CROWDSOURCED CROWDSOURCING RESEARCH

Michael Bernstein
Stanford Computer Science
msb@cs.stanford.edu + @msbernst
Discussion is at: crowdresearch.slack.com
The team scaling fallacy: Underestimating the declining efficiency of larger teams

Who’s in Charge Here? How Team Authority Structure Shapes Team Leadership

Team Familiarity, Role Experience, and Performance: Evidence from Indian Software Services

The Influence of Shared Mental Models on Team Process and Performance


Out of Sight, Out of Sync: Understanding Conflict in Distributed Teams

The Mutual Knowledge Problem and Its Consequences for Dispersed Collaboration

Some unintended consequences of job design
How might computing connect large groups to tackle bigger, harder problems than they could complete in isolation?
CROWDSOURCING: SMALL TASKS, MANY PEOPLE

Combine many paid non-expert opinions

e.g., text shortening
e.g., image labeling
e.g., data collection
CROWDSOURCING PLATFORM CHALLENGES

Today’s platforms are notoriously bad at...

- ensuring high-quality results
- producing fair wages and respect for workers
- making it easy to author effective tasks
What might we create if we knew that our children would become crowd workers?

REPUTATION

“I went to Stanford” or “I work for Google.”

vs.

Alexei L.
Senior PHP/HTML5/Magento/Wordpress/Joomla/Drupal Developer

★☆☆☆☆ Don’t miss chance to work with me! 24/7, RAPID DEVELOPMENT, HIGHEST QUALITY, EXACT DEADLINE Support ★☆☆☆☆ The Hourly rate would

David A.  Agency Contractor

eCommerce Architect, Oxwall & Web Rockstar
or work study and micro-internships?
OUR GOAL: RECONSIDER THE DESIGN OF CROWDSOURCING PLATFORMS
DESIGNING A NEW FUTURE

We will follow a user-centered research trajectory:

- Empathy and needfinding
- Brainstorming and ideation
- Rapid prototyping and implementation
- Launch
- Evaluation

...but you don’t need to be an expert at all of these!
OUTCOMES

A new marketplace that we’re all proud to support and use
Papers to top-tier academic venues – with you as coauthor
A chance to learn with me as we experiment with new forms of research at scale
MY CURRENT ASSUMPTIONS

We will do our research in the open
The platform will be open source
The platform will be non-profit
Authorship will be determined by participation
CROWD WORKER FELLOWSHIPS

If you are a crowd worker participating (e.g., from Amazon Mechanical Turk), we want to help defray the costs of the time you spend not working on normal tasks.

We have a fellowship budget that can support you for $50/month of participation as long as your team submits effective milestones. This isn’t complete payment, but we hope it helps. We can do this until our fellowship budget is up, likely several months at least.
HOW WILL THIS WORK?
crowdresearch.stanford.edu

crowdresearch.slack.com
CROWD-SCALE RESEARCH

There are hundreds of us here.

We are going to be trying out new models of research collaboration.

General format: we will work in teams toward weekly milestones, give feedback on each others’ milestones, and take the best ideas to move forward
WEEKLY MILESTONES

Each week, we will use the results from our efforts so far to decide on a milestone that we’ll pursue for the next week. Collaborate with your team to execute the milestone. Write up your team’s results on the crowdresearch wiki.
After submitting your team’s milestone, you’ll have about one day to give feedback on a few peers’ submissions on the crowdgrader platform.

We will use this feedback to:

- Highlight the highest-rated submissions
- Invite teams to join the Hangout on Air
- Guide our next steps
WEEKLY RHYTHM

Saturday 9am PST: team meeting + milestone opens
Wednesday 11:59pm PST: milestone closes
Friday 9:00am PST: peer feedback on milestones
SKILLS AND EXPECTATIONS

In principle, open to anyone who has the drive to contribute.

Possible skills you can bring to the table:

- Crowd work experience
- Design
- Programming
- Social science
WHO’S HERE?

Students (North America, India, Europe, and more!)
Researchers
Crowd workers
PREPARATION

For the best experience – though not formally required – it would help to have familiarity with human-computer interaction concepts.

For an introduction, watch Scott Klemmer’s Coursera lectures at http://hci-class.org
THE RESEARCH PLAN
ROUGH GAME PLAN

Needfinding and empathy
Lay out workers’ and requesters’ needs
Brainstorm and iterate on concepts for the platform
Create rapid prototypes for feedback (on paper + in code)
Iterate toward a running web platform
WEEK 1 MILESTONE

Get experience as both a worker and a requester on today’s crowdsourcing platforms

As a worker: sign up for Amazon Mechanical Turk and try to make $1
As a requester: post a task on Mechanical Turk that asks for feedback from ~15 workers

If you need funds for your requester task, email crowdresearch@cs.stanford.edu and we can PayPal you a few dollars.
WEEK 1 MILESTONE

Explore a non-AMT crowdsourcing platform

  e.g., oDesk, TaskRabbit, GalaxyZoo, Prolific Academic

Skim a few papers that articulate interesting models of crowdsourcing

  Listed on the wiki: MobileWorks, mClerk, Flash Teams
  Feel free to pick others if you prefer!
SPEAK UP AND LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN BE AS EFFECTIVE (AND FUN!) AS POSSIBLE
QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION