We have a great governor who protected us and put the right things in place. When it comes to the federal government here, I think they are handling it horribly and it's embarrassing for America, honestly. It's only going to get worse for America, I believe. I am so thankful that I have this job, and I don't need to risk my life or my kids' lives to go to work daily outside the home.

ANAND

32 years old, male, Delhi, India. I'm a postgraduate with a degree in Finance. I also do freelance on MTurk and Upwork.¹ I only do work that pays decent money or the work should be very easy to do and approved in a short time. I choose requesters carefully by reviewing their profile and checking reviews on Turkopticon². The work timings on MTurk are odd for me. Because of time zone differences between India and the US, I have to work at night mostly.³ I work consistently at MTurk and, as a result, I have achieved the master qualification, which is difficult to obtain. In my free time, I enjoy reading about technology, playing mobile games, watching movies and asking questions on Quora.⁴

[bernardo - 13/03/20 11:46:58] In your profile, you said that you work consistently with MTurk. What are your average hours per day working with MTurk?

[anand_turker_in 14:01:41] 4 hours per day. But on weekends I work more than that usually, unless I am going out with my family.

[Martina - 22:00:14] Why did you choose to work for MTurk?

[anand_turker_in - 14/03/20 05:05:09] I chose because other freelancing options were difficult to work with. For example, in sites like Freelancer and Guru there are projects but lots of bids get posted on those projects

¹ On MTurk, work is available 24/7 and anyone having the required qualification (if any) can do the work, while on Upwork you need to apply to fetch a particular project.

² For those unfamiliar with the "Turker world," Turkopticon is a website for workers to help one another with information and their experiences with employers.

³ To cope with this problem, I take a 2 to 3-hour nap in the afternoon to get ready to work at nighttime. This is the best I can do to cope with the time zone issues.

⁴ The last question I asked on Quora was: "Which free app or website is best for a daily horoscope?"

– making them worth less, financially. Work on MTurk is available for almost everyone and throughout the year.

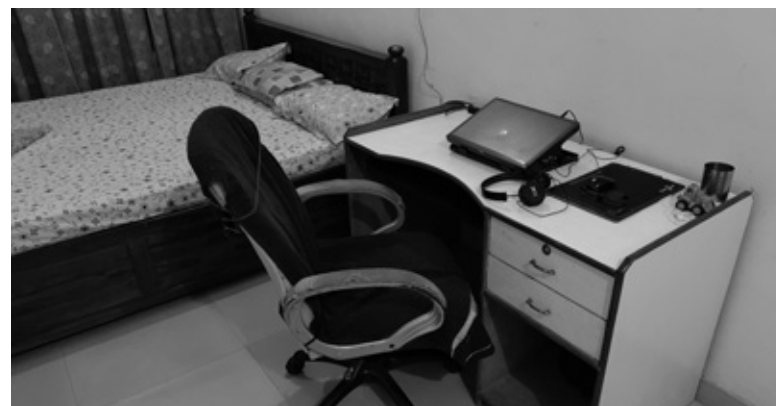
[humano - 15:17:36] If you could have another job besides being a Turker, what would it be?

[anand_turker_in - 18:18:19]

I already have another job. I am a Finance professional in India. I do tax and accountancy work here.⁵

[brunomoreschi - 21:24:46] What is your workspace like at home?

[anand_turker_in - 15/03/20 04:03:38] It's a room with a bed and a computer table.⁶ I usually work while sitting on the chair. But sometimes I also use the laptop while I am lying in bed. Here is a picture of the space.



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⁵ MTurk and accountancy work are different. I do my professional work in an office setting. After the implementation of GST (Goods and Services Tax is an indirect tax or consumption tax used in India on the supply of goods and services), the field of tax and accountancy in India is growing at a rapid pace. This subject of taxation makes me think about very rich and very poor people. Billionaires are getting taxed more worldwide and I think positively of the politicians who tax more aggressively. Also, I think that basic income should be tax-free everywhere.

⁶ I think my workspace is great and I have all the required facilities here. Because of this I'm not interested in a public workspace as I like to work alone without any disturbance. But I like the idea of attending courses which teach better use of MTurk. I also like to discuss with other fellow workers.

[Martina - 14:06:55] How do you rate the quality of your job at MTurk from 1 to 10? What criteria do you use to evaluate the quality of your job? Is it flexibility, financial contribution, value to the world?

[anand_turker_in - 18:15:01] Honestly, first is financial reasons and second is learning and contribution.⁷ Rating on a scale is difficult for me, but if you insist, I can rate myself as 7.

[Coronito - 16/03/20 01:16:07] Can you describe your last HIT?

[anand_turker_in - 04:06:37] A survey about investment decisions. It was about hypothetical scenarios and asking to choose how you would invest.

[brunomoreschi - 13:28:22] Is it true that people in India still receive payment via gift cards? I recently read on the MTurk website's FAQs page that Turkers from India now receive the same as the workers from the US: receiving the money directly in their bank accounts.

[anand_turker_in - 15:11:04] No. Turkers from India still mostly get paid by gift card method. Amazon has introduced a new method where they will be paying by something like PayPal, but right now this is still in early stages. They are rolling it out very slowly. I've enquired about it several times, but every time they reply with their standard response that right now this option is not available to me and that they will reach out to me when this becomes available.⁸

[brunomoreschi - 17/03/20 00:39:09] I still want to know more about how Turkers from India receive payments from MTurk.

⁷ MTurk is fine if you are considering it as a secondary income. Contribution means that one can contribute to various studies conducted by educational institutions to improve their studies. Of course, I'm trying to be optimistic about my responses here. ;)

⁸ I do not know anyone in India who has been paid through bank transfer personally, but I have read on various forums where Turkers from India are saying that they are getting paid like this. I do believe that Amazon avoids paying through bank transfer to non-US Turkers.

Can you tell me more about those e-mails you have sent to Amazon? How did the company respond to them? Was it an automatic answer? Can you paste their answer here?

[anand_turker_in - 15:34:30] MTurk introduced a new payment method called Hyperwallet around a year ago. But it is still in its early stages, according to them. So, most of the workers from India receive their earnings in the form of a gift card. Actually, it is beneficial to Amazon because gift card earnings must be spent on the Amazon US website! Every time I send an e-mail to them, the MTurk standard reply is: "Thank you for reaching out regarding eligibility for US bank account or Hyperwallet eligibility for MTurk earnings dispersal. We have reviewed your eligibility and this option is currently not available for all MTurk workers in every country. While we expect to expand the program in the future, you are not currently eligible to participate at this time. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. In the meantime, you can continue to disburse your MTurk earnings to your Amazon.com gift card balance. If you have any questions or are having issues specific to the MTurk experience, please contact us at mturk-worker-support@amazon.com."

[insidethesystem - 23:04:50] As I understand it, practically all Turkers outside the US receive their payment via gift card on Amazon US, right? This means that all non-US Turkers are actually spending their pay on purchases from a specific US company – Amazon, from one of the world's richest men. Amazon profits twice here: from your work and from your obligation to spend your money on the same company you work for. This seems like an absurd exploitation! What do you think about this?

[anand_turker_in - 18/03/20 05:03:13] You got it right. But there is nothing we workers can do about it. We need to accept things as they are. We cannot force them.

[tecgirl1 - 20:21:59] Do you really think that Turkers can't do anything about what *Insidethesystem* wrote? I slightly disagree with you. Labor achievements in history were only possible through the mobilisation of workers... shouldn't Turkers come together to try to change things in the world of digital work? There

are already 500,000 Turkers in the world – together I believe all you have immense power.

[anand_turker_in - 19/03/20 05:06:18] I do agree with you that together we have power, and we can change the system. But is there any method to unite these 500,000 Turkers?

[brunomoreschi - 19:08:42] Can you tell us more about the story that you told me before you started this project? About the day you e-mailed Jeff Bezos and he responded.

[anand_turker_in - 19:17:36] If you send an e-mail to Jeff Bezos, then there is a good amount of chance that his team will reply. But you should e-mail only as a last resort. I e-mailed them about making bank transfer options available to all Turkers outside of the US. But I got a standard reply that I should contact MTurk support, which I've done many times already.⁹

[brunomoreschi - 21:18:16] Do you consider yourself an Amazon worker?

[anand_turker_in - 20/03/20 06:29:21] Yup. I work on this platform, so I consider myself an Amazon freelancer.¹⁰

[não_sou_um_robo - 21/03/20 02:45:21] Before you started working on MTurk, did you use the internet a lot? Have you always been an online person? When you were younger, were you interested in computers and digital life?

[anand_turker_in - 06:32:50] Oh, yes. I was active on the internet and one day came across MTurk. I registered on it as a worker and I was denied. After that I forgot about it. But after around four years their

⁹ If one day I was able to meet Jeff Bezos, I would ask him to please introduce the rejection appeal platform on MTurk and facilitate all workers with the bank transfer feature.

¹⁰ As a freelancer, I think I should have certain basic rights like appealing if the work gets rejected unlawfully and getting paid through bank transfer.

[anand_turker_in]

I do agree with you
that together we have
power, and we can
change the system.
But is there any
method to unite these
500,000 Turkers?

e-mail came saying that I could work. I have been using the internet since my college days. It was somewhere around 2005.¹¹

[svenancio - 15:28:22] What is it to be a Turker Master? Is this about your education level? Or is it just a rank inside MTurk?

[anand_turker_in - 18:12:03] A rank inside MTurk. It is a premium qualification (rank) allotted by MTurk to workers that do great quality work with consistency. It has no relation to the education level of the Turker, thank goodness!

[lucasnseq - 21:06:09] Do you often use scripts to assist your work in the MTurk platform?

