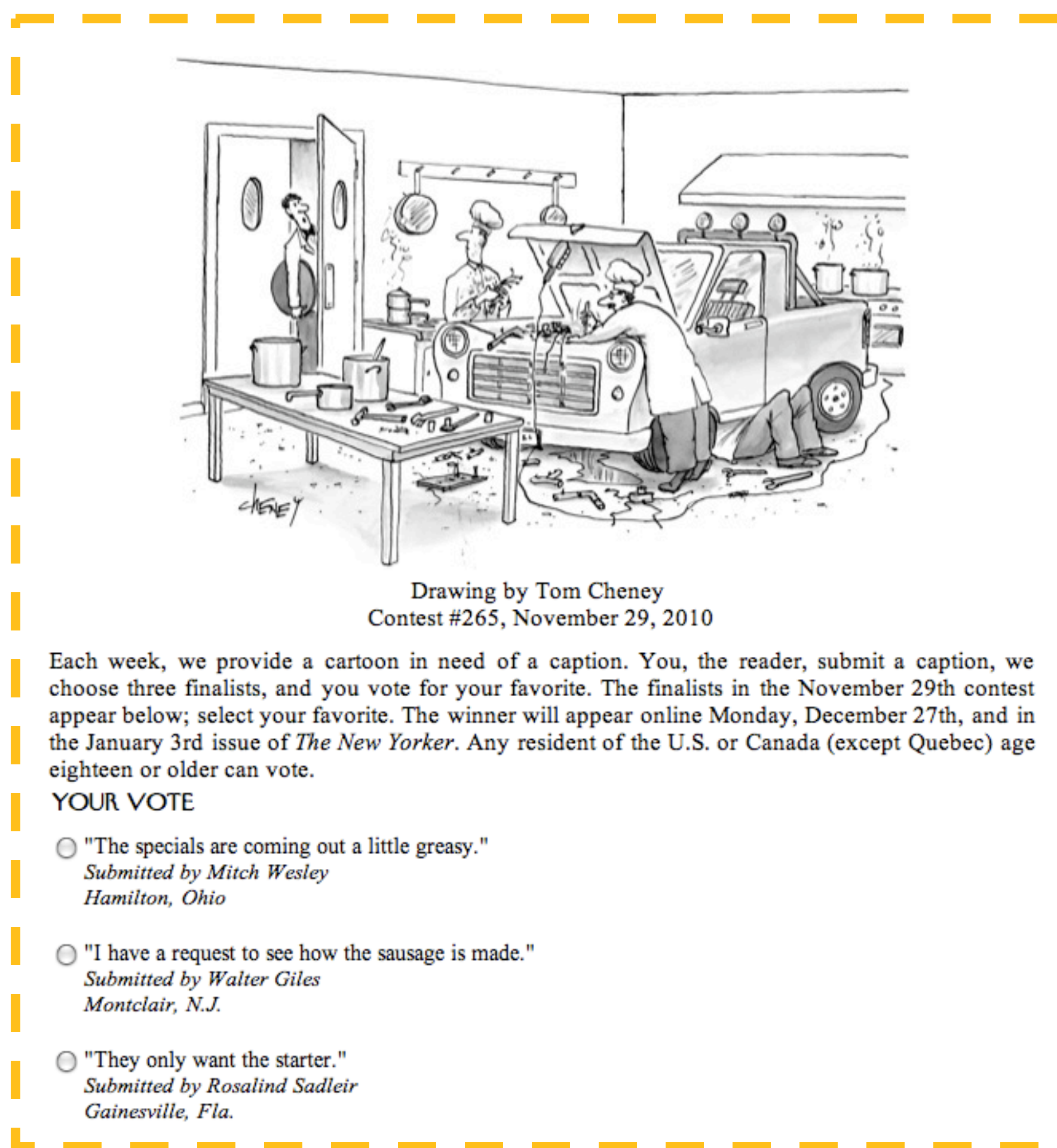# Are Turkers like New Yorkers?

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Problem Description

- Crowdsourcing is an exciting new opportunity
- Mechanical Turk is a flexible way to participate in crowd sourcing
- Our goal: explore what kinds of tasks we can expect Turkers to do
- Can we expect Turkers to weigh in on matters involving cultural knowledge/common sense?
- Our experiment: Do Turkers have the same sense of humor as New Yorker readers?
    - Compare results from New Yorker cartoon caption contest to Turkers' favorite captions
    - Would expect them to diverge

Drawing by Tom Cheney
Contest #265, November 29, 2010

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. The finalists in the November 29th contest appear below; select your favorite. The winner will appear online Monday, December 27th, and in the January 3rd issue of *The New Yorker*. Any resident of the U.S. or Canada (except Quebec) age eighteen or older can vote.

