

The gig economy: workers on tap (II)

However, the fact that it is smaller than you might think is not the gig economy's strongest defense. That rests on how gigging brings important benefits to the economy. The advantages for consumers are clear. With a **swipe** or a click, almost anyone can get Rover walked in the park or a vital document copyedited within hours.

swipe 滑动

Crucially, benefits also accrue to workers. The algorithms that **underpin** gig-economy platforms improve the “matching” between giggers and jobs, leading to less dead time. The evidence that gig workers face a pay penalty compared with conventional employees is **patchy**; many say they value the extra autonomy they enjoy compared with salaried workers. Gig platforms are a useful way of topping up income or smoothing out earnings if other sources of work dry up. They can also break open closed industries. Research shows that the arrival of Uber in American cities leads on average to a 50% **surge** in the number of self-employed taxi-drivers.

crucially 关键地; 重要地

underpin 巩固; 支持

patchy 片面的; 补丁的

surge 汹涌; 激增

But the gig economy is not perfect. Platforms argue they are no more than **neutral** marketplaces in which workers and customers meet. By this logic, workers ought to count as self-employed. But the standards to which some platforms hold workers tell a different story. Food-delivery riders are often told to wear a uniform; drivers for **ride-hailing apps** need to maintain a good rating or can be kicked off the platform. Platforms have a legitimate interest in maintaining their quality of service. But it cannot be right that some firms **specify** how workers must submit to the duties of acting like employees even as they reject the responsibilities of acting like employers.

neutral 中立的; 中性的

specify 指定; 规定

ride-hailing app 网约车 APP