[anand_turker_in - 22/03/20 05:33:58] Not for assisting work, but to keep track of work and finding work. I use Turkmaster and MTS.¹²

[silvan - 24/03/20 20:39:24] Much of the work you do on MTurk are processes that digital systems cannot actually do. So, can I say that digital systems are not only digital, but also human? Are machines human because of all of you, Turkers?

[anand_turker_in - 22:20:16] Yes, some of the work we do is used to teach AI. I have seen projects where after teaching AI the projects were ended.¹³

[tecgirl - 03/25/20 14:41:57] Sorry, but I see a contradiction when I think that AI automatism exists largely because of Turkers... if it is done by humans, then it is not automatic, it is

¹¹ I used the internet with the help of a GPRS [General Packet Radio Service is a mobile data standard for 2G and 3G mobile connection] based phone from Nokia. It was more than 10 years ago! It was a great feeling and I was surprised to see the internet working on my computer. My country (India) has been known since 1990 to be a hub for companies and workers in technology, telephony, telemarketing, internet systems. I believe I chose to be a Turker because of that context.

¹² MTS is a Chrome extension which keeps track of your submitted, rejected, and approved HITs. Turkmaster is a script which is useful to find work.

not autonomous. Wouldn't it be correct to think that Turkers are responsible for causing a false sense of automatism on machines – an effect that isn't real? Automation may not yet exist at all.

[anand_turker_in - 18:55:18] Frankly speaking I cannot comment anything about it with conviction. We, Turkers, just work for some requesters that collect data to train the AI systems. So, I can say that we do have a role behind AI.¹⁴

[kamer - 19:43:56] From 0 to 10 (where 0 is nothing and 10 is maximum), how much do you agree with this statement: "I am an essential person for the digital world and the fact that almost nobody knows of my existence is a strategy to cause the wrong impression that machines are smarter than they actually are."

[anand_turker_in - 20:48:21] 8. But I honestly don't know how to explain my choice.

[kamer - 21:47:58] If I hire Turkers to help on a product, or research, or study etc., would it not be fairer if I put the Turker's name (or at least worker code) in the acknowledgments of the project? Has this ever happened to you?

[anand_turker_in - 26/03/20 4:55:14] I love this idea!! But it has not happened to date.

[nalag - 9:01:07] Is it possible to teach an AI to be able to teach another AI?

[anand_turker_in - 11:09:50] Sorry. I cannot say anything about this because I have zero knowledge about it.

¹³ For example, I worked for a requester who was building a system that could help people learn English by asking queries and talking. The project went on for several months and ended after the requester achieved his goal.

¹⁴ If you take the example of a movie, I think we, Turkers, are doing the job of a spotboy and supporting staff.

[Coronito - 12:06:44] Do you think that AI will enslave us humans?

[anand_turker_in - 13:06:06] Maybe. Right now, AI is in the development phase and I feel that it is just a computer program to assist us.

[silvan - 21:00:36] Have you ever done any service on MTurk that you suspected was related to the military field?

[anand_turker_in - 22:20:35] I don't think so. But I will never be sure of that.

[gabriel - 27/03/20 00:29:53] Do you ever read blogs or watch something while you're turking? Or is it something that requires your full and undivided attention?

[Coronito - 2:45:32] Or can you turk while listening to podcasts? :)

[anand_turker_in - 5:15:38] Yes, I do like to watch YouTube videos while working on easy batches. Though watching videos is not fully possible, I do listen especially to content. I like to listen to podcasts and songs only during easy and repetitive batches. Most HITs or tasks require full and undivided attention, except a few batches that are repetitive in nature and easy to do. For example, when copying and pasting information from a webpage, finding e-mails of companies, selecting data or images, etc.

[gabriel - 5:21:27] Any podcast you particularly like right now? :)

[anand_turker_in - 5:23:50] Yes, but most of them are in Hindi language. I like to listen to stories. I use the Audible app to listen to podcasts.

[kamer - 10:38:35] I would like you to send me a link of some content that you like and that you would like other people to see as well. It can be a song, a text, an image, a website, anything ...

¹⁵ This kind of batch needs sitting time and a low level of attention because work is repetitive and boring. I do feel fatigued after prolonged work hours and I usually go to sleep after finishing these kinds of batches.

[anand_turker_in - 12:57:44] OK. Here: <https://youtu.be/IKHSvIUlsrw>.



As you can see it's a meditation video.¹⁶

[brunomoreschi - 14:04:55] How is MTurk during this coronavirus period? Is there more or less work? What about you and this period of world crisis due to the coronavirus, how are you feeling about it and dealing with it?

[anand_turker_in - 15:58:28] I found a lot less work this week on MTurk. It can be due to coronavirus. Right now, panic is spreading in India as well as the coronavirus. People have started to hoard essential stuff like food and medicine. India has less resources compared to US, Italy and China, so panic is spreading. But a Turker needs good internet connection¹⁷ and space at home. Coronavirus has not affected any of these. Even work is also decent to date.

¹⁶ Your response and outlook change when you meditate. Your stress reduces. You can think right and clearly. You become more reasonable and understanding by cultivating clarity of mind, connectedness, and emotional balance, in such a way that you are better able to handle relationships in a more sensible way. But it also shows that even when I'm meditating, I'm using the computer and the internet!

¹⁷ I am using a 50 Mbps fiber connection. It works fine most of the time. Outages happen 3/ 4 times a month. I use mobile internet then.

[staysafe - 17:05:05] I heard that everything is closed because of the pandemic (pretty crazy!). Do you ever take vacations from turking? Something like saying: this month I'll go travel and won't use the MTurk site? Or, through the years you've been working there, have this ever happened? I wonder if you save up money for this, or something like that...

[anand_turker_in - 18:27:55] Yes, right now everything is locked for at least 21 days. People are locked in their homes. I do take vacations, like 5 months ago I went on a 15-day trip with family.¹⁸

[brunomoreschi - 21:23:17] What is a question that no one has asked you yet and that you would like to have answered?

[anand_turker_in - 22:29:52] There are two: How do you feel when your work gets rejected?¹⁹ And how do you feel when you receive a bonus?²⁰

[anand_turker_in - 27/03/20 23:50:12] Thank you! I've learnt many things from other workers and all of you!!

¹⁸ During this vacation, I need to be honest with all of you: yes, I took my laptop with me and used MTurk before sleeping and in the morning time while having coffee and breakfast at the hotel.

¹⁹ I feel bad when my work gets rejected as I put full effort. Sometimes the work gets rejected for fraudulent reasons and it really hurts me.

²⁰ Obviously, I feel great and bonus money is always welcome!

REYLIN

26 years old, female, Owasso, US. I have been turking, on and off, since 2012. I have master's qualifications, over 105,000 tasks completed, 99.9% approval rate. A typical morning for me is I wake up, check the weather, feed my cat, make coffee, and then start turking right away. An ideal start time for me is 6 am, so I can go through MTurk and see what good HITs are left behind from the night/day before. But most of the time, I start at 7 am. I usually end my turk day around 2 pm.¹ My least favourite thing about turking is that, fortunately, and unfortunately, it has grown quite a lot the past few years, so great HITs are not as easy to catch. You must really be on top of it, utilizing MTurk scripts to get the good ones. But for the most part, I enjoy it: I can do it from the comfort of my home.²

[brunomoreschi - 13/03/20 1:25:07] This question I am sending to all of you: what is your workspace like at home?

[reylin_turker_us - 5:30:04] I work at a desk in my apartment. I live alone, so it's usually pretty quiet.³ I use a PC, but sometimes if I am not feeling well, I will grab my laptop and go turk on the couch/or even my bed. At my desk, I always have coffee, a calculator (sometimes I need one for turking), a phone (for the calling HITs⁴), and a noise-cancelling headset with a mic. That's my typical turk setup.

1 I do have lunch while turking most times. Just the other day, I didn't eat lunch until around 4 or 5 pm due to having a bunch of HITs in my queue on MTurk. I am working in pajamas right now, but I don't always wear it. If I am ever having issues with getting motivated, it helps to change into normal clothes.

2 I definitely drink a lot of coffee when turking. In fact, I am drinking coffee right now as I type this. It's not totally for keeping me awake, but it definitely helps. I am just a big coffee fan. I love iced coffee, pour over, french pressed, cold brew, nitro, hot coffee of any roast etc.

3 I was always the shy and quiet one. I grew up in a very large family, and I even have a twin sister, so it was easy for me to always hide and be in the background. In school, I spent lunches in the library. At home, I spent time alone hiding and reading. I am very comfortable with being in solitude. All I need is music and my computer.

[nãõ_sou_um_robo - 6:45:38] Before you started working on MTurk, did you use the internet a lot? When younger, were you interested in computers and digital life?

[reylin_turker_us - 13:36:13] Yes, before I used the internet a lot. Actually, being on the internet so much is what led me to find MTurk. I have always been an online person. I love computers, I love learning about how they work and how to build them, and I love digital life, for sure.⁵ It's incredible just how much you can get done on the internet. You can go to school online, you can work online, and you can even make friends online. A few years ago, I participated in a virtual orchestra. The internet is very cool to me.

[FORABOZO - 18:32:37] If I want to be a Turker, how do I start?

[reylin_turker_us - 14/03/20 01:30:21] You would go to this link mturk.com and click "Get Started." The biggest tip is to join MTurk communities; whether it's forums or on Reddit. Surround yourself with veterans to learn how to get started on the right foot. They can provide many guides, resources, and tips. Another tip is to remember that at first, you must have patience. You must build up your HITs approved, to qualify for better paying HITs. The HITs won't be that great at first, but if you stick to it, it will get better. Every day when you get on MTurk, search "qual" and take the tests to get qualifications, so more HITs open up to you. The last tip is never having the expectation that this can be a main source of income. While it is for some, it isn't for many. You could have a good day today, but tomorrow could be bad.