YOUR VOTE

- "The specials are coming out a little greasy."
  Submitted by Mitch Wesley
  Hamilton, Ohio
- "I have a request to see how the sausage is made."
  Submitted by Walter Giles
  Montclair, N.J.
- "They only want the starter."
  Submitted by Rosalind Sadleir
  Gainesville, Fla.

Related Work

- This work is related to studies of the demographics of Mechanical Turk
- Lots of interesting results in this sphere from Panos Ipeirotis (NYU)
    - Most Turkers are from either the US (50%) or India (40%), probably because Amazon supports paying in local currencies in these countries
    - They're usually younger and less affluent than the general population
    - More women participate in the US, while more men participate in India

HIT Design/Evolution

- Went through several iterations to design the Human Intelligence Task (HIT)
- Sources of feedback:
    - Input field in the original HIT
    - Turker Nation (www.turkernation.com)
- HIT Batch Details:
    - One HIT template
    - 50 distinct HITs, each with a different New Yorker cartoon
    - 25 assignments per HIT
    - 1250 responses total
    - Workers can do multiple HITs; only one assignment/HIT

Choose a caption for this cartoon

- The New Yorker is a popular magazine known for its cartoons. Each week, they feature a cartoon with three captions, and readers may vote for their favorite.
- The cartoon & captions below were obtained from the New Yorker's cartoon archive.
- Choose your favorite caption from the three options provided.
- Please also answer a few questions, just for demographic information.

Cartoon:

Captions: Choose your favorite for the above cartoon.

- It better work—they sold it to us.
- If this doesn't work push that boulder and run like hell.
- Our medicine man went to M.I.T.

Did you find any of the captions funny?

Demographic Information:

What is your age?

Which of the following best describes your highest achieved education level?

What is the total income of your household?
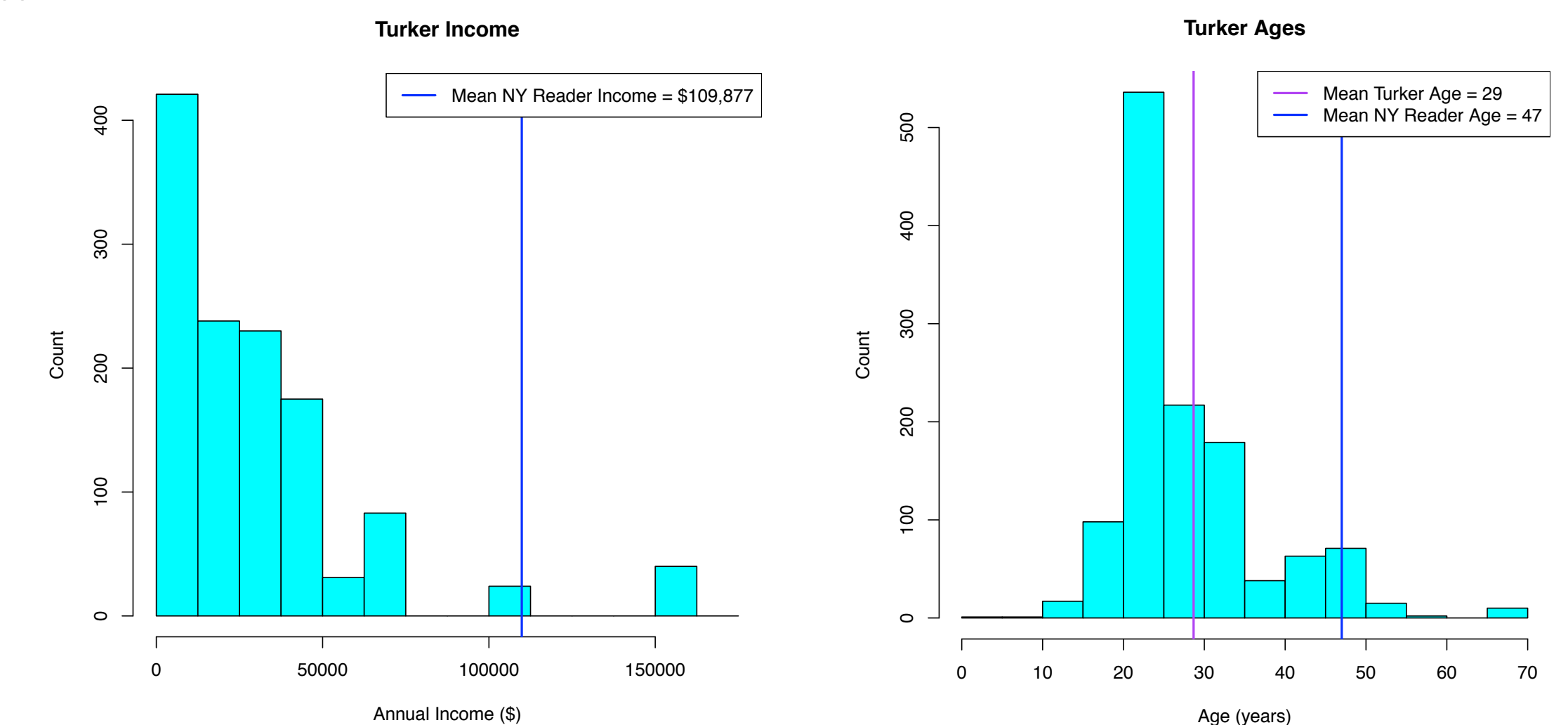
What country do you live in?

