Title: **The Sheep Market**

Requester: Aaron Koblin

Year: 2006

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> The Sheep Market is a collection of 10,000 sheep created by workers on Amazon's Mechanical Turk.
> Each worker was paid $.02 (US) to "draw a sheep facing left."

#mechanical turk   #2006

Title: **The Faces of Mechanical Turk**

Requester: Andy Baio
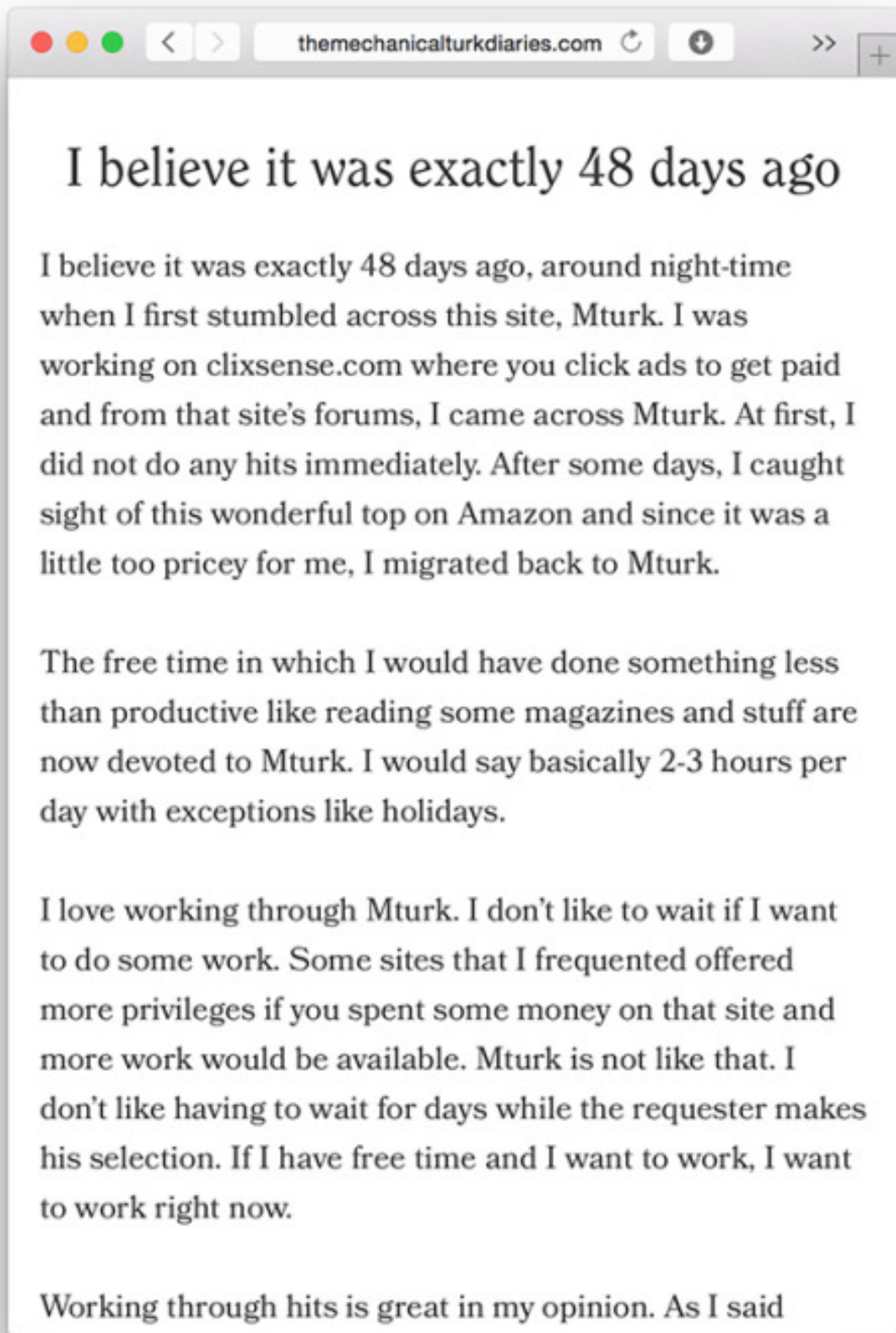
Year: 2008

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> When you experiment with Amazon's Mechanical Turk, it feels like magic. You toss 500 questions into the ether, and the answers instantly start rolling in from anonymous workers around the world. It was great for getting work done, but who are these people? I've seen the demographics, but that was too abstract for me.
>
> Last week, I started a new Turk experiment to answer two questions: what do these people look like, and how much does it cost for someone to reveal their face?

#2008   #mechanical turk

I believe it was exactly 48 days ago

I believe it was exactly 48 days ago, around night-time when I first stumbled across this site, Mturk. I was working on clixsense.com where you click ads to get paid and from that site's forums, I came across Mturk. At first, I did not do any hits immediately. After some days, I caught sight of this wonderful top on Amazon and since it was a little too pricey for me, I migrated back to Mturk.

The free time in which I would have done something less than productive like reading some magazines and stuff are now devoted to Mturk. I would say basically 2-3 hours per day with exceptions like holidays.

I love working through Mturk. I don't like to wait if I want to do some work. Some sites that I frequented offered more privileges if you spent some money on that site and more work would be available. Mturk is not like that. I don't like having to wait for days while the requester makes his selection. If I have free time and I want to work, I want to work right now.

Working through hits is great in my opinion. As I said

Title: The Mechanical Turk Diaries

Requester: Jason Huff

Year: 2009 - Ongoing

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turk

Description:

> Stories from Amazon's Anonymous Workforce. Are crowdsourcing platforms like Amazon's Mechanical
> Turk as bleak as the company's shipping warehouses? Read my essay for The New Inquiry, Serf
> Boards, to find out more about this project.

#2009   #mechanical turk

MOBY-DICK;

OR,

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE.

AUTHOR OF

"TYPEE," "OMOO," "REDBURN," "MARDI," "WHITE-JACKET."

Chapter XI

Stubb's Supper

Some years ago--never mind how long precisely--ha[ving] interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a l[ittle]

It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulati[ng]

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before cof[fin] meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an up[per hand] prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street high time to get to sea as soon as I

Title: **Emoji Dick**

Requester: Fred Benenson

Year: 2010

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> Emoji Dick is a crowd sourced and crowd funded translation of Herman Melville's Moby Dick into Japanese emoticons called emoji.
>
> Each of the book's approximately 10,000 sentences has been translated three times by a Amazon Mechanical Turk worker. These results have been voted upon by another set of workers, and the most popular version of each sentence has been selected for inclusion in this book.
>
> In total, over eight hundred people spent approximately 3,795,980 seconds working to create this book. Each worker was paid five cents per translation and two cents per vote per translation.
>
> The funds to pay the Amazon Turk workers and print the initial run of this book were raised from eighty three people over the course of thirty days using the funding platform Kickstarter.

#2010   #mechanical turk
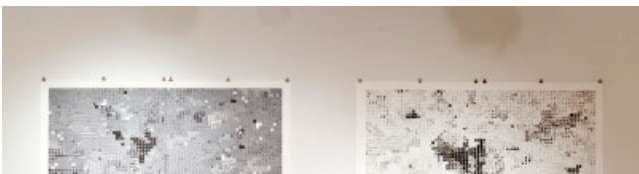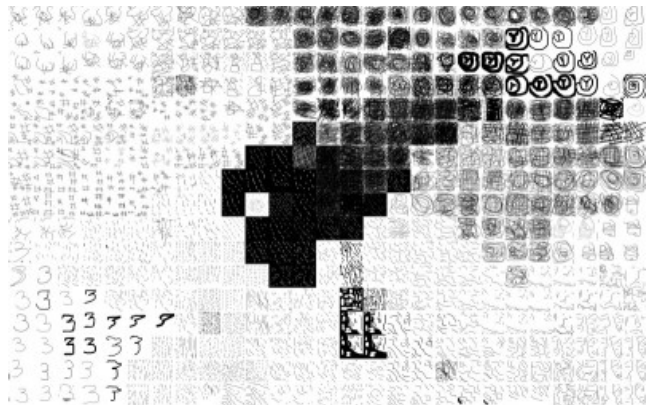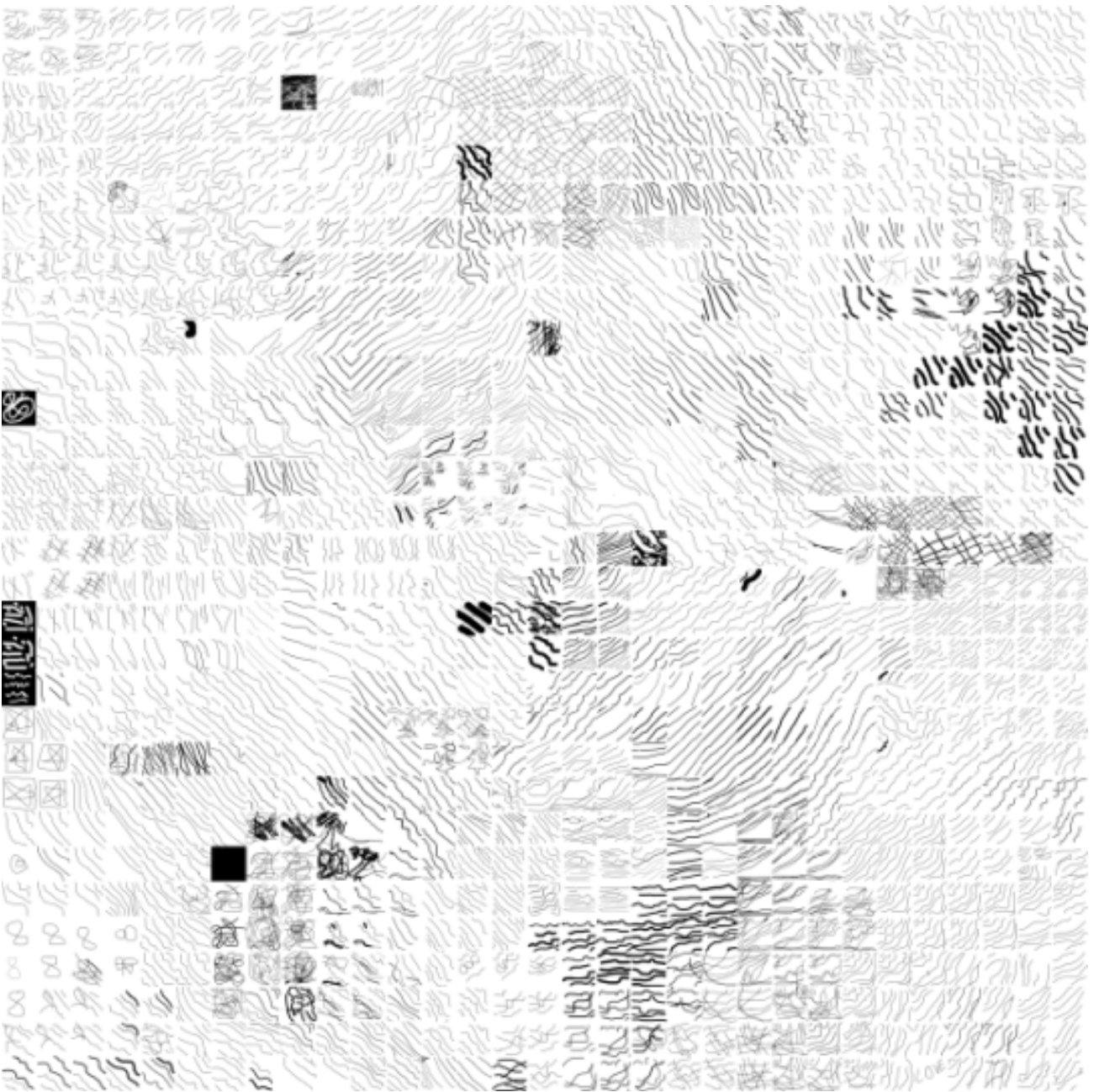
Title: **Seed Drawings**

Requester: Clement Valla

Year: 2011-Ongoing

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> The *Seed Drawings* are a set of drawings that are repeated copies, much like a drawing-version of the game 'Telephone', and produced by online workers. The process begins with one simple drawing (the 'Seed') and each worker copies the previous drawing. The completed drawings track the evolution of the copies over time, as well as the ruptures produced by those workers who ignore the instructions and change the drawings. The workers are culled through the online service of Amazon.com's *Mechanical Turk*, a pre-existing system that offers workers pay in reward for specified tasks. For the *Seed Drawings,* each worker is paid 5¢ to copy the previous worker's drawing— a paltry sum for a menial task. The *Seed Drawings*explore two aspects of contemporary networks: the online proliferation of copies and repeated memes, and the spread of cheap, crowdsourced micro-labor.

#2011   #mechanical turk

Title: **Autoportrait**

Requester: Tara Kelton

Year: 2012

Workforce: Anonymous online workers

Description:

Anonymous online workers paid $.50 each to draw their own portrait. A custom software application combines their drawings in real-time.
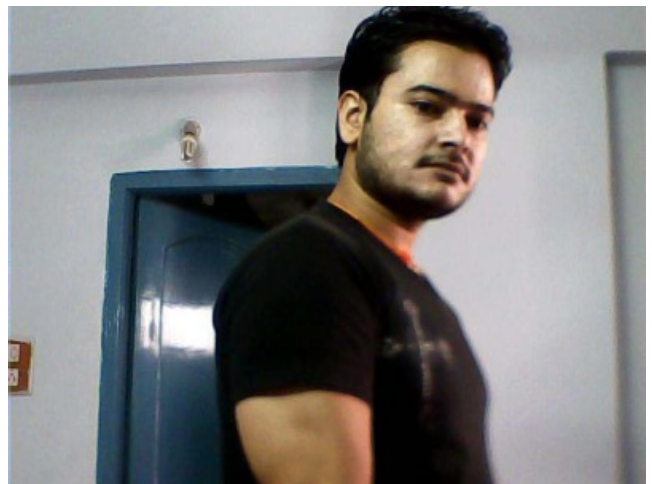
YOU DESERVE A MINUTE OFF.

Stand up. Do 1 minute of exercise. Make a snapshot of yourself using your webcam.

Upload the image to any imagesharing service. Paste the URL of your uploaded image below and get payed 0.50$*.

Uploaded image URL

*BE CREATIVE AND GET A 0.10$ BONUS PREMIUM!

REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL

Title: **Leisure Factory**

Requester: Manó Dániel Szöllősi

Year: 2012

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

Manó Dániel Szöllősi infiltrated in the online labor platform Mechanical Turk and paid people for a personal webcam snapshot. His work raises questions about labor exploitation, the role of the Internet and the meaning of private images.

Above you can read the first component of the assignment I published on Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform.
The second component asked the online worker the drew a 'captcha' (an acronym for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart") with any kind of drawing software.

The result of Leisure Factory is the collection of these image pairs: the online worker's self-made webcam portrait and his self–drawn 'captcha'.

#2012   #mechanical turk
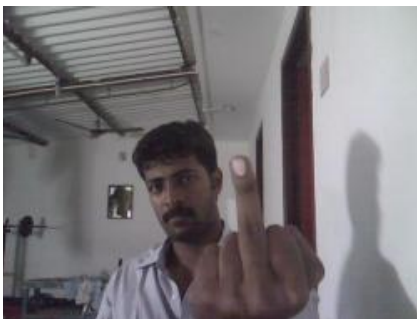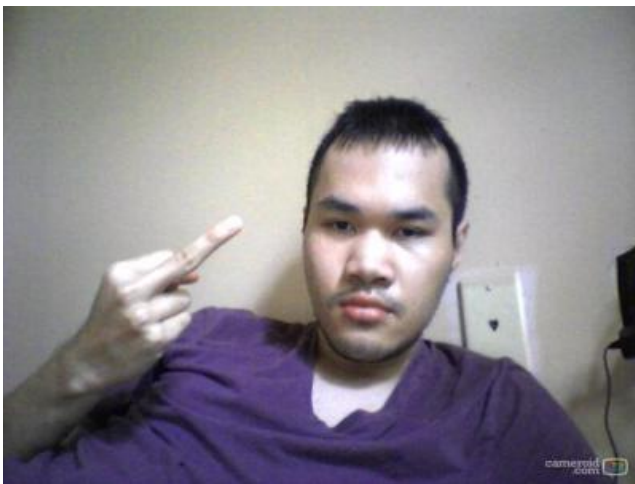
Title: The Middle Finger Response

Requester: Guido Segni

Year: 2013

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> Recently I've been intrigued by one of the new trend in art-making practices: it is the use of crowdsourcing applied to art.
>
> It basically consists in paying (very small) fees to a crowd of online workers dispersed around the world wide web that have to individually complete small tasks in order to produce huge and amazing pieces for the art world.
>
> So, I finally decided to make my crowdsourced art piece too and I posted a simple task on the Amazon Mechanical Turk.
>
> I've just asked all the crowd/cloud/online workers (regularly paid with a fee reward of about 0.5 U$D per submission) to take a picture in front of their own web cam with some simple and specific requests: to show/reveal their face, their context and, ultimately, their middle finger response.
>
> Basically the result is a curated selection of spontaneous self portraits of cloud workers and a travel around one of the most represantive crowdsourcing platform.
>
> In the end, "The middle finger response" is the cynical but sincere attempt to establish a dialogue between the artist, the public and the crowd dispersed through the new frontiers of leisure, labour and exploitation in the age of the big cloud.
>
> Hope you'll enjoy it!

(Source: crowdworkersoftheworldunite.com)
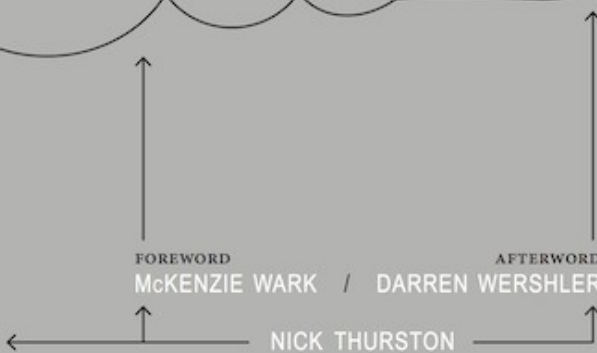
#mechanical turk   #2013

OF THE SUBCONTRACT

FOREWORD
McKENZIE WARK / DARREN WERSHLER
AFTERWORD

NICK THURSTON

Title: **Of the Subcontract, Or Principles of Poetic Right**

Requesters: McKenzie Wark and Darren Wershler

Year: 2013

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

Of the Subcontract is a collection of poems about computational capitalism, each of which was written by an underpaid worker subcontracted through Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk service. The collection is ordered according to cost-of-production and repurposes metadata about the efficiency of each writer to generate informatic typographic embellishments. Those one hundred poems are braced between two newly commissioned essays; the whole book is threaded with references to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Wolfganag von Kempelen, and the emerging iconography of cloud living.

Of the Subcontract reverses out of the database-driven digital world of new labour pools into poetry's black box: the book. It reduces the poetic imagination to exploited labour and, equally, elevates artificial artifiical intelligence to the status of the poetic. In doing so, it explores the all-too-real changes that are reforming every kind of work, each day more quickly, under the surface of life.

#mechanical turk   #2014

Title: **The Warp**

Requester: Tyler Coburn

Year: 2013 - 2014

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> The Warp is a compilation of quotes that trace the effects of 18th Century automata on later transformations in labor and industrial technology. A recurring figure in these quotes is The Mechanical Turk, an infamous, chess-playing automaton powered by a small man concealed in its shell. As a concession to the fact that certain repetitive tasks still exceed the computer's capabilities, Amazon has assigned this name to its crowdsourcing marketplace; The Warp contains hand-drawn illustrations by some of the marketplace workers, whom I hired to respond to select quotes. The illustrations not only required more creativity than the Turk's commonplace tasks, but offer small reminders of the various types of labor at work in our virtual machinery.