4 Calling HITs consist of us calling a specific number and collecting data. These are not that common. I've done some, but not many, due to the pay never being that worth it for me.

5 My first memory of being on the internet is from when I was in middle school. I was downloading music software, and then downloading music from those, and burning CDs. I felt so much freedom. I spend at least 12 hours on the internet every day. Seven, eight hours of that is for work, usually.

[calebesimoes - 9:34:34] Can you tell me the qualifications to be a good Turker?

[reylin_turker_us - 13:00:01] I would say qualifications of a good Turker is someone who is honest, doesn't submit bad work in hopes of not getting caught, someone who can multitask, and someone who is open minded.⁶

[brunomoreschi - 14:46:53] Do you remember the first time you joined MTurk?

[reylin_turker_us - 15:18:18] Yes, it was 8 years ago. I did a little bit of work, then left, but then rediscovered it, and I've been turking on and off since then. It was very confusing at first, but I knew it would eventually get better based on all the guides I had read.

[brunomoreschi - 21:22:33] Can you describe the main HITs you performed today?

[reylin_turker_us - 15/03/20 01:35:02] I would say 80% of the HITs I did today were surveys.⁷

[humano - 15:17:18] What is the most useful and important job you have done on MTurk?

[reylin_turker_us - 18:37:57] I'd consider all the jobs I do on MTurk useful. They all serve a purpose for something. I know that's a boring answer lol, but I definitely look at all the jobs as important.

⁶ Open-mindedness is useful because you will get a lot of different types of work. Some of it is weird, and you will question your sanity sometimes; you will have moments of "I'm really describing how a picture of a baseball bat with cake frosting all over it is making me feel for 25 cents."

⁷ On most days, I'd say it's split by 60/40 as far as time spent doing surveys to batches. I think it is exciting to help researchers, companies etc. in creating and improving. Considering my background, and the fact that I have no degree, it is cool that someone as small as I am, could be playing a role in the next big thing that could be in everyone's home, or on their phone.

[brunomoreschi - 19:59:43] What was the strangest job you've done on MTurk?

[reylin_turker_us - 20:56:06] The strangest job was pornographic. I had to look at scenes and give the videos a title. There were thousands of them, so I spent hours watching pornographic content and coming up with creative titles. Besides the fact that it was adult content, the job was fine. It was easy, and the pay was ok.

[brunomoreschi - 21:19:27] So, can I conclude that a considerable part of video titles on pornographic websites are written by / thought of by Turkers? This is very interesting!

[reylin_turker_us - 22:46:56] Yes, a good bit of pornographic videos may be titled in MTurk. I do not know what website the videos came from, specifically.⁸

[Coronito - 23:43:38] Is turking something you can do while listening to podcasts or something?

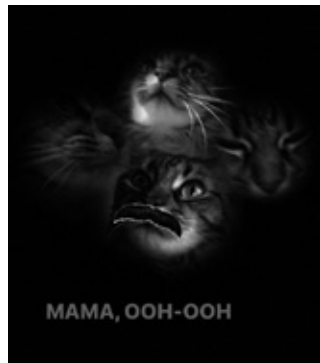
[reylin_turker_us - 16/03/20 15:11:21] Yes. The problem is my cat :)

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[gabriel - 15:29:06] Can you tell us more about your cat? Does it hang out with you while you're turking? hahaha

[reylin_turker_us - 15:45:36] Great question! My cat hates when I turk because it takes all of the attention off of her. She hops up on my desk from time to time to remind me that she's here. My cat's name is Fancy. She is the sweetest cat ever! Here's a picture of her; and here's another one of her as the band Queen:

⁸ I've come across other HITs with graphic content. A batch of HITs was posted with a bunch of images, and our job was to flag the images that contained anything with graphic content. There were some naked bodies, and such. I felt nothing towards them. I looked at the task as I looked at other flagging tasks. They did not make me feel uncomfortable. I think it is because I've been on the internet for a long time, and have seen a lot of crazy things, so that type of stuff just does not bother me.



[insidethesystem - 22:14:50] I would like to know more about the work you do on MTurk. There have been cases of: 1. Work involving some type of violent material? 2. Something that invades your privacy or that of another person? 3. Work related to creating fake news or misinformation on the internet? If these cases have already happened to you, please give more details about them.

[reylin_turker_us - 23:11:34] 1. I have not had any HITs that have involved violent material.⁹ The closest thing would probably be, maybe, a study that showed us a video of people arguing, and we had to assess it. But nothing crazy. 2. No HITs have ever invaded my privacy. There have been surveys that have been about touchy subjects – stuff I didn't feel too comfortable talking about, due to me just being sensitive about certain things, but they weren't invading my privacy. I think I'd just refuse to do a HIT if I felt it got too personal.¹⁰

⁹ I've come across other HITs with graphic content. A batch of HITs was posted with a bunch of images, and our job was to flag the images that contained anything with graphic content. There were some naked bodies, and such. I felt nothing towards them. I looked at the task as I looked at other flagging tasks. They did not make me feel uncomfortable. I think it is because I've been on the internet for a long time, and have seen a lot of crazy things, so that type of stuff just does not bother me.

¹⁰ I want to talk about another violent HIT I did recently. The job was to read tweets taken from Twitter and assess how inflammatory they were. They were all political tweets, so I believe politics and social media use is what researchers were studying, but I am not sure. Some of the tweets were responses of people arguing about politics on Twitter.

I have also never felt any HITs have invaded the privacy of others. 3. Lately, I have been taking several studies about fake news articles going around. There were several ones that had me judge whether was real or fake.¹¹

[staysafe - 23:11:34] What are the most annoying technical issues you've had on MTurk?

[reylin_turker_us - 17/03/20 1:31:48] When I take a long survey, and then there is no confirmation code for me to go back and place into the HIT on MTurk, to confirm that I completed the survey. Other technical problems I face are when sometimes HITs won't load whenever I open them. This does not happen often, but when it does, I disable my browser's adblocker to see if that fixes it.

[tecgirl1 - 1:48:32] Can you reveal the name of requesters that you have had problems with?

[reylin_turker_us - 2:36:59] I can't say that I've had any problems crazy enough to remember the requestor's name specifically, but I will say that Oscar Smith is known for underpaying, badly.¹²

[brunomoreschi - 2:39:56] Is Oscar Smith a person or a company?

[reylin_turker_us - 13:33:09] Oscar Smith HITs are for an app called CardMunch, and I believe that it is owned by LinkedIn. I don't know that the requestor, himself, is bad, but the HITs aren't usually worth it when

¹¹ A big reason why I feel my privacy has never been invaded is probably because I will stay away from a HIT if I feel it is invasive. For instance, photos of myself with personal information, such as an address, would be invasive, and I just would never do that.

¹² I am satisfied with some requesters, but not all. Some requesters really need to increase their pay for some of the tasks they're wanting. I think that's the biggest problem with some requesters. When requesters decide to post HITs on MTurk, they need to really think of what they are asking Turkers to do, and how much time it will take, and set a price at a 10 cents / minute rate at the least.

they're up, because of how low the pay is for the amount of work. If I could speak to Oscar Smith, I would tell them to really consider increasing the pay, and to value Turkers more. Don't expect someone to do work for you at a US\$ 2 / h rate just because they're a Turker. Yes, we decide to turk, and can just decide not to, but they have a job that needs to be done, and we're there to help, if we choose, so why not pay it appropriately?

[**Todoro** - 14:48:09] Do you work on sick days?

[**reylin_turker_us** - 14:54:32] Yes, I do still work on sick days. One of the greatest things about turking is I'm in my home, so if I'm ever feeling horrible, I just switch from my computer to my laptop, get in bed, and continue turking.

[**brunomoreschi** - 15:26:23] But, Reylin, do you think it's fair to work when you're sick? I understand that working from home is easier, but it also means that you are always being considered a potential worker. That seems a little cruel to whoever is working, doesn't it? I keep thinking: isn't there a fairer way? For example, a hypothetical situation: having the possibility of notifying the MTurk that you are sick and being rewarded with a minimum of money. Anyway, I keep thinking about how things could be fairer and easier for the worker – because being at home or not, you are still a worker in this case. I keep wondering how important it is to speculate on new forms of digital work, and not just accept the current situation. What do you think about this?

[**reylin_turker_us** - 15:46:06] Paid sick days are ideal in any work situation, and I get where you're coming from, but because I am not officially employed by MTurk, that isn't offered. You raise a good point, though. I think with the coronavirus chaos going on right now, more employers will change their current policies on sick days and calling out. And while the virus is unfortunate, I think it's forcing employers to roll out fairer policies that should have already been set in place, and that is a good thing. Now, again, because I am not employed by MTurk, that won't matter. MTurk would have to switch to contracts / employing Turkers, so we can have those benefits.¹³ I don't think that will ever happen, but I am all for that, if it does.

[**silvan** - 20:51:04] You and what you do are very little known to the general public. Do you believe that this is a strategy by technology companies? – hiding you to create the impression that everything is automatic, even if in fact it is still human.

[**reylin_turker_us** - 18/03/20 13:01:56] That is a good question. I'd hope that if Turkers complete work for companies, they are being honest with their customers / clients, and letting them know how their product, or whatever it is, was made. I see no reason in hiding that some of the work was done on MTurk, but I would not be surprised if it happens.

[**tecgirl** - 14:43:30] I see a contradiction when I think that AI automatism exists largely because of Turkers... if it is done by humans, then it is not automatic, it is not autonomous. Wouldn't it be correct to think that Turkers are responsible for causing a false automatism effect on machines – an effect that isn't real? Automation may not yet exist at all.

