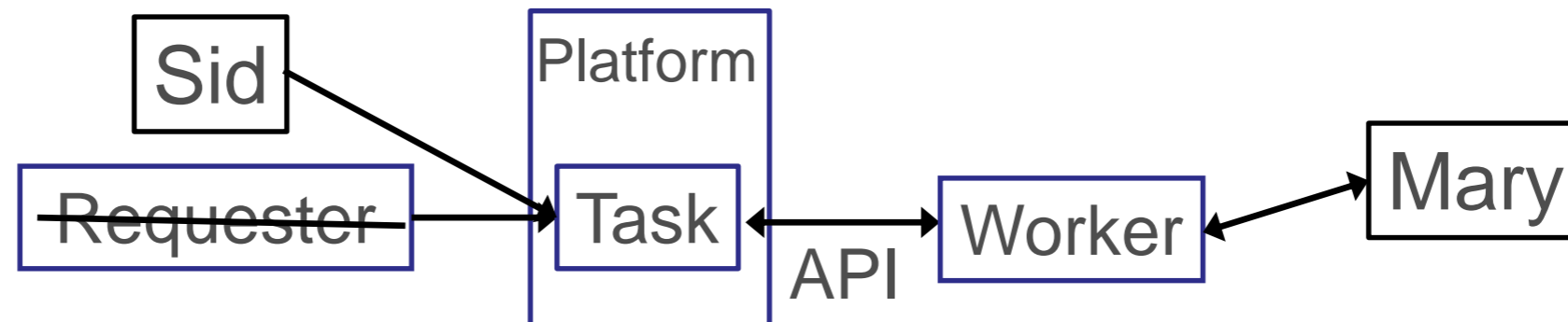


Crowdwork: Job of the Future?

Mary L. Gray & Siddharth Suri
Microsoft Research

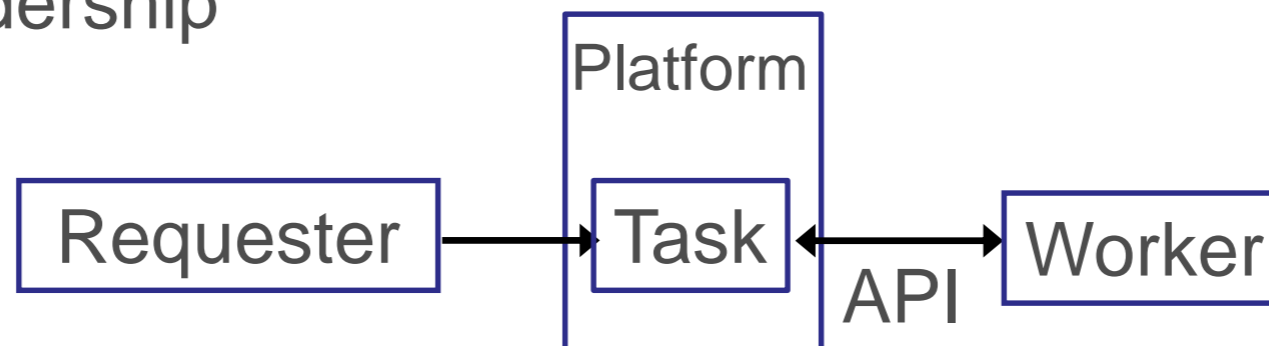
The API Governs the Interaction



- ▶ Requester posts a task. It interacts with workers through an API defined by the platform e.g. Mturk, UHRS.
- ▶ Who are crowdworkers? Why do they do crowdwork?
 - ▶ Ethnography: What can we learn from workers by talking to them?
 - ▶ Computer science: What can we learn from workers by using the API?

The API Leaves only Work and Pay

- ▶ Crowdwork (esp. microtasks) is pay for labor but not much more.
- ▶ The API strips out much of what turns work into a job (like ours):
 - ▶ No advancement
 - ▶ No employer reputation
 - ▶ No larger organization
 - ▶ No benefits
 - ▶ No leadership
 - ▶ No recognition
 - ▶ No worker identity
 - ▶ No colleagues
 - ▶ No collaboration



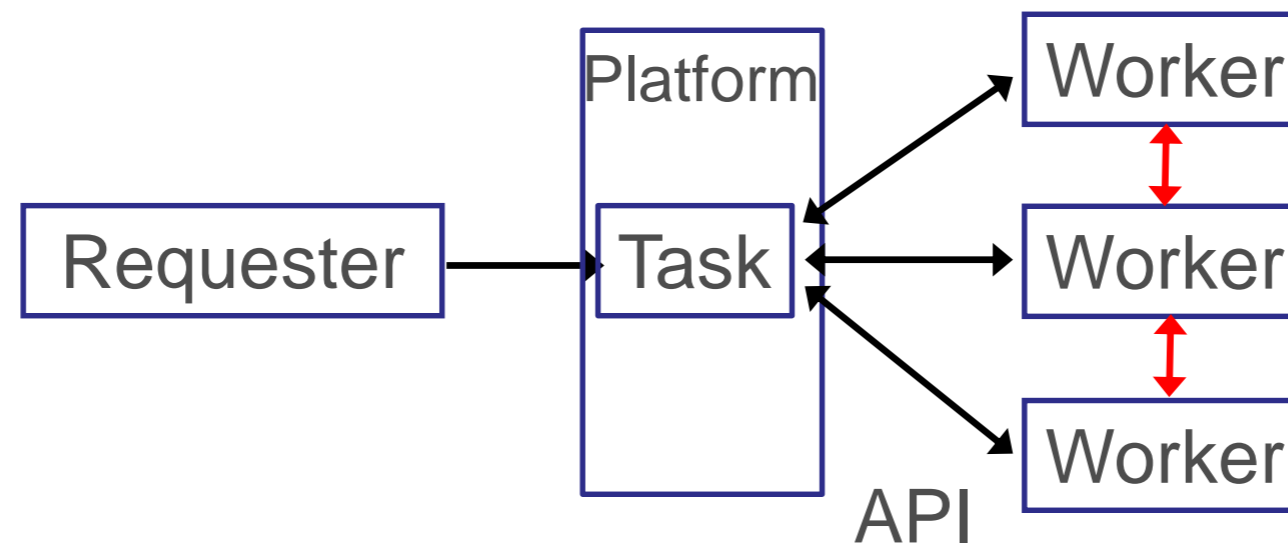
Turning Crowdwork Into a Job

- ▶ Advancement: Mobileworks allows workers to become managers, Mturk has Masters
- ▶ Leadership: Mturk has Spangirl, Gigwalk has Jenzie Hallifax & Andrew Schut
- ▶ Employer reputation: TurkOpticon by Lilly Irani & Six Silberman
- ▶ Collaboration: Forums, sharing tasks, working on tasks together

Workers Talk, Teach & Collaborate

- ▶ Teach:
 - ▶ “I taught Mturk to many friends. My friends Aishwarya and Priya are earning well” – 34 year old housewife in Tamil Nadu
 - ▶ “Salman Khan is my guru in MTurk” - 32 year old housewife in Tamil Nadu
- ▶ Talk & Collaborate:
 - ▶ “If we are not here [*sharing* information about tasks], MTurk is also not here”
 - ▶ “If I am working and find a good HIT then I call him and tell him about it” – childhood friends in Andhra Pradesh
- ▶ We would have never thought to measure task sharing without talking to workers

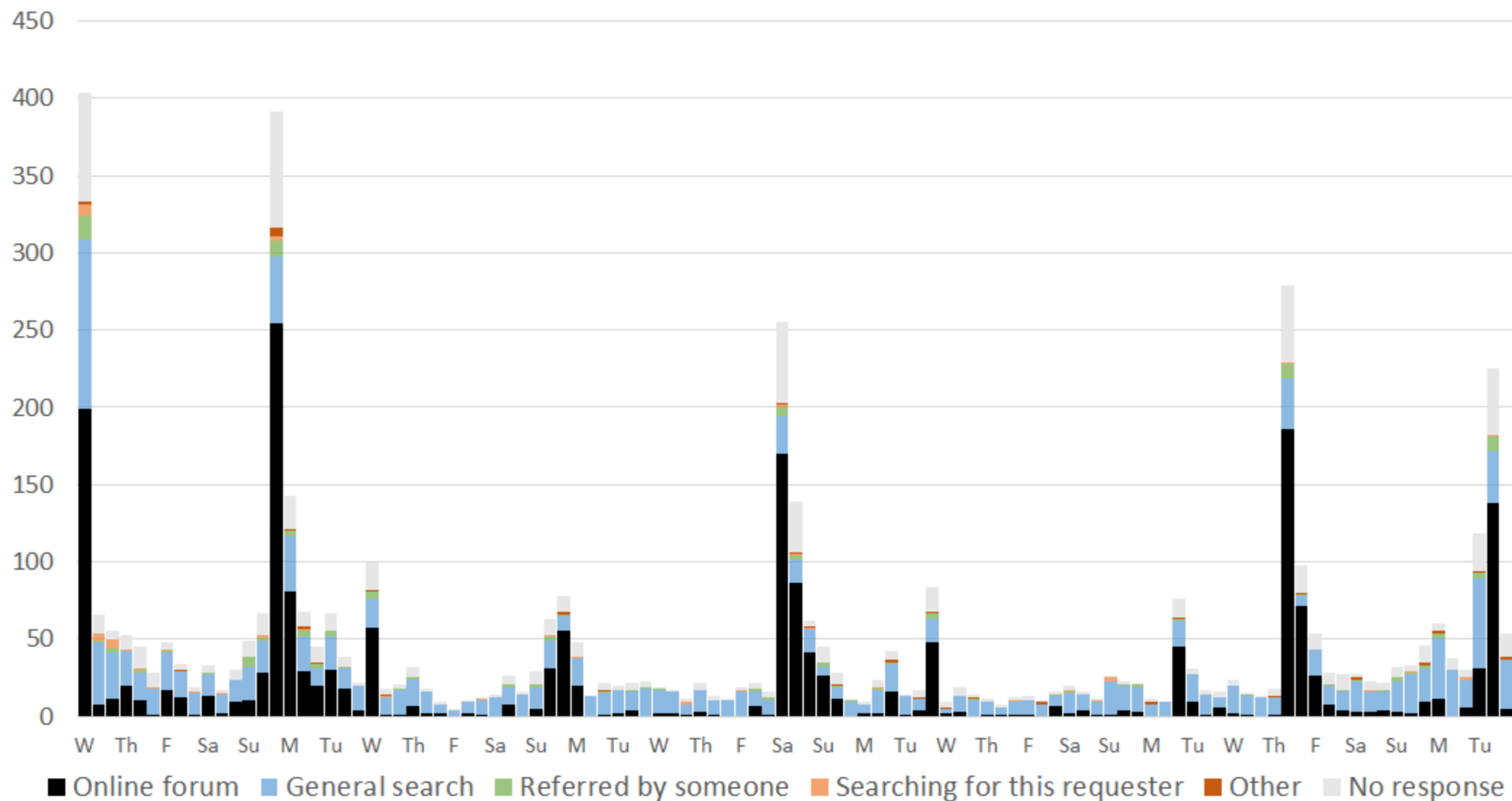
Workers are Not Autonomous



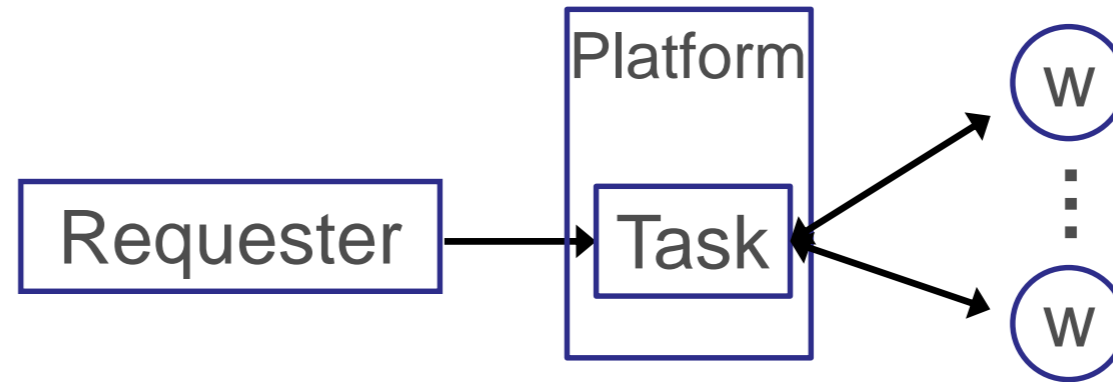
API hides these edges

- ▶ Communicate via phone, forums, chat, Facebook
 - ▶ Workers help each other with tasks (even in person)
 - ▶ Workers refer tasks and requesters to each other
- ▶ Can affect results: if worker x does a task a friend of worker x could be more likely to do that task

