

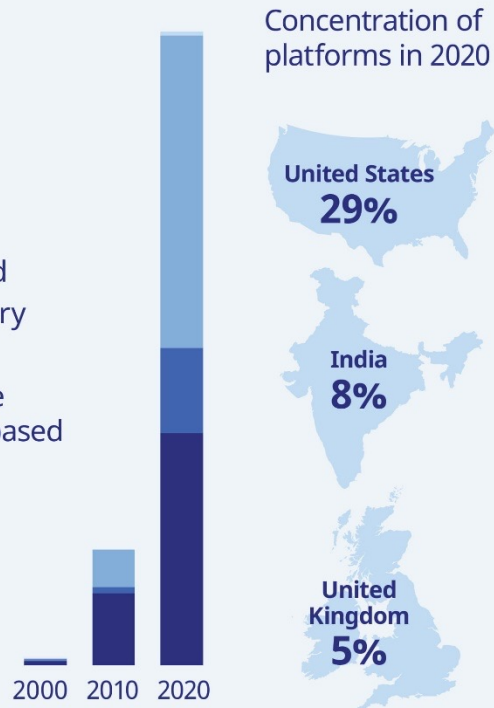
► World Employment and Social Outlook 2021

The role of digital labour
platforms in transforming
the world of work



► Rapid growth of platforms...

5x rise
since 2010