[**reylin_turker_us** - 19/03/20 00:07:37] I may be wrong, but I think it's all very different. I don't think all AI has an MTurk history, and a lot of the times, when we are doing AI HITs on MTurk, it's just us reviewing the results of the system. For instance, there are HITs where you have to judge the naturalness of robots / AI saying certain things. So, the Turkers aren't THAT much responsible, but still play a small part.¹⁴

[**kamer** - 7:44:25] From 0 to 10 (where 0 is nothing and 10 is maximum), how much do you agree with this statement: "I am

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¹³ I believe I am not an employee of MTurk only because Amazon doesn't officially see me that way. I feel that the work I do, and have done on MTurk, should qualify me as an employee with benefits. I've been on here since 2012 and helped a lot with the growth and learning of MTurk, as with a bunch of others. We've all worked in groups on forums to make MTurk a better working experience for ourselves, with no help from Amazon. We created guides, websites, resources, scripts, etc. There are a lot of people who have put in a lot of time trying to make MTurk better, and none of them are employed by MTurk.

¹⁴ The people writing the code behind the AI have the most responsibility in the creation of AIs. As much as I would like to be part of this group, I do not have the intelligence / needed training to create stuff that is that incredibly intelligent.

an essential person for the digital world and the fact that almost nobody knows about my existence is a strategy to cause a wrong impression that machines are smarter than they actually are.”

[reylin_turker_us - 10:17:01] Wow! That is very interesting, and you are making me think about things I haven't really considered before. I'd choose a 4.¹⁵

[kamer - 16:47:52] If I hire Turkers to help me on a product or research or study etc., wouldn't it be fair for me to put your name (or at least your worker code) in the acknowledgments of this project? Has this ever happened to you?

[reylin_turker_us - 20/03/20 00:10:00] I think it's not a big deal to not get credit, but at the same time, it would be kind of cool if people who posted studies acknowledged in the results that it was done by Turk-ers. I think there's too many people to acknowledge everyone, and some of us want to remain anonymous anyway. Personally, I'd rather stay anonymous, but if I ever participated in a study that lasted for months, and I actually put in a lot of effort, then I'd want some kind of acknowledgement. I haven't been offered the opportunity to be credited for something, by name, that resulted from a task. I feel you'd really have to stand out as a Turker, or do something incredible, for that to happen. So many people are working on these tasks, and I don't know that crediting Turkers is a big priority for some of the requesters that post.

[digital_socialism - 6:37:25] How do you imagine MTurk will be in the future? What will change?

[reylin_turker_us - 10:12:11] I think it will definitely change. I think a lot more people will be on it, and

¹⁵ I chose such a low number because I do not know whether Turkers are specifically being used as a strategy to cause the wrong impression that machines are smarter than they are. It feels like an extreme statement, and I'd hope it is on the extreme / exaggerated end, but I would not be surprised if I was wrong. We do contribute to the digital world, and it is important, but I am really putting my faith in people knowing that there was human work behind these machines, whether requesters give us credit or not.

[reylin_turker_us]

Yes, I do still work on sick days.
One of the greatest things about
turking is I'm in my home, so if I'm
ever feeling horrible, I just switch
from my computer to my laptop,
get in bed, and continue turking.

a lot of us won't be making as much money as we are now.

[dojomaster - 17:39:54] You mention in your description that MTurk has grown a lot in the recent past. In which ways do you feel this in your day life?

[reylin_turker_us - 21/03/20 00:15:40] Around peak times (I'd say about noon), it gets a lot harder to catch well-paying surveys because more people are on.

[mrmontanari - 19:11:31] I was reading the chat conversations and I started to think about the artistic aspect of this work, and I want to know what you think about it. What is your opinion about this experience from an artistic point of view? How do you understand your participation in this project Exch w/ Turkers, what are your motivations, what is the experience like?

[reylin_turker_us - 20:27:52] I love art. In all forms... music, painting, writing... I even consider food as art. Now, as far as connecting it to what I do here on MTurk. Because all the tasks are so different, I don't know if I can make a general statement, relating art to this type of work. I can only talk about it while using specific jobs / tasks. There are a lot of art HITs. Just last week I had to look at different paintings, and choose how they made me feel, emotionally. The paintings were great, and I enjoyed those tasks, and I think it was cool to get that opportunity to help with a study that studied how people perceive paintings.¹⁶ MTurk has a lot of different people working on it from all over the world, and so I know they got various answers. It would be interesting to know the results.¹⁷ I apologize if that doesn't

¹⁶ A batch of HITs were posted, and each one contained one painting, with a variety of emotions you could choose from. All you had to do was say how it made you feel. My favorite painter and painting are a very popular one, I'm sure you have heard of and seen it. It is The Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh. I am a night person. I love to look at the stars and the moon.

¹⁷ One second I am finishing up a HIT, wondering what the point of it was, and then another HIT pops up and seconds later, I have totally forgotten about the first HIT I was wondering about.

necessarily answer your question. I think that in the same way that art is "free form," MTurk is freeform also in a way; anybody can post any kind of HIT or study and get a wide range of responses back.¹⁸ My understanding in MTurk and this project... well, to keep it simple, from what I understand is that not everything can be done with robots. Sometimes requesters need actual humans. I also understand that Turkers are also doing tasks that help improve robots. My motivations are partially because of the convenience of turking at home, and also because of my interest in a lot of the tasks / jobs that get posted. There are so many things people are working on, that goes beyond my understanding, and to still even play a small part in that, is pretty exciting sometimes.¹⁹ I love science, I love art, I love studies, I love learning etc. etc. and MTurk has all of that.

[brunomoreschi - 21:04:40] How is MTurk in this coronavirus period? What about you and this period of world crisis? How are you feeling and dealing with it?

[reylin_turker_us - 21:48:43] There is less work, **73** and on top of that, more people are home and turking, so it's even harder to catch HITs. This week has been the slowest week for me, due to the coronavirus. Last week, I noticed that a good bit of the studies was all

¹⁸ I can see MTurk as an art form. This may be a bit of a reach, but whenever researchers post studies trying to get different perspectives on one topic from a variety of topics to come to one conclusion, we can say that the researcher is painting a picture. The study is the paint brush, and the Turkers responding are the different colors/paints. All our different responses come together to create one painting, or result / conclusion. If MTurk was an artist, it would be Banksy, for sure.

¹⁹ There's no doubt that I've helped with the construction of a world with better-trained AI. There are so many HITs that consist of bettering robots; judging their vocal responses or judging their movement/reactions to things. I've seen the change in AI-related HITs. For instance, in 2012 I was reading sentences from a robot, judging how natural the response was. Now, there are HITs with robots performing surgery, and I judge that. I wouldn't consider myself a teacher of machines. I would consider myself a helper of the teacher of the machines. I am 100% in support of Amazon offering online courses for us to learn more about the machines we are training.

related to the coronavirus.²⁰ I have family in two States with a high case number. I am not worried about myself, specifically, since I am young, and in a state with not as many cases as others. But my parents are close to 60 years old, and all of my uncles are 60+, and living in states with high numbers of cases, so I am worried.²¹ I am scared for the world, but I hope that we can all get through it and be able to get back to our normal lives, as soon as possible. I am dealing with it by not staying glued to the news too much, as I find that makes my anxiety about it all much worse.

[humano - 22/03/20 19:18:40] Who is the person you love the most in your life?

[reylin_turker_us - 20:40:46] The person I love the most is my best friend. Genuine love feels hard to find. Especially as adults, all of us have our trust issues. So, when you find that person you can be yourself with, no matter what, someone who doesn't leave when time gets rough, and someone who knows how to laugh (that's important), you have to hold on tight to these people.

[kamer - 20:49:04] Have you ever had a loving relationship with someone virtually?

[reylin_turker_us - 23/03/20 00:13:02] Yes, I met him on an MTurk forum²² :)

[kamer - 13:35:38] What is your favourite food? Your favourite movie? And your favourite song?

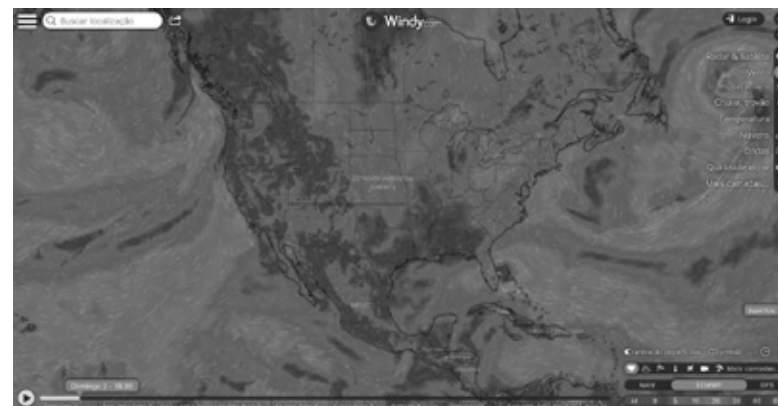
20 I am very disappointed in America's politicians and what they've done in relation to the pandemic. Our president has divided our country, once again, on something that should not be political-related. A world after the pandemic is hard to imagine right now. I think it's going to affect my work in the sense that more people are going to be home and on MTurk, so less HITs will be available. Finally, I am not angry at those people because I understand needing to work. I am angrier at the country's leaders.

21 My parents do not know I turk, specifically, but they do know I do computer-related work from time to time. I think they would much rather want me to have a stable job; which is understandable.

[reylin_turker_us - 14:14:06] I love a good burger!²³ My favourite movie is *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009), and my favourite song is probably *In the Woods Somewhere* by Hozier. Thank you for the question!!

[kamer - 24/03/20 7:38:11] I would like you to send me a link to some content that you like and that you would like other people to see as well. It can be a song, a text, image, a website, anything...