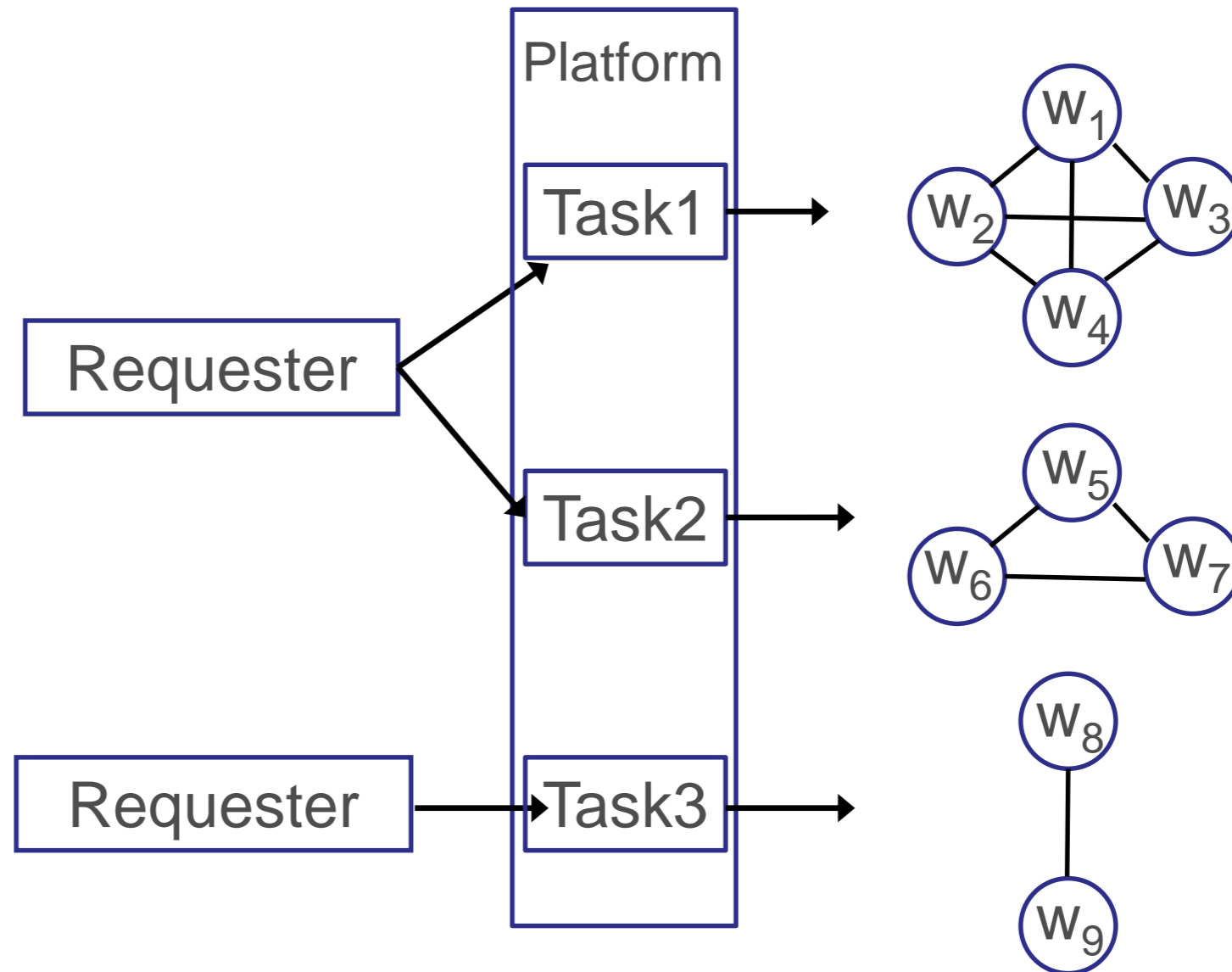
Workers Refer Tasks to Each Other



Crowdsourcing is less like this:



and more like this:



Conclusion

- ▶ Crowdsourcing strips away much of what makes a job a job
 - ▶ Maybe to increase quality, usability, enjoyment we need to restore some of the aspects of jobs?
 - ▶ Workers and platforms have already begun doing this.
- ▶ Is the fact that the API strips away all but the work and pay bad?
 - ▶ Gender: Women can work inside the home in India.
 - ▶ Religion: Muslims can find work more easily online.



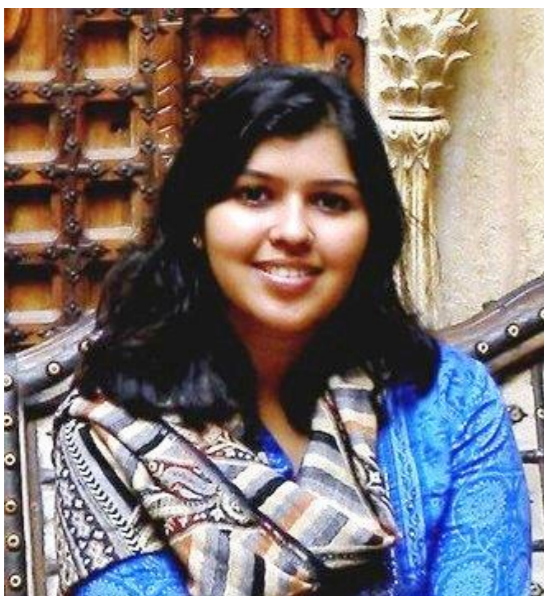
Shoaib Ali



Mary L.
Gray



Greg Minton



Deepti Desai



Sara
Kingsley



Rajesh Patel



Kate
Miltner

**Demo at 2:15
in Hood!**

