

## **ON-DEMAND WORKER WAGE THEFT**

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## ON-DEMAND WORK

Algorithmic systems determine the quality of on-demand workers' work and whether workers get paid.

These systems have been accused of wage theft (Dombrowski, Alvarado Garcia, and Despard 2017; McInnis et al. 2016).

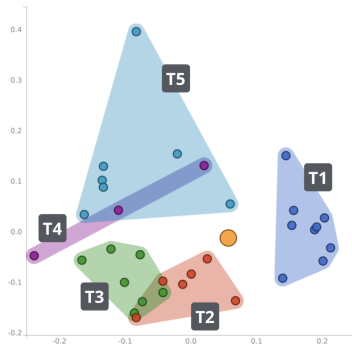
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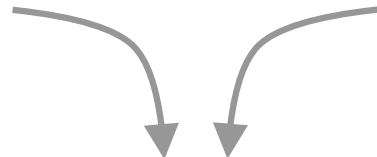
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*Clusters of legitimate workers' differing interpretations of the same task (Kairam and Heer 2016)*

**Behavior**  
on-demand tasks

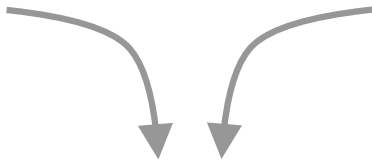
**Algorithm**  
crowdwork quality  
control system



**Judgment**  
is this crowdworker's output  
**correct**, or should it be  
rejected?

**Behavior**  
factory workers

**Bureaucrat**  
factory foremen



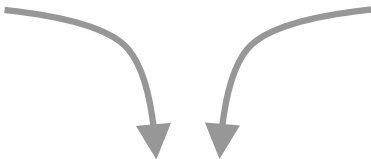
**Judgment**  
Is the factory worker doing  
the work correctly, or do  
they need assistance?

## **Behavior**

massive amounts of  
creative information  
work

## **Algorithm**

foreman tasked almost  
exclusively with  
accepting or rejecting  
work



## **Judgment**

### **Ideally**

Acknowledge when workers need to deviate from script,  
provide necessary resources, and give feedback

### **In reality**

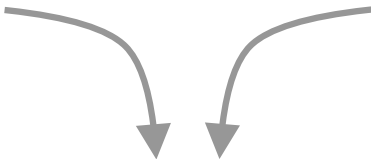
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Algorithms can't cope with novelty, which is what we want from increasingly complex and creative on-demand work

- Algorithmic foremen can't distinguish novel answers from wrong answers
- There's a catch-22 of training data
- Street-level algorithms here never have the data they need to distinguish between bad and novel