[reylin_turker_us - 25/03/20 00:14:41] Here is a cool website that shows the weather in the most beautiful way I have ever seen. I enjoy windy.com so much because it is the most visually appealing way I have ever seen the weather forecast. It makes checking the weather so much more fun.



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22 I keep up with him. We met on one of the MTurk forums, and eventually it led us to meeting in person. It was fun having a relationship with someone doing the same work that I was doing because we both understand something about each other, that many other people probably wouldn't understand. At first, we exchanged tips and HITs with each other. We'd listen to music together and send links to HITs to each other in chats. We have done a lot of things in person, from going on long road trips together, to even camping out in the middle of a forest for several days.

23 It is always a good time to eat a burger, so I'd like one while turking. LOL. I will never turn down a cheeseburger. It is one of the greatest foods ever invented!

[reylin_turker_us - 27/03/20 00:25:20] Hey!
I had a lot of fun participating in the exchange with
Turkers, and I would gladly do it again. Honestly, there
was nothing I disliked about this experience. It has all
been straightforward and super easy. It has been a cool
way to vocalize some opinions I have about MTurk, in
a way that I have never really expressed before. I really
appreciate getting the opportunity to do so. Thank you
so much for the questions and the opportunity to partic-
ipate in this. :D

SONIA

I am 41 years old, I am married, the mother of a 10-year-old boy and a 5-year-old girl. I live in Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil, a well-known tourist city. I've been working online since 2014 – I got pregnant and had to look for other ways to earn money. I started on MTurk in 2018 because I wanted to buy Baby Alive dolls for my daughter and Lego for my son's collection – on the Amazon US site it's cheaper. But MTurk money also helps with the monthly budget. I've done several jobs and didn't get paid, I even thought about quitting. But I persisted, moved on, met people who shared their knowledge with me, others who cheated me out of fear of competition. I often repeat: if you don't work, you won't get paid – at MTurk everything depends 100% on you. I want to note that it is wrong to think that the internet brings in easy money, that does not exist.

[amanda - 13/03/20 8:25:58] How did this type of work come to you? What did you do before?

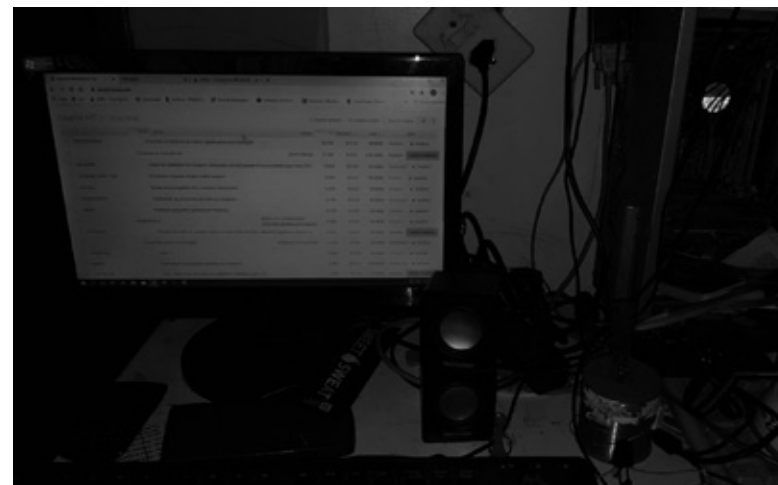
[sonia_turker_br - 8:46:39] I was already doing some work online and, at the end of 2018, a friend told me about MTurk. So, I checked out the platform and enjoyed working on it.

[brunomoreschi - 10:26:09] What's your workspace like at home?

[sonia_turker_br - 11:32:58] I used to work in two places, but now there are three.¹ I have a laptop in the kitchen, a laptop in the living room and a desktop in my work room, where I also have a work table with a soldering iron and various other things – I repair cell phones

¹ I think my workspaces are ideal for me – not that it's right, because I think the right thing would be to have a specific place just to work online. I love the idea of having a public space away from home to work as a Turker – if the internet is fast and secure. It would be nice if we actually had a place where everyone could come together to ask for more rights and, who knows, maybe get Amazon to allow Brazilians to be paid more directly, not just in the form of products from its US website.

in my spare time. With several computers connected, the Catcher extension beeps on all the machines, so I can hear it from wherever I am in the house. Then I run to the computer. It's already become a habit. Setting up the computer in the kitchen was my husband's idea. This helped me to work as a Turker and, at the same time, manage the children at mealtimes and help with homework. I'm sending you a photo of one of these workspaces.



[não_sou_um_robo - 12:46:29] You mentioned that you're married. Is your husband also a Turker?

[sonia_turker_br - 13:54:05] Yes, I'm married, and I have two children. My husband is not a Turker, he doesn't have much patience for it. But he works with electronic security, so with a computer, but more in the form of installation, maintenance and fibre optics. At first, he didn't like my job because the workload was too much and I didn't have time for him and the children. Today I've found a balance between the time I spend online and the time I spend offline, so that I can connect with my family.

[A_mumia - 14:08:26] How many hours a day do you work as a Turker?

[sonia_turker_br - 14:18:47] I'm online all day. The MTurk page is always open in order to catch HITs. On average, I spend 10 hours connected every day.²

[lucasnseq - 21:07:19] How big is the community of Turkers you're part of (if any)? How many people are you in contact with who do the same work, more or less?

[sonia_turker_br - 2:56:59] There are several groups on WhatsApp and Facebook of people who work as Turkers. I'm in a small WhatsApp group of about 20 people.³

[dojomaster - 14/03/20 7:37:41] In your description you say that people cheated you out of fear of competition. Can you tell us that story? I'm curious!

[sonia_turker_br - 7:47:21] In truth, many people are not open to teaching what they learn in the digital environment, while others charge to teach you. I don't criticize it, it's a competitive environment. I've helped someone who ended up taking my position as a recruiter at a company in Denmark. However, I think that sharing knowledge is the best way to retain it, and when I teach, I also learn.

[brunomoreschi - 12:40:45] When you're working online, can you focus solely on MTurk work? Or do you mix that with online news, e-mail, etc.? I'm also curious about how the pandemic and the excess news coverage of it have affected your focus on MTurk.

² One thing I learned from my mother, to be able to work well from home is: you have to wake up, take a shower, even if you're staying at home, get dressed as if you were going out, or going to work, put on some perfume, put on some lipstick, and that way your brain wakes up with you – in other words, your mind needs to understand that you're not at home on a day off, that you're working. Working from home in pajamas? No way!

³ I was also in the WhatsApp group that Julio (the other Brazilian Turker taking part in this project) created. That virtual space was a good learning experience for me. In the beginning, people helped each other a lot, it was impressive. But people lacked commitment. It's too bad it no longer exists.

[sonia_turker_br - 13:08:24] I do several things at once when the HIT allows it.⁴ I don't like having free time. During this pandemic, the excess amount of news is distressing. That's why I try not to search for information too much, so as not to lose focus. The children are at home all day now, so I have to manage everything with ease.⁵ I now need to double my workload on MTurk, because I know that in the coming months everything is going to get more complicated financially.

[tecgirl1 - 15:17:22] Do you think Amazon should do something for Turkers during the pandemic?

[sonia_turker_br - 17:26:59] Yes. Amazon should change the rules for Brazilians. I can't eat my MTurk account balance, nor can I order food via US Amazon. Payment could be made via a digital wallet. Do I think that's going to happen? No.

[brunomoreschi - 19:02:56] How is MTurk during this Coronavirus period? How are you coping with the pandemic?

[sonia_turker_br - 20:20:06] I think that with many people at home, there will be an increase in the number of people working on MTurk from now on. I think we're in for some very turbulent days ahead. Not to be pessimistic, but I think the amount paid for HITs will decrease and the number of virtual workers will increase.⁶ Given that the bills never stop, people will look for alternative

⁴ This was more possible before. But today, most of these HITs are timed. Even in this sense, Turkers are being demanded more of.

⁵ We've been in lockdown since March 17th 2020. Now (August 2020), I've gained a bit of experience in dealing with the situation, but it's still crazy. That's because we have two children out of school, at home 24 hours a day, plus two cockatiels singing non-stop, and a dog. All this has made it more difficult to work on MTurk for 10 hours, like I used to before the pandemic. Not to mention that now I have to be a teacher to my children! With all this responsibility, I'm only doing the MTurk services that I've already mastered, as there's less time to dedicate to learning new tasks.

⁶ I was right when I predicted that. I see that now, when HITs are launched on the platform, they disappear in a matter of 2 or 3 minutes!

[sonia_turker_br]

I think that with many people at home, there will be an increase in the number of people working on MTurk from now on. I think we're in for some very turbulent days ahead.

ways and means to get some money, and one of these will be digital. But, of course, there will also be lots of cool things, keeping to the phrase "it's in the crisis that we grow." Now's the time to undertake and innovate.

[Coronito - 15/03/20 12:42:02] It's a good time to work remotely from home, isn't it?

[sonia_turker_br - 12:47:49] Exactly. Now it's better to work remotely – less risk of contracting Covid-19.

[brunomoreschi - 14:17:35] Sonia, do you consider yourself an Amazon employee?

[sonia_turker_br - 14:47:24] Not directly. If you look at it from an indirect, informal point of view, yes, in a way, since I work on the platform they manage. Actually, I'm not sure.

[brunomoreschi - 19:45:40] Do you remember the first time you went on MTurk? How was it? What was your first impression?

[sonia_turker_br - 20:23:23] Yeah, I remember. I was really lost; I didn't know what to do. But my virtual colleague Julio taught me a few introductory things. I did some low-paying HITs where I had to mark pedestrians in images. I spent 10 days doing that, it paid only 1 cent of a dollar, which is not uncommon on MTurk.⁷

[brunomoreschi - 16/03/20 4:05:17] What's the strangest job you've ever done on MTurk?