Title: **Outsourced Views, Visual Economies**

Requester: Yuri Pattison

Year: 2013 - 2014
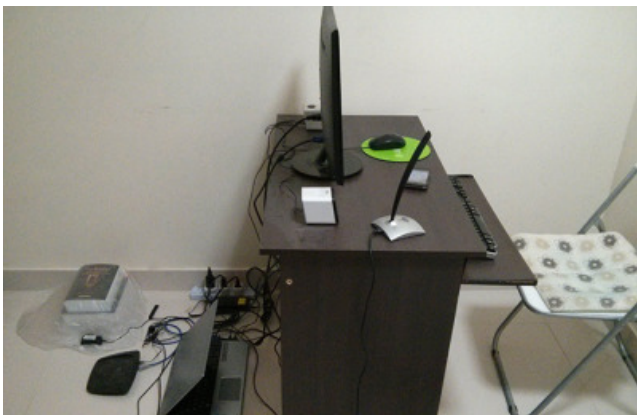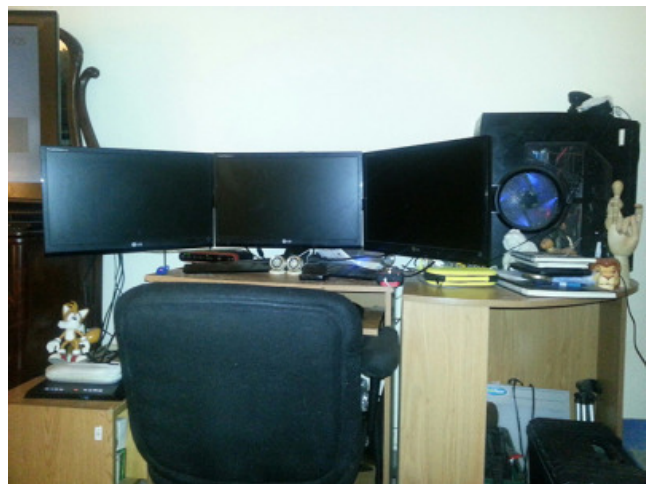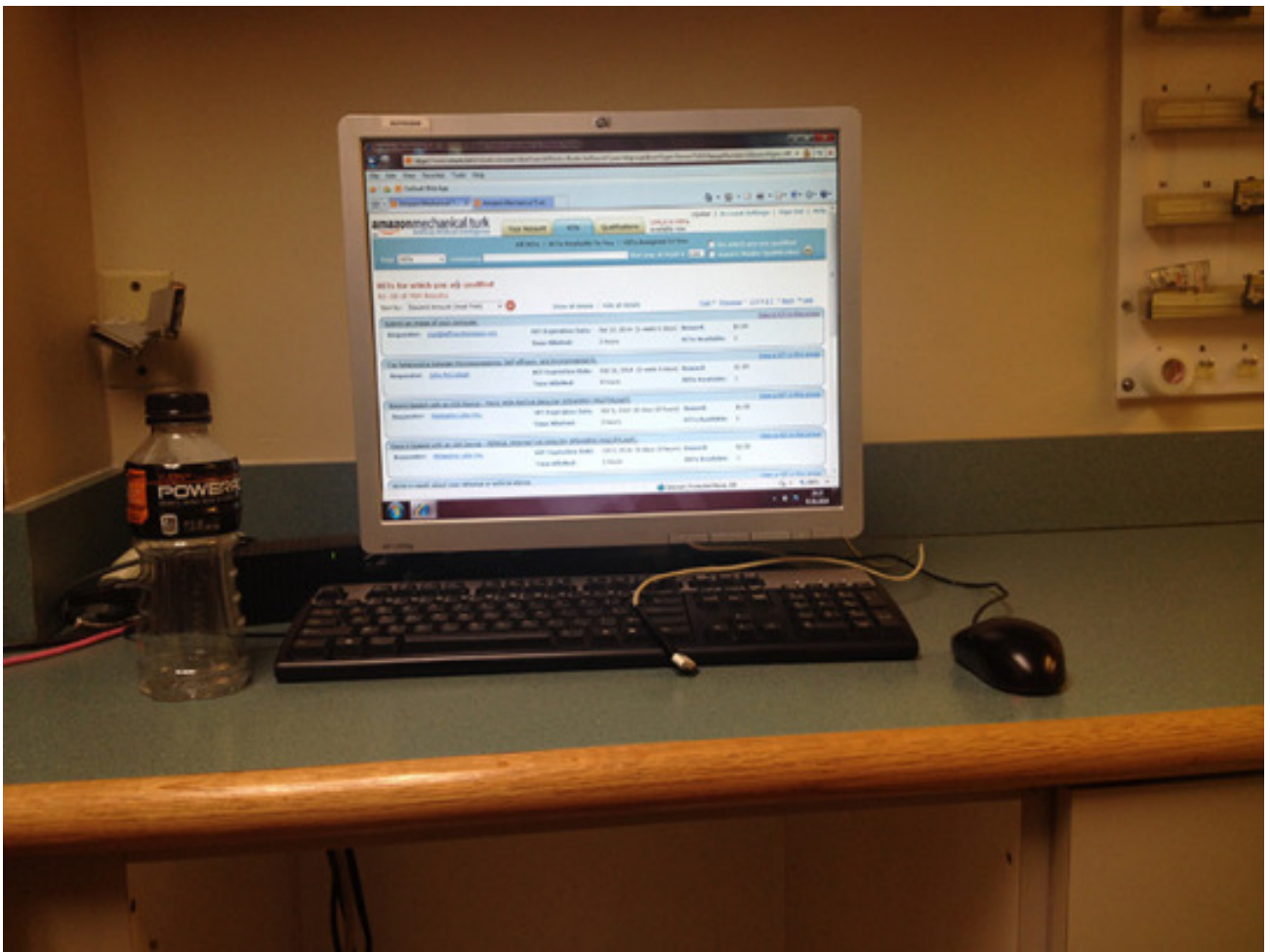
Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

