

International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore
Course Title – Social Pathways to Information Technology | Course Code – DHS 110
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Assignment 2

Unpacking the Labour Behind a 'Gig': Interviewing a Gig Worker

Objective:

Most of us have used on-demand platforms to order food or groceries, get home repairs or take taxi rides. Such apps offer us convenience and variety at our fingertips. On-demand platforms are a powerhouse of technical capacity, that can process millions of orders each day. However, what is easy to overlook is the labour that provides you with the service.

To get a better understanding of the labour behind the app, strike up a conversation with a worker who uses on-demand apps. This will give you a new perspective of the app and a first-hand account of how it is used as a source of livelihood. This will also provide an understanding of the effort and challenges behind the convenience of on-demand apps.

Instructions:

1. **Select a suitable platform:** You may select any app of your choice as long as it involves workers who provide a service to you.
2. **Find a gig worker:** If you are a regular user of an app, you may consider availing their service (ordering food for instance) and having a brief conversation with the worker. If not, you may find workers at various pick-up and drop-off points (such as IIITB front and back gates).
3. **Gauge their willingness/feasibility to engage with you:** Remember, workers have limited time so do not force them to chat with you if they are in a hurry. Please use your best judgement, if you feel unsafe, do not engage with the worker.
4. **Seek informed consent:** Before asking workers questions, tell them why you are doing so. Mention that you are a student of IIIT-B and that talking to a worker is part of your coursework and would help you get insight into their work life. Please use the informed consent script for reference.

5. **Keep it brief and respectful:** Ask workers about themselves but keep it brief. If they wish to leave the interview midway, it is okay for them to do so. Please move on to another gig worker if this happens.
6. **Take notes, be mindful:** Do not record conversations. Just make a mental note. Ensure you **do not** collect or store their names, phone number and other personally identifiable information. The idea here is to understand **their** experience of being a worker on the platform.

Suggested Questions:

- Where are you from?
- Which city or state do you work in?
- What is your native language?
- Why did you choose gig work?
- How many hours do you work daily?
- What challenges do you face?
- How much do you spend on data/petrol/phone?
- How easy or difficult is it to use the app/platform?
- What benefits do you get? (such as health/accident insurance)
- How much weight do you carry during your work hours?
- Who do you call during an emergency?
- Where do you go if you have a complaint or issue?
- How do customers treat you?
- How do you feel about customer ratings?
- Are you allowed to rate the customer?

The conversation does not have to be rigidly structured around just these questions. If the worker ventures into other additional areas, allow them to do so. You may also ask suitable follow-up questions based on their responses.

Informed Consent Script:

You may use the following script while introducing yourselves and for seeking your respondent's informed consent: (Please translate according to the language suitable for the interview)

Introduction: Hello! My name is _____ and I am a student from IIIT Bangalore. As part of one of my courses, I am trying to understand gig work from the perspective of workers. For this, I would like to interview you for not more than 20-25 minutes. If you agree, I would like to talk to you about your work and your experience with the platforms that you are a part of.

Before I proceed for your “Consent”, please be assured that any information/responses that you share with me would be used solely for this assignment. Your participation in this study is at your will, you are free to discontinue from this at any point of time. You can choose not to answer any specific questions asked. Your personal identifiers such as your name or phone number will not be noted down.

Please feel free to ask any questions to better understand the purpose of this interview. If you have understood the purpose, could you please indicate if you are willing to participate/give your consent?

Yes - Continue

No - Thank & terminate

Reflection and Essay:

After your interview, write a **800–1200-word essay** reflecting on:

- Your experience as a customer using the app.
- The worker’s experience in making a living through the app.
- The role of the on-demand platform in enabling such services.

Grading Criteria:

Marks will be awarded based on:

- The depth of insights gathered from the worker.
- Your ability to reflect on the gig work experience.
- Your analysis of how technology supports such work arrangements.

Deadline: 17th March, 8 AM.

Please ensure that your file name follows this order: RollNumber Full Name Assignment 2