[sonia_turker_br - 5:43:51] I wouldn't say strange, but I've done some tasks that I call "*telhadinho*," where I had to place a roof according to the buildings that appeared in the image – it's hard to explain. I had a hard time at first, because the roof I created never fit the standards. After trying and failing for almost 40

⁷ We often subject ourselves to HITs that pay one cent in order to raise our HIT percentage and thus get a high score on MTurk – since the best services require you to be highly rated.

minutes, I got the hang of it. I have no idea what that was for. All I know is that it was exhausting.

[brunomoreschi - 5:47:41] What I find curious is that you did the task, but don't actually know what it was for. Whether it was to train a mobile application, create a computer vision system, among many other possibilities. Requesters don't usually share what the assignment will be used for, right? How do you feel about that?

[sonia_turker_br - 8:04:51] The general rule is that they never tell you the purpose of the task you're doing. I feel a bit strange about it, but what can I do?

[gabriel - 10:30:54] Have you ever thought about giving up working on MTurk? If so, why?

[sonia_turker_br - 12:32:58] Yes, this was due to several factors. One of them was exhaustion, even though it's an online job, it's just as tiring, if not more so, than working at a physical place. Other reasons are a banned account with a balance and no explanation, exhausting work that wasn't paid for and the fact that I have a family, children. It's a challenge for me to spend so much time online to earn so little. The worst of these factors is when Amazon decides to ban my account. It's very cruel.

[gabriel - 12:34:44] If I may ask, what keeps you going?

[sonia_turker_br - 12:37:17] I personally enjoy working online and the money I earn has helped me buy dolls for my daughter, for example.

[gabriel - 12:41:22] You buy the dolls in the US, but doesn't it take a long time for the order to arrive in Brazil?

[sonia_turker_br - 12:47:00] It takes a *long* time!

[brunomoreschi - 17/03/20 00:49:12] Is the money you earn often used to buy things for them? If so, what kind of products? And, lastly: do your children know that these purchases came from your work as a Turker? Do they understand when you explain it?

[sonia_turker_br - 5:27:34] My children understand that the toys are paid for by the work on MTurk. I always have a list of what they want. Here are two images – one shows part of the Baby Alive dolls I've bought for my daughter, and the other shows some of my son's Legos. Apart from toys, I buy vitamin supplements that don't exist in Brazil, some cosmetic products, etc.⁸ Since it's very difficult to receive payment in the form of cash, I decided to juggle these things and thus avoid having my account banned when I tried to sell my credits outside of MTurk.



⁸ I've also bought a cell phone, a cake mixer, clothes, you name it. The only thing that frustrated me was that I couldn't buy a new television – they wouldn't deliver it to Brazil.

[brunomoreschi - 5:30:25] Interesting. What's on your children's list now?

[sonia_turker_br - 9:28:01] My son has already put another Lego box on the list. Both of them also want new sneakers.⁹ At the end of the month it's one of their birthdays, and I have to work harder for that too.

[mily_m27a - 12:21:13] Thank you for sharing some of your personal experience here. You earn an average dollar per hour of work. Is that the basis on which you guide your children when choosing their orders on Amazon?

[sonia_turker_br - 13:15:21] On average, I can make between US\$ 3 and US\$ 9 an hour¹⁰ on days with good HITs. Yes, that steers my children's requests. Mind you, it's my choice as to what I actually buy, according to how much I make.

[brunomoreschi - 15:46:53] We just talked on WhatsApp and you allowed me to make this public: you told me that in the last two days your routine has changed due to your son's health, right? He had to go to the hospital. How do unforeseen events like this affect your work as a Turker? Don't you think Amazon should offer some kind of support in the event of a health problem? Best wishes to your son!

[sonia_turker_br - 19:34:16] Yes, my routine was totally altered, because we work by HIT, so, I'm on call, and on those days it was difficult to be online. I do think that Amazon should provide support in the event of health problems for workers and their families – it's such a wealthy company.¹¹ But the reality is different: they don't offer any kind of support or security. In truth,

⁹ I managed to buy the sneakers. I had to work for four days straight – and that's because I got a task that paid well. Otherwise, it would've taken more than a week. I also have to work on MTurk to pay the delivery costs, not just the value of the product.

¹⁰ I think that MTurk work should be priced at a minimum of US\$ 5 an hour, so that it can be done with more attention and perfection. But the reality is very different.

Turkers generally walk a tightrope. We never know when our accounts will be blocked.¹²

[brunomoreschi - 19:57:57] And we're talking about a company whose owner is considered to be the richest man in the world...

[sonia_turker_br - 20:20:09] Exactly. I think there should be a plan for supporting Turkers, after all, we're the ones who train robots to work in the future. The richest man in the world does this to us. We also know that spending hours typing repetitively in front of the computer will lead to future problems.¹³

[brunomoreschi - 21:26:06] Do you ever feel any physical problems from working as a Turker?

[sonia_turker_br - 18/03/20 5:12:18] In addition to the pain in my wrists, the mental exhaustion at the end of the day is terrible. Even when you're asleep, it's as if your brain is still working. I get tired physically and mentally. Since I have the opportunity here, I'll go into more detail: I have mild bouts of anxiety with the feeling that I'm missing out on a good MTurk task. When you have a job with set hours, you can organize yourself. Online, everything is very unpredictable. That's why we're always on the alert – and, of course, apprehensive and anxious.

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¹¹ They could offer a corporate health plan, even a basic one. They could also find a way of paying the Brazilian Turkers in the form of money. Life on MTurk isn't easy, you know? A third thing that is simple to implement: allowing Brazilian Turkers to buy from Amazon in Brazil. It's so obvious. That alone would be a huge leap in quality.

¹² Now I can say it with more clarity, just over a month after it happened. I was banned from MTurk for a few days and lost the equivalent of a month's minimum wage salary in Brazil. Amazon's justification was only that I had violated the rules – without specifying which. I still don't know. It upset me so much, I could even say it made me depressed. I wondered how many accounts are banned for no reason. It's not pleasant, your psyche and self-esteem are affected because you're reminded of how much of your life you've wasted. Time that could have been spent relaxing, reading a book or even playing with my children.

¹³ I think that if all the Turkers petitioned, it might be possible to change something...

[brunomoreschi - 14:36:17] Your job often involves making choices – for example, whether or not an image has an element. And choosing isn't just a rational process, it's also a sentimental one. Did you realize at any point that your choice was going to make a difference and completed the task in such a way as to introduce something of your own, some ideology of yours into it?

[sonia_turker_br - 15:50:51] There was one task that was for Brazilians. It was called Submit and we gave synonyms for words. I felt really good. There was another task that involved cataloguing dried plants – a really beautiful task where we wrote down fruits, flowers and buds. It was almost a partnership. I think my emotions got in there somehow.

[brunomoreschi - 16:16:03] Could you explain this HIT example of cataloguing plants? Why did you cite it as an example? I didn't fully understand...

[sonia_turker_br - 16:52:46] You looked at a picture of a plant and had to write down in different colours what was a bud, a flower and a fruit. It paid one dollar per plant, which is a very good rate for MTurk. It was tiring, but different at the same time. I believe that my ideology remains in the machine. For instance, I don't do HITs with violent or adult content, because I don't want to contribute to that. My children are home and can see the computer screen. I will never go against my principles to make money. I think my work leaves a bit of my essence behind, but it's hard to explain. It's just a feeling.

[digital_socialism - 17:40:50] In your previous answer, you mentioned "principles" when you're working on MTurk. Which are they?

[sonia_turker_br - 18:35:22] I don't do HITs that are offensive or have pornographic content. I think this goes beyond what I'm willing to do, because I put a lot of love and care into everything I do.

[didiana - 20:41:57] How do you feel working in a job where you and your role are invisible to the end user?

[sonia_turker_br - 22:08:27] There are many other jobs that are essential and invisible too.¹⁴ However, I confess that I sometimes feel frustrated. It doesn't interfere with my performance on the platform, though. I think someone has to do the tedious part of a job so that everything runs smoothly.

[silvan - 20:53:38] Do you consider yourself the human side of a machine?

[sonia_turker_br - 19/03/20 2:49:48] In theory, you could say that.

[oi - 3:30:39] What does being human mean to you, Sonia?

[sonia_turker_br - 3:41:04] It means having the necessary awareness to recognize differences and feel the needs of others.

[kamer - 7:43:20] And from 0 to 10 (where 0 is nothing and 10 is maximum), how much do you agree with this statement: "I am an essential person for the digital world, and the fact that almost nobody knows of my existence is a strategy to give the wrong impression that machines are smarter than they actually are."

[sonia_turker_br - 7:56:12] I agree a 9 with this phrase. I think we do an essential job of training the intelligence that will do our service in the future.

[mrmontanari - 15:47:12] I was reading the chat conversations and started thinking about the artistic power of this work and I wanted to know what you think about it. What do you think of this experience from an artistic point of view? How do you understand your participation in this project, what are your motives, how is the experience going?

¹⁴ Other examples of invisible work: Facebook ad improvement work, where the evaluators are unknown. And in the physical world, the waste collector who comes to your house several times a week. Virtually no one notices who they are – until the day they go on strike, of course.

[sonia_turker_br - 15:56:05] Well, I see this project as a part of my personal growth.¹⁵ I like challenges, I like learning and sharing what I learn with others. I think that where I've gone wrong, someone else doesn't have to. As for the artistic side of this work, I think that teaching an AI or a person is an art – the art of sharing knowledge. I can't say it's a passion, but I really enjoy all the work I do, and I've learned to always look on the bright side of every situation.