In the "Outsourced Views, Visual Economies" project, Pattison contacted the low-paid workforce plying their services on the Amazon Mechanical Turk platform. This is a "micro-work" marketplace created by the famous American retailer aggregating listings for tasks that currently cannot be carried out by a computer. Users can browse the available tasks and choose to complete any of them for the remuneration offered by the requesters, often not exceeding the amount of one dollar.

The individuals completing the tasks are citizens for whom the work they find on Amazon Mechanical Turk is the main source of income. Pattison's video is a collection of smartphone video snippets and photos taken by AMT suppliers of the view from their windows (nearest their work place) after the artist posted a listing for such a task on the website.

#2013/2014   #mechanical turk

Title: **Turker Computers**

Requester: Jeff Thompson

Year: 2013 - 2014

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

Our computers, and where and how we use them, is incredibly personal: we care for them like pets or lovers, cleaning them, grooming their operating systems when prompted, and increasingly taking them with us wherever we go. Similarly, the workspaces in which we use them also reflect how we work and how we interact with technology. As with any relationship, each person is unique. This project attempts to capture these varied relationships.

A simple request was made on Amazon's Mechanical Turk website over the period of approximately a year: take a photograph of your computer, and include a name (or handle/alias) and where you live (as vague as you like)*. A selection of the resulting images are shown here.

The images also starkly show the relationship between class and technology. The human-side of the technology economy that we most often see are shiny Google offices, open floorplans, and ping-pong tables. However, many of the technological services we rely on are carried out by faceless workers spread across the globe (Adrian Chen's reporting on content moderators is a great example, as is this post by Shawn Wen on The New Inquiry).

#2013-2014   #mechanical turk

What do you want her to say or do?

○ Stay

○ Say [   ]

○ Leave

stop talking about yourself so much

What do you want her to say or do?

○ Stay because [   ]

○ Talk about [   ]

○ Act [   ]

○ Ask [   ]

○ Leave because [   ]

Imagine the woman as an avatar that can move in different directions. What do you want her to do?

○ Advance

○ Back off

○ Sidestep / change subject

○ Stay put / idle

Explanation [   ]

he's interested, stop acting so nervous

Title: **Social Turkers**

Requester: Lauren McCarthy

Year: 2013

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> What if we could receive real-time feedback on our social interactions? Would unbiased third party monitors be better suited to interpret situations and make decisions for the parties involved? How might this help us become more aware in our relationships, and more open to unexpected possibilities?
>
> I am developing a system like this for myself using Amazon Mechanical Turk. During a series of dates with new people I meet through the internet, I will discretely stream the interaction to the web using an iPhone app. Turk workers will be paid to watch the stream, interpret what is happening, and offer feedback as to what I should do or say next. This feedback will be communicated to me via text message.
>
> Through this series of interaction experiments, I will refine the rules of the system — the type of feedback and rating the turkers provide, and the amount and frequency of their influence. I will also keep public logs of the responses of the turkers and my own reflections on what transpires during each interaction.

#2013   #mechanical turk
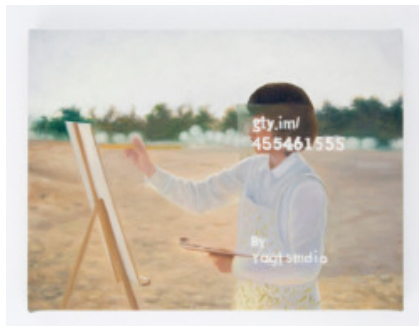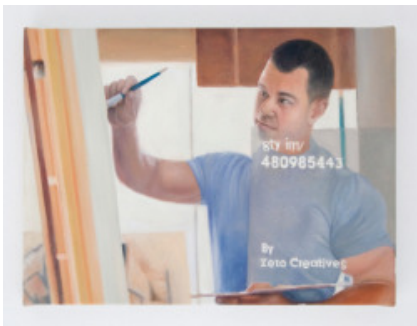
Title: A Contemporary Portrait of the Internet Artist

Requesters: IOCOSE
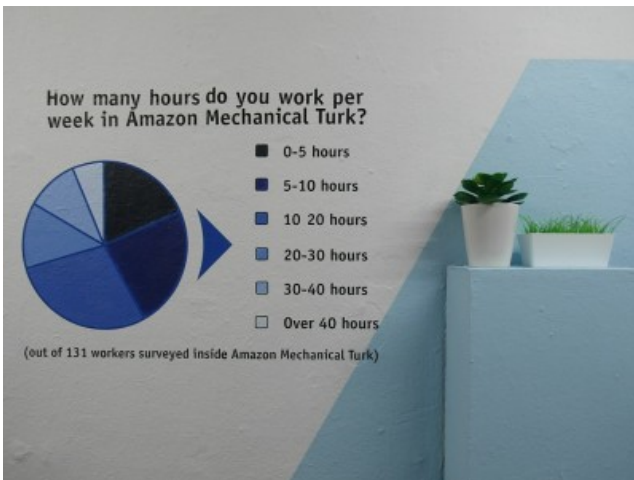
Year: 2014

Workforce: Underpaid Chinese painters

Description:

The artwork consist in a series of portraits, which the group commissioned underpaid Chinese painters to draw. Each portrait represents a copyrighted photo found on the Getty Images archive using 'artist' as research keyword.

