Assignment #1: “Be a worker”

Overview

For this assignment, you will be asked to participate in at least two crowdsourcing platforms as a worker. Spend at least an hour in total completing work across the two platforms.

Suggested Platforms

- Mechanical Turk
- Galaxy Zoo
- Fold It
- eteRNA
- Upwork [requires a profile]

The options are not limited to these platforms — any current crowd-work platform is acceptable. If you’re unsure if something qualifies as a crowdwork platform, just drop me a line to ask.

Deliverables

After using both of your selected platforms for to total of at least an hour, write up a short (~½ - 1 page) description of what you did, and answers to the following questions:

- Provide a Turkopticon-style rating of the requester (scale of 1-5 for each of the following, with a sentence or two of justification):
  - **FAST**: How quickly were you rewarded for your contribution? (if not pay, then how fast did you receive points / barn stars / etc.? Was it possible to show up on leaderboards immediately?)
  - **FAIR**: Was the work expected of you reasonable? Was it hard to determine what you had to do? Was is reasonable to get your work ‘approved’?
  - **PAY**: How was the effective pay rate? (high? low? too hard to get points, if not money?)
  - **COMM**: If you communicated with the requester / platform at all, how responsive were they? Did they address any needs you had effectively?
Turkopticon helps workers see reviews of requesters on MTurk in order to improve workers’ ability to choose tasks that pay well, requesters that communicate with workers effectively, and are fair about approving tasks. This can significantly improve worker wages as a result. [https://turkopticon.ucsd.edu/requesters]

Additionally, briefly discuss any other issues that came to mind while working on these platforms. Discussion of how the two platforms differed is also useful.

Example follow-on questions:
- What would make this platform easier to use for workers?
- What would make you remain active on the platform longer?
- Will you return to do work in the future, beyond this assignment? Why or why not?
- Is the platform accessible to people with disabilities when reasonable? (for example, transcription is a task that blind users can contribute to, but platforms often make it difficult to get to the work itself because of insufficient web accessibility focus)
- How would you redesign how recruiting is done (post style, audience, etc.)?