[brunomoreschi - 16:34:02] In your last response, I felt that you maybe take pride in being part of something greater – digitizing life, helping to build intelligent machines, etc. Does this feeling exist? If so, isn't it somewhat overshadowed by the fact that you (Turkers) generally work hard and earn little? And because almost no one knows about the existence of workers like you and your fundamental role in building a digital, interconnected and more efficient society.

[sonia_turker_br - 17:55:06] Bruno, I try to love and be proud of everything I do. I'm proud of my work online, that's a fact. As you know, contractors lack a lot of recognition for their workers, because the heavy labour is done by us and, contrary to what some may think, it's not easy work.¹⁶ You have to dedicate time, thinking and effort to carry out the tasks, you have to use your arms to type and your head to think. When you look at voice command technology on the market, you never realize all the work that went into it – people who worked for hours, tirelessly, to train the equipment.¹⁷ And the pay

¹⁵ One important thing you learn in online work is how to say no. When it was in person, I didn't have the courage to say no. Now, I'm more confident in that aspect. I learned to choose what I want to do.

¹⁶ In reality, many people's mentality is that because you're working online from home, it's fun and profitable. The reality is that few people really know what the work is like, spending hours in front of a computer (10, 12, 15, 18 hours), going to sleep late at night – while at the same time having the responsibility of being a mother and a wife. I'd like to repeat that it's not easy at all. In the workplace, you can slack off, take a coffee break, smoke a cigarette (for those who smoke, of course), kill time in the bathroom, have weekends and holidays off. All this with no impact on your salary – which you know exactly how much will be. None of this exists online.

[sonia_turker_br]

I don't do HITs that are
offensive or have pornographic
content. I think this goes
beyond what I'm willing to do,
because I put a lot of love and
care into everything I do

is well below what it should be. According to a recent report, MTurk is modern feudalism.¹⁸ I believe that if the remuneration were better, and the money we earn on MTurk were paid fairly, in terms of an account to receive money in cash and not in the form of barter for products, perhaps many would work with more enjoyment, sense of pride and quality. I've never been able to express myself like this about MTurk, thank you!

[FePessoa - 22:27:19] I'd like to know your opinion on the current political situation in Brazil.

[sonia_turker_br - 22:59:25] Well, this chat is about MTurk, I'll reserve the right not to answer about politics. But I think that the current situation in Brazil will lead to the emergence of new Turkers looking for extra money to help them make a living. There should be a law to protect those who work as freelancers in general.

[todaythata - 21/03/20 3:09:13] I'm young and I've been in IT for two years working with a CRM that no longer suits me. I'm trying to switch to UX. Would you have any advice for my career?

[sonia_turker_br - 14:01:47] I don't know what CRM or UX is, but, as you said, because you're young, you'll still have many stages to go through in all areas of your life. The tip I'm going to give you is something I apply in my life too: when you are in an area that appeals

¹⁷ The right thing to do would be to give a spotlight to the tiny part (human in this case) behind the machine, yes. The Turker ID on MTurk is made up of numbers and letters, which means that for Amazon we are just a code. But every Turker is a real person with a life, a family, loves and sorrows, who has days when they wake up feeling good and take everything in their stride, but also days when they're utterly drained. If each job could be credited for the work done, that would be very interesting. That would be a good start to feeling more valued for the good work we do on a daily basis. You know those movie subtitles where everyone's name appears at the end? I'd really like that. I don't mind if it's in a small font, but it would be there, registered.

¹⁸ Modern feudalism is undoubtedly part of MTurk. We are underpaid, we depend entirely on those who offer us the job. I work so that I can barter; to exchange my credits for products from the owner of the company I work for. That's not even capitalism.

to you, work with passion, then you'll achieve professional and financial success too. Working with what you love, with something that motivates you to improve, is a big plus. Regardless of the area. In addition to my digital work as a Turker, I do volunteer work which is my true passion. I hope that helps. Put passion into what you do and that will make a difference.

[bernardo - 22/03/20 22:39:08] I would like to hear about the volunteer work that you mentioned in your previous answers. Congrats! I think that's really important =] If you don't mind me asking, what do you work with?

[sonia_turker_br - 23/03/20 00:32:20] Not at all, I love my volunteer work. It's at an old people's home in my town – once a week I tell them stories. In the Oncology ward at the Municipal Hospital, I spend one afternoon a week talking with patients and their families, because I've learned that a word of hope can change a person's life. I also help an NGO that teaches girls how to crochet. Anyway, I try to be useful.¹⁹ It all started 14 years ago, when I would help the homeless by distributing soup on cold nights. That slowly grew. I try to set an example for my children.

[humano - 24/03/20 15:15:59] Sonia, are you happy?²⁰

[sonia_turker_br - 25/03/20 15:37:17] I am happy.

[humano - 15:49:11] And who do you love most in your life?

¹⁹ Working as a Turker helps me feel useful too, because I'm shaping the future.

²⁰ This is a question I like to ask myself every day, and in times of a pandemic it's even more important. I'm happy because I've achieved something I couldn't have imagined – 11 years ago, a doctor told me I wouldn't be a mother. And I got pregnant and gave birth to a wonderful son. When I was about to have an enterectomy, I got pregnant again and my beautiful daughter came along... after that, I shut down the factory.

[sonia_turker_br - 16:38:39] Today I can say that the people I love most are my children, because their needs will always come before mine, and their happiness will also be part of mine.

[kamer - 26/03/20 16:49:23] Have you ever had a loving relationship with someone virtually?

[sonia_turker_br - 17:39:24] Although this question isn't relevant to the chat, as it's outside the topic of MTurk, I did have an affair with someone I met online in 2004. This eventually evolved into a 14-year marriage with two children. Yes, I met my husband virtually.

[kamer - 27/03/20 17:59:14] I would like you to send me a link to some content that you like and that you would like other people to see as well. It can be a song, a text, an image, a website, anything.

[sonia_turker_br - 18:51:51] I love a book by Father Fabio de Mello called '*Quem me Roubou de Mim?*' (Who Stole Me from Myself), but I didn't find a link to share with you, sorry.

[sonia_turker_br - 19:49:57] I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this chat... It was very important to share my experience and also to be able to answer some questions about working on MTurk. I hope everyone is doing well during this pandemic. I hope to meet everyone in a future project. In advance, my deepest thanks to the entire team behind this project and everyone who interacted with me.²¹

²⁰ Rereading my answers left me with the feeling that I should have talked more about remote work as a whole, not just on MTurk. We know that AI is just one arm of online work, there are transcribers, translators, researchers and recruiters who work remotely too. We are all responsible for this digital world, even if we are anonymous. We exist and we are part of the evolution of machines.

ONLY TURKERS

Turkers are unable to chat with each other on the MTurk platform. On the Exch w/ Turkers website, a chat window allowed them to exchange messages and discuss, for example, the differences between services offered and payment methods, according to their nationalities. Other website visitors could only read the conversation between the Turkers.

[julio_turker_br:] Hello turkers! Excited for this experience? Greetings from Brazil!

[sonia_turker_br:] Hello Julio! Hello turkers!

[anand_turker_in:] Hello guys. How are you?

[brianne_turker_us:] Hello! I am very excited to get started and share with...

[julio_turker_br:] Slow week for you guys too?

[brianne_turker_us:] My week has been pretty good. Yesterday was not so great so I used the opportunity to run errands.

[reylin_turker_us:] My goal for the weekend is usually way lower than what it is throughout the week. It is usually significantly slower. Sometimes I just give up and take the day off, but there have been some Saturdays where I was able to make a little bit of money. It just take longer to reach goals.

[anand_turker_in:] Is someone doing the “Paraphrase machine-generated questions” HITs?

[julio_turker_br:] No, I am not a Master unfortunately!

[anand_turker_in:] How many years have you been turking?

[julio_turker_br:] Only completed my first-year last month. It was when MTurk started to accept Brazilians, probably because Amazon is starting new bussines here. And you?

[anand_turker_in:] I have completed 4 years and became a Master after one year. I'm from India.

[julio_turker_br:] Awesome! In India, are they still paying with Amazon credits or is it a bank deposit now? Because for us, Brazilians, they only offer the Amazon gift card option :-)

[anand_turker_in:] Still Amazon gift card after 4 years.

Even after so many e-mails to Mturk, they are not willing to provide any other payment option.

[julio_turker_br:] Sad. I used to think that if people became Masters there would be a better payment option. :-)

[sonia_turker_br:] I like to work as a Turker. The only negative point is the payment method for Brazilians. They need to change this!

[julio_turker_br:] It would be awesome, but I don't think they will change that. Brianne and Reylin, how do you guys receive your Amazon payment, straight to your bank account? Because we (from Brazil and India) receive it via gift card. We have to use our credits to buy things from Amazon US – it's insane!

[brianne_turker_us:] I get a direct deposit to my bank every 3 days. I personally liked to use it to order stuff on Amazon but that isn't an option anymore.

[anand_turker_in:] You have a direct deposit to bank account because you are from the US.

[anand_turker_in:] You may receive it soon, but it is a matter of luck, Julio. The new method they have introduced is getting rolled out very slowly. They're allotting the new payment method on a lottery basis.

[julio_turker_br:] I saw an e-mail about a new method for a lot of countries, but Brazil was not on that list yet. What is bad for us is that Brazil has a lot of taxes.

[anand_turker_in:] Julio, you do not need to order goods on Amazon. I can tell you a method by which you can cash the MTurk earnings. If you are interested you can reply here.

[julio_turker_br:] I would like to know, for sure! I buy giftcards sometimes but also lose around 15%, 20%.