If you're in the USA, what state do you live in?

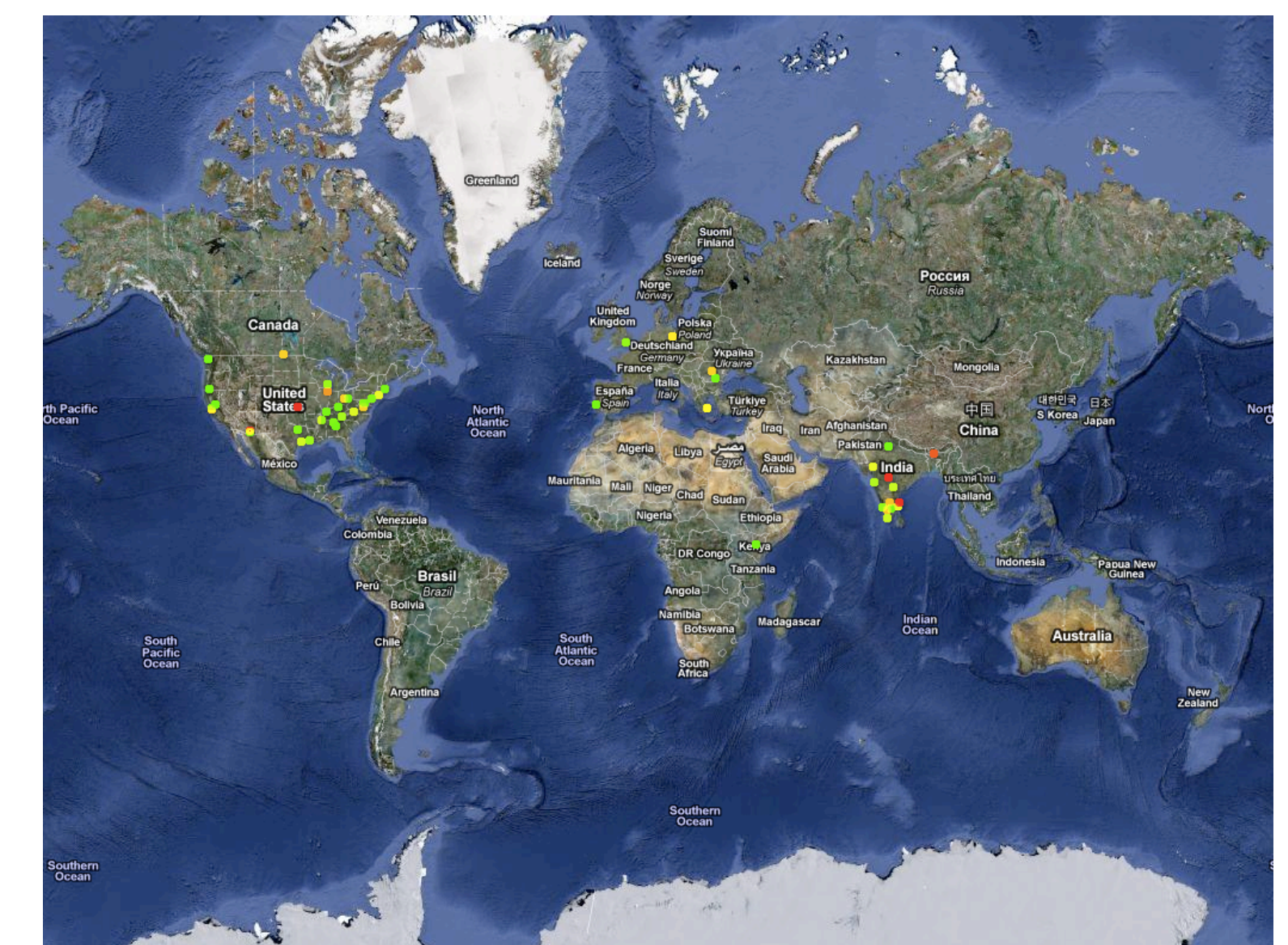We value your feedback. How did you like our HIT?
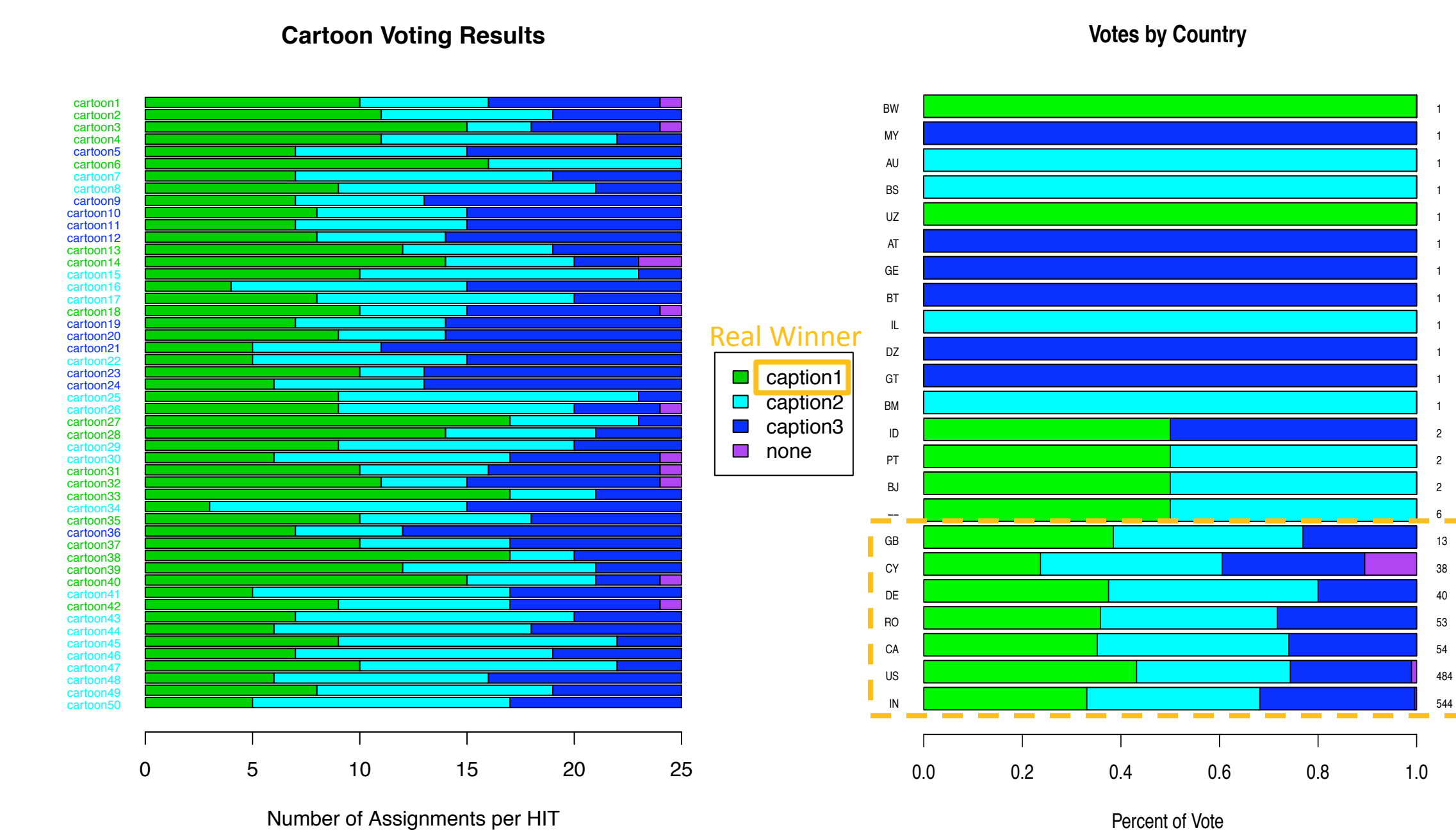
Submit

Results

- Batch timing
    - Posted at 10:19am (PST)
    - Completed at 11:03am (PST)
- Batch rewards
    - $0.05 per HIT (set via Turker Nation)
    - Average hourly rate: $3.75
- Demographics: Turkers vs. New Yorker readers [data for 2009, from Wikipedia]

- Heatmap of Turker Locations (based on IP)

- Turkers' voting results

caption1: 38%; caption2: 40%; caption3: 22%