Toward Effective & Sustainable Online Crowd Work
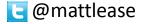
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Microsoft Research Faculty Summit 2014 15TH ANNUAL

New Capabilities Enable Innovation

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But also new "Dirty" Digital Jobs

- Tasks
  - Content moderation (Catch-22)
  - Solving captchas, SEO, account creation, …
- Goals
  - "Legal" fraud, cyber-crime, or cyber-warfare
- Workers
  - Unknown or at-risk: refugees, prisoners, children, …
  - Typical lack of informed consent
  - How do we know work is freely chosen?
- Part of larger, online ecosystem (cf., Robert Sim)

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Community Technology Access

Computer Gateways to Self-Suffiency

In 2009, UNHCR launched a special programme to give refugees and internally displaced people access to computers in a bid to open up education and livelihood opportunities, especially for women and girls. The Community Technology Access (CTA) project, backed by key UNHCR corporate partners Microsoft and PricewaterhouseCoopers, was piloted in Rwanda and Bangladesh.

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Debate in ACM

Software Aims to Ensure Fairness in Crowdsourcing Projects

The debate rages on about whether crowdsourcing is a win-win for workers, as well as for employers.

RE WORKERS WHO participate in the highly distributed microlabor online system known as crowdsourcing treated fairly? And what about the crowdsourcing employers?

Paul Hyman. *Communications of the ACM*, Vol. 56 No. 8, Pages 19-21, August 2013.

- Contribute to society and human well-being
- Avoid harm to others
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Be fair and take action not to discriminate
- Respect the privacy of others

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE. *As an ACM member I will*
- Uphold and promote the principles of this Code
- Treat violations of this code as inconsistent with membership in the ACM

Financial and economic imperatives …Which approaches are less expensive and is this sensible? **With the advent of outsourcing and off-shoring these matters become more complex… there are often related ethical issues concerning exploitation…**

6

What about regulation?

- [Wolfson & Lease (ASIS&T 2011)](#)

- As usual, technology ahead of the law
  - employment law & independent contractors
  - patent inventorship
  - data security and the Federal Trade Commission
  - copyright ownership
  - securities regulation of crowdfunding

- Understand risks of *"just in-time compliance"*

Seek Win-Win Solutions

- Pay debate has centered on quality vs. cost tradeoff

- What is "fair" and sustainable in a global economy?

  – Is it better to pay nothing? (i.e., volunteers, gamification)

- A meta-approach

  – Learn: Find information (e.g., Internet, surveys)

  – Share: Publicize information for others

  – Act: **Find ways to make the "right" thing preferable**

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The Future of Crowd Work, CSCW'13

The 16th ACM Conference on
Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing San Antonio, Texas, Feb 23-27, 2013

Kittur, Nickerson, Bernstein, Gerber, Shaw, Zimmerman, Lease, and Horton

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Join the conversation!

Crowdwork-ethics, by Six Silberman

http://crowdwork-ethics.wtf.tw

an informal, occasional blog for researchers interested in ethical issues in crowd work
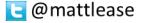

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Unanticipated challenges & risks with emerging technologies

Lease et al., SSRN'13