[anand_turker_in:] The method I am going to tell you is also risky because you may lose some money, but you can earn too. I am talking about buying Bitcoins. You can buy Bitcoins with your Amazon gift card balance. You can go to purse.io and order

stuff for others, in exchange you will earn Bitcoins. After that you can sell those Bitcoins and cash it.

[anand_turker_in:] Bitcoin is subject to market risk. But right now it's a good time to buy Bitcoins as it is down. Can you tell me which website you are using to buy gift cards, Julio?

[julio_turker_br:] Cool! A friend of mine uses purse.io. I buy gift cards directly on Amazon, there are some available like Google Play, Uber, Airbnb. Others like PSN are not.

[julio_turker_br:] How much HITs have you guys done? And how many years have you been Masters?

[brianne_turker_us:] 166,000 HITs and I've had Masters for about 3 years. I got Masters after about 1 year of working on there.

[julio_turker_br:] Cool, and do you think Masters is good or are there other qualifications that could also be that good? Like some specific companies, I always see people talking about qualifications from years ago that requesters do not give away anymore.

[brianne_turker_us:] I think having quals is more important than Masters when it comes to batch work, they are so hard to come by though.

[julio_turker_br:] So Masters gives you more surveys than batches?

[brianne_turker_us:] For me, yes, they do.

[julio_turker_br:] Good to know, I don't like surveys, I prefer batches. So, no need to dream so much with the Masters. :-)

[anand_turker_in:] Hello folks, just one small query. How do you guys communicate with requesters to reverse rejected assignments? I mean how do you persuade them?

[reylin_turker_us:] Are you asking what we say to them? I will usually look at why it's rejected, and if I don't agree with it, I will explain to them the problem / misinterpretation.

[anand_turker_in:] I was asking what you say to them. Do you always send polite message? Or become rude if they do not reply?

[reylin_turker_us:] Oh, I am always polite, even when it frustrates me. I figure my chances of getting the rejection reversed are much higher if they don't get annoyed with me. lol

[anand_turker_in:] That's great. Sometimes I get frustrated when a requester does not reply at all, no matter how many messages you send them. Once I had 75 rejections from one requester for e-mail finding HITs. I previously worked for that person on the same kind of hits. But once he rejected 75 out of 225 HITs where the e-mail was not available. He specifically mentioned that you should leave blank if e-mail can't be found. And I just did that. But he rejected all HITs where e-mail was not available. I sent at least 15 e-mails but he never replied. I did contact MTurk regarding it but they said they could not do anything in this matter since its a requester's right and they wouldn't interfere. I replied that it leaves a big loophole and anyone can abuse their system by rejecting since they won't interfere. But they replied with the same message and said it is beyond their policy. I feel that MTurk has a very poor worker support and abusing their system as a requester is very easy since no one cares.

[julio_turker_br:] Hey turkers! So about this job, is it your main job ou just something like beer money?

[anand_turker_in:] It is not my main job, but I use a decent amount from it to cover my petty expenses.

[sonia_turker_br] The truth is that HITs that are better paid are not available for Brazilians to do.

[anand_turker_in:] Good HITs are mostly available to US workers. Rest are more or less same. I qualified for a requester named vacationrentalapi for address finding and verification HITs. That work was best because it paid great and was available throughout the year. But after some time they limited their HITs to US and Canada workers only. I worked for 1.5 years for them before getting dropped. I still miss those HITs because I loved that work.

[brianne_turker_us:] Julio, it's my main job but the money isn't used to pay any main bills in my household. I mainly use it for shopping, savings, and paying down debt.

[reylin_turker_us:] Right now, MTurk is my main job while I job search. Whenever I am in between jobs, I usually make enough on mturk/other freelance jobs to cover bills.

[julio_turker_br:] Hey guys! Sorry to continue talking about this, but I would like to ask you all, how do you feel about this way that MTurk pays HITs? Do you feel the pressure to perform more? One year ago, I had a project for Appen and Lionbridge with hourly pay and it was amazing, but with MTurk my anxiety almost took me down.

[sonia_turker_br:] The MTurk payment, it would be better if they paid money to turkers, not just credit to the Amazon account. I agree that it does generate anxiety.

[anand_turker_in:] Yes, I do agree with you on this. But Amazon is having double benefit by offering only gift card method because they can sell their products on amazon.com. Since Amazon is making more profit by offering only gift card method, why would they offer bank transfer?

[anand_turker_in:] What is the worst HIT that you performed? I mean while performing that work you felt full of anxiety.

[brianne_turker_us:] Anything with extremely disturbing pictures of death or questions that ask about dying.

[julio_turker_br:] I dont remember anything on MTurk. I did a quite stressfull job for another company, another platform during elections, on all that fake news wave. I was hopeless.

[reylin_turker_us:] These do not give me anxiety, but those C-SAT HITs, where you rate how well a surgery is being done, always make me feel a little nauseous.

[julio_turker_br:] I find it curious how different the HITs we perform are. I basically never see the resquesters that you guys from the US and India are talking about.

[reylin_turker_us:] I am curious about that too. I wonder how different they are and how each requestor decides what survey should go to which country. Are there that many differences, from country to country, in things such as psychology.

[julio_turker_br:] Surveys are quite specific, they need a number of women and men, age and data like that. But batches make me more curious.

[anand_turker_in:] I've been thinking... There is one thing we can do. We can collaborate and try to put pressure on MTurk to make the Hyperwallet option available to all non-US workers. But for this we need lots of supporters.

[anand_turker_in:] Also, I want to tell you something. I once contacted Amazon founder Jeff bezos regarding Hyperwallet. I e-mailed him that MTurk support is not providing us any bank account option or newly launched hypervalent option. But I got a reply from his team that I should contact MTurk support regarding it. Which I found to be extremely funny.

[julio_turker_br:] hahahaha let's call the guy! hahahahaha

[anand_turker_in:] Why are you laughing? You can e-mail Jeff Bezos and his e-mail ID is jeff@amazon.com. Most probably you will receive a reply. There is a dedicated team for this.

[sonia_turker_br:] I'll send.

[julio_turker_br:] Sorry, I am not laughing at you. Some things make no sense if we translate them.

[reylin_turker_us:] That's awesome to try and contact them about it. I mean we know the chances of Jeff Bezos responding are slim, but there's going to be SOMEone who will see it. More people should e-mail them to try and get the point across. Even if they don't do it, I imagine if they get like 100 e-mails all requesting the same thing, they will at least think about it.

[reylin_turker_us:] Have any of you ever made US\$ 100 in one day of turking?

[sonia_turker_br:] In one day the maximum I got was US\$ 87.50

[julio_turker_br:] Only once, unfortunately.

[anand_turker_in:] Many times. Mostly during 2017 and 2018 when I used to work for vacationrentalAPI. I even made more than \$200 and \$250 many times. But nowadays its rare.

[anand_turker_in:] Personal question for all. Have you found the true love of your life or you are still searching for them?

[brianne_turker_us:] I found him quite a few years ago, he's been the best thing that has ever happened to me.

[reylin_turker_us:] It's hard to say because feelings are always changing... I believe I've found the love of my life, but because of life's "issues" I am unable to be with that person, so I am single.

[sonia_turker_br:] This is very relative; everyone has a love.

[sonia_turker_br:] It was great to interact with all of you during these past weeks. For me it was a very rewarding experience. Good luck to all, I wish you all great earnings, and that we have news on AMT soon regarding payments!

[julio_turker_br:] Hey guys! Thanks for the exchange! It was awesome to learn more about other turkers, how it works in other countries and to get to know each of you! Stay home! Stay safe! Hope all of you and your families are well in this situation!

[reylin_turker_us:] It was a lot of fun answering questions on here with you guys. Good luck with turking, and in life. Have a wonderful weekend!

[brianne_turker_us:] Good luck with turking! I had fun answering questions!

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Bruno Moreschi is a researcher and visual artist. He was a post-doctoral fellow at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo (FAUUSP), holding a PhD in Arts from the State University of Campinas (Unicamp), with a period at the University of Arts of Helsinki (Kuva Art Academy). He is a senior researcher at the Center for Arts, Design, and Social Research (CAD+SR) and member of the *Decay without mourning project: future thinking heritage practices* (funded by Volkswagen Stiftung, Fondazione Compagnia di SanPaolo, Wallenberg Foundations and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond). In September 2023, he began academic and artistic research at the Collegium Helveticum, Switzerland. His research investigates the deconstruction of systems and the decoding of procedures and social practices in the fields of art, museums, visual culture and technology. The projects have received recognition from grants, exhibitions and institutions such as ZKM, Van Abbemuseum, 33rd São Paulo Art Biennial, Rumos Award, Funarte, Fapesp, Capes, Cambridge University and Bauhaus Fellowship.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Guilherme Falcão Pelegrino is a graphic designer and editor. He earned a BA in Graphic Design from Senac University/SP (2006), with a specialisation (post-grad course) in Art: Critique and Curating from PUC/SP (2012). His practice in design encompasses publishing and editing, journalism, the relationship between design and music, education, and the research and production of self-publications: fanzines, pamphlets, books, bulletins. He is currently the Senior Art Director at Nexo Group. He is co-creator (2006) and editor-in-chief (since 2012) of Zine Parasita. Between 2013-17 he was the founder and editor of CONTRA, a small press dedicated to collaborative publications in visual culture. He is the co-founder of A Escola Livre (The Free School, 2014-18).

Falcão and Moreschi have been working together since 2017 in a partnership in which artistic practices and design interact, breaking hierarchies between the two fields, in search of a hybrid space that is experimental and at the same time communicative.

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_The project was featured on www.aarea.co in March 2020, allowing its visitors the opportunity to chat and establish a dialogue with participating Turkers. After 22 days, the site lost its interactivity and was migrated to exchanges.withturkers.net, where the conversations remain available in an unedited format.

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