Title: The Union of Human Intelligence Taskworkers

Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is one of several online marketplaces where individuals and businesses can pay 'Human Intelligence Task' (HIT) workers to perform tasks that computers are currently unable to do. Common jobs include; choosing the best among several photographs of a storefront, writing product descriptions, or identifying performers on music CDs. Workers browse among existing jobs and complete them in exchange for a monetary payment set by the employer. HIT workers typically work in isolation, with little-to-no contact with other HIT workers. They have very few rights or benefits as employees, and their isolation in this *"wild west of digital labour"* means they lack the collective organising power – such as a trade union – to create the leverage necessary to change their conditions.

Throughout the last century, trade unions and co-operatives have played a vital role in the fight for workers rights. As well as working together to achieve common goals, such as; improving safety standards, attaining better wages, and improving working conditions; it is common for their values/ideals to become distilled in imagery, such as banners, murals, and cartoons.

Using MTurk, Chris Alton has employed* a small group of HIT workers to collaboratively design a union banner about their working conditions. The HIT workers, conducted research, exchanged notes and drawings, and offered feedback on the banner's design as it developed.

Alton considers this project as a space in which it might be possible to prefigure the formation of a HIT workers union. The banner, titled *The Union of Human Intelligence Taskworker*s (2019) speaks of the difficulties that HIT workers face; satirises their employer; directly references common tools; and demands an array of changes they wish to bring about. It also pays homage the history of union and co-operative banners, incorporating a number of common symbols such as the pansy, cornflower, wheatsheaf, rainbow and beehive. These symbols appear within an associative mind-map; a mode of visualisation commonly associated with internet start-ups. However, in this instance, the proposed ideas sit in drastic contrast to the ideology of Silicon Valley start-ups.

Alton conceived the project as a possible avenue for dissent and solidarity for the HIT workers. *The Union of Human Intelligence Taskworkers* reveals their working conditions to a wider audience, whilst also commenting on broader issues regarding precarious labour, automation, and trade/workers unions in the digital age.

*For a living wage of £10.00 p/hour, which is substantially higher than rates paid on MTurk