3. Allow workers, their representatives and public interest groups to test how the algorithms work

To allow workers to more deeply understand the impact on those affected by algorithms, companies should make some version of their algorithm available for testing.

This could be done by providing API access to a sandboxed version of the system, making open source the key algorithms used on the platform or provide access to anonymised/synthetic data accurately reflecting the behaviour of the system. Some companies may even want to share their source code and training datasets directly.

While public access would be a gold standard, a more limited approach may be appropriate, in which only worker representative bodies or recognised academic or civil society organisations can access the testbeds, potentially via licensed access. Adequate documentation should be provided to make use of these resources.

Examples

A company offers a taxi drivers and passenger matching service.

To allow drivers and their representative to understand how the matching algorithm functions, they provide a sandboxed version of the algorithm over an API. The sandboxed version allows authenticated users to simulate client requests and the location of drivers, and evaluate how these demands propagate to drivers, including how this information is presented to each drivers individually. The API allow users to import data for easy testing of complex scenarios and allows export of data to analyse how the algorithm reacts to different conditions.

The company provide a feedback mechanism for API users to report bugs or issues. To enable better auditing of the algorithm, the company provides access to the three latest version of the system so that users can compare results.

Individuals and organisations must go through a selection process offered by the company to be authorised access the API and are submitted to Terms and Conditions as to limit potential damage.