#2014   #chinese painters

Title: **Serf Net**

Requesters: Angela Washko & Alex Young

Year: 2014

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

In their collaborative exhibition at Alkovi Galleria, Angela Washko and Alex Young present SerfNet - a project which focuses on crowd-sourced labor platforms and the individual worker's relationship to the products of their labor, the environment in which they produce it, their understanding of the larger framework they're producing in, and whether or not they consider what they are doing labor at all. Instead of replicating existing statistical research about online networked labor, Washko and Young decided to create a business within Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Operating as SerfNet, Washko and Young created Human Intelligence Tasks or HITs (small tasks that a business or researcher might need humans for, often things computer algorithms cannot do yet, ranging from research surveys to transcribing text from receipts or audio) for Mechanical Turk Workers to complete in exchange for money - all mediated through mturk.com's interfaces and the Amazon Marketplace pay site. The jobs (HITs) the artists created solicited and rewarded individual workers' contemplation and reflection on the value of their own work within and their personal relationship to the systems in which they are participating.

Over 150 individuals working within this labor platform participated in SerfNet's surveys - reporting bases in the United States and India. Through SerfNet, Washko and Young also sought out to examine the English language's hegemonic position within global business and its impact on aspirations toward upward mobility (while simultaneously being a requirement for mTurk HITs which may only pay a few cents per hour). Looking to the past and future to animate the etymology of the English conception of labor and the interconnectedness of concepts of pain, toil, travel, and more... SerfNet presents this contemporary crowd-sourced labor phenomenon under the lens of medieval European feudalism.

#2014   #mechanical turk

Title: **By Everyone, For No One, Everyday**

Requesters: Eva and Franco Mattes

Year: 2014

Workforce: Crowdsourcing websites

Description:

> *Random Acts* is a new series of 1 minute-long webcam performances realized by paid anonymous workers following our instructions. We hired the performers through the crowdsourcing websites so we do not know who they are, where they are, or even their motivations. We will publish the videos online during the whole show as often they get produced and sent to us.

#2014
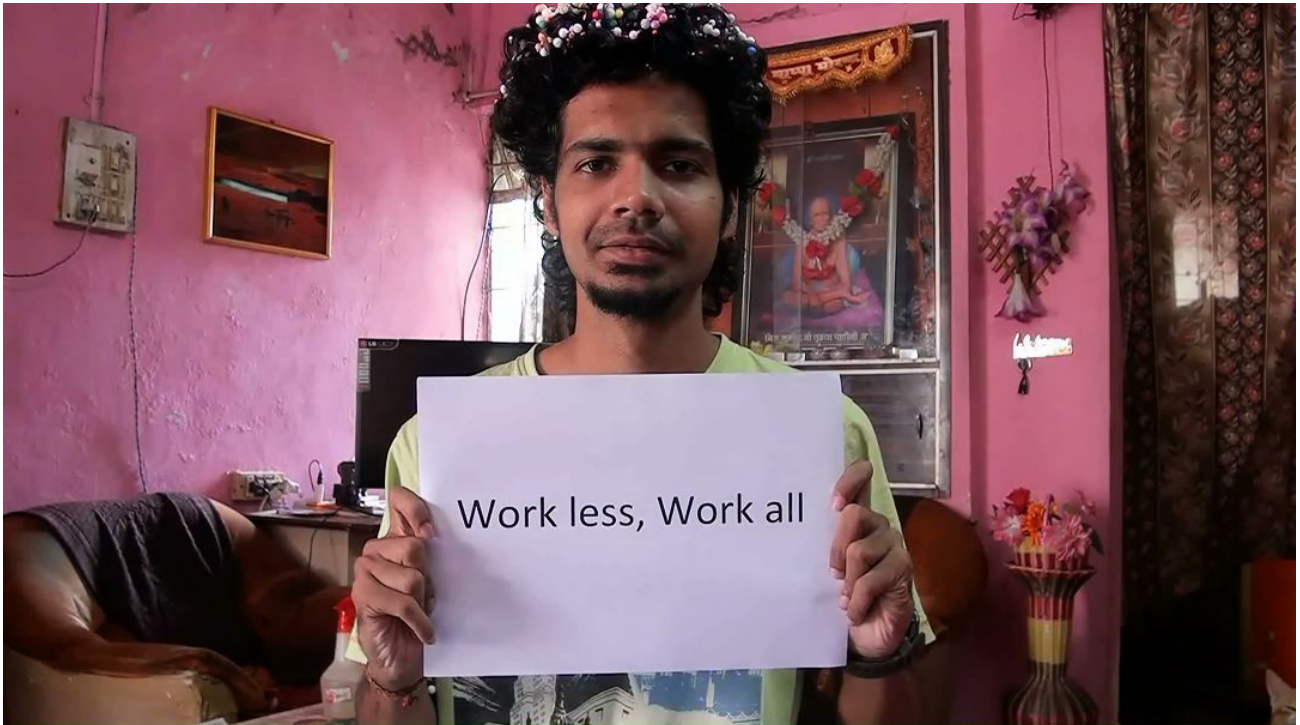
Title: **Work less, Work all - We're the 99% on Fiverr.com**

Requester: Guido Segni

Year: 2015

Workforce: Fiverr

Description:

> Work less, work all. We are the 99% on Fiverr.com combines body art with a performative approach and a strong political and conceptual statement. During the time of the exhibition the artist will create a gig on Fiverr.com - a website where people offer their professional services at a very low rate – offering the possibility to buy one of his artworks.
>
> The artworks will be created by buying and reselling the gigs of Fiverr workforce, asking each worker to use his/her body to show, sing, dance or declaim a message chosen by the artist. The whole operation can be described as a commissioned body art performance, in which the performative procedure followed by the artist is combined with the actions performed by the workers on or with their own bodies.
>
> If on the one hand Segni exploits workers' body and creativity to produce his artworks, on the other hand he asks them to convey messages that borrow language and mottos from the labour rights movements, thus stressing on the difficult and peculiar labour conditions in the digital era.
>
> Buy an art work, exploit a worker.
> Now.

Title: **Ethical Things**

Requesters: Simone Rebaudengo + Matthieu Cherubini

Year: 2015

Workforce: Amazon Mechanical Turks

Description:

> The "Ethical Things" project looks at how an object, facing everyday ethical dilemmas, can keep a dose of humanity in its final decision while staying flexible enough to accommodate various ethical beliefs.
>
> In order to achieve that, our "ethical fan" connects to a crowd-sourcing website every time it faces an ethical dilemma. It posts the dilemma it's facing and awaits the help of one of the "workers", or mechanical turks, who will tell the fan how to behave. Thus, it assures that the decision executed by the system is the fruit of real human moral reasoning.
>
> Moreover, the fan is designed to let the user set various traits (such as religion, degree, sex, and age) as criterion to choose the worker who should respond to the dilemma, in order to assure that a part of the user's culture and belief system is in line with the worker, or ethical agent.
>
> (Should it be a middle-aged Muslim male with a PhD or a young Atheist female?)

#mechanical turk   #2015
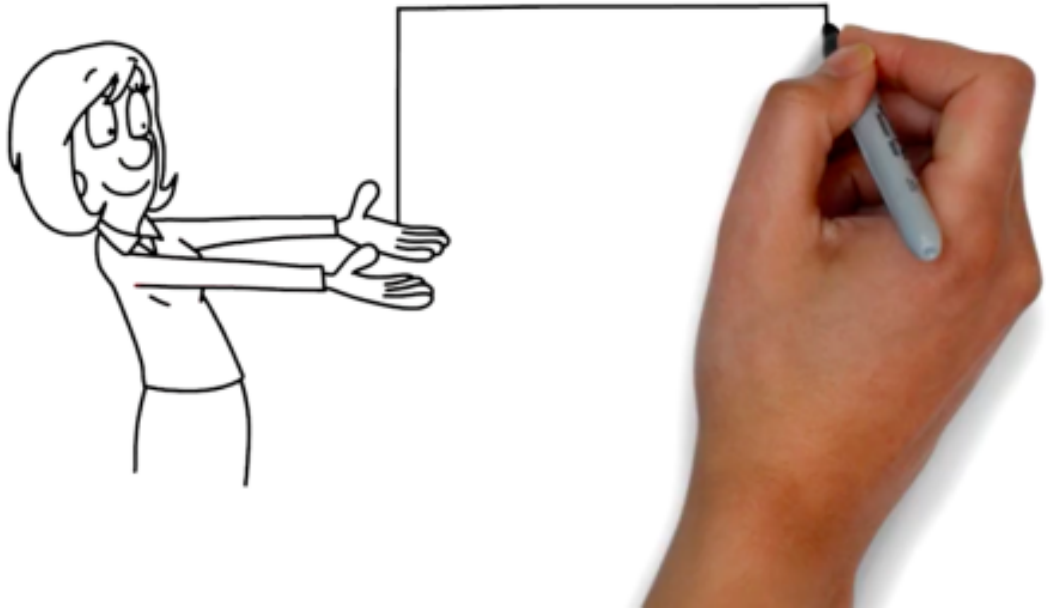
Title: **DullTech**

Requester: Constant Dullaart

Year: 2015

Workforce: Fiverr

Description:

> By highlighting the incongruity between clean digital branding strategies and depictions of the manufacturing labor that enables them, the DullTech Kickstarter video baits this response. Produced for under $200 through the website Fiverr, the video abruptly contrasts sharpie-drawn cartoons of white people assembling puzzle pieces (depicting the product's concepts) with photographs of the O.E.M.'s workers and engineers as well as e-waste and the smog-filled landscape of Shenzhen; the perky, jargon-filled narration and a ukulele and glockenspiel soundtrack only heighten one's feeling of disquiet.

#2015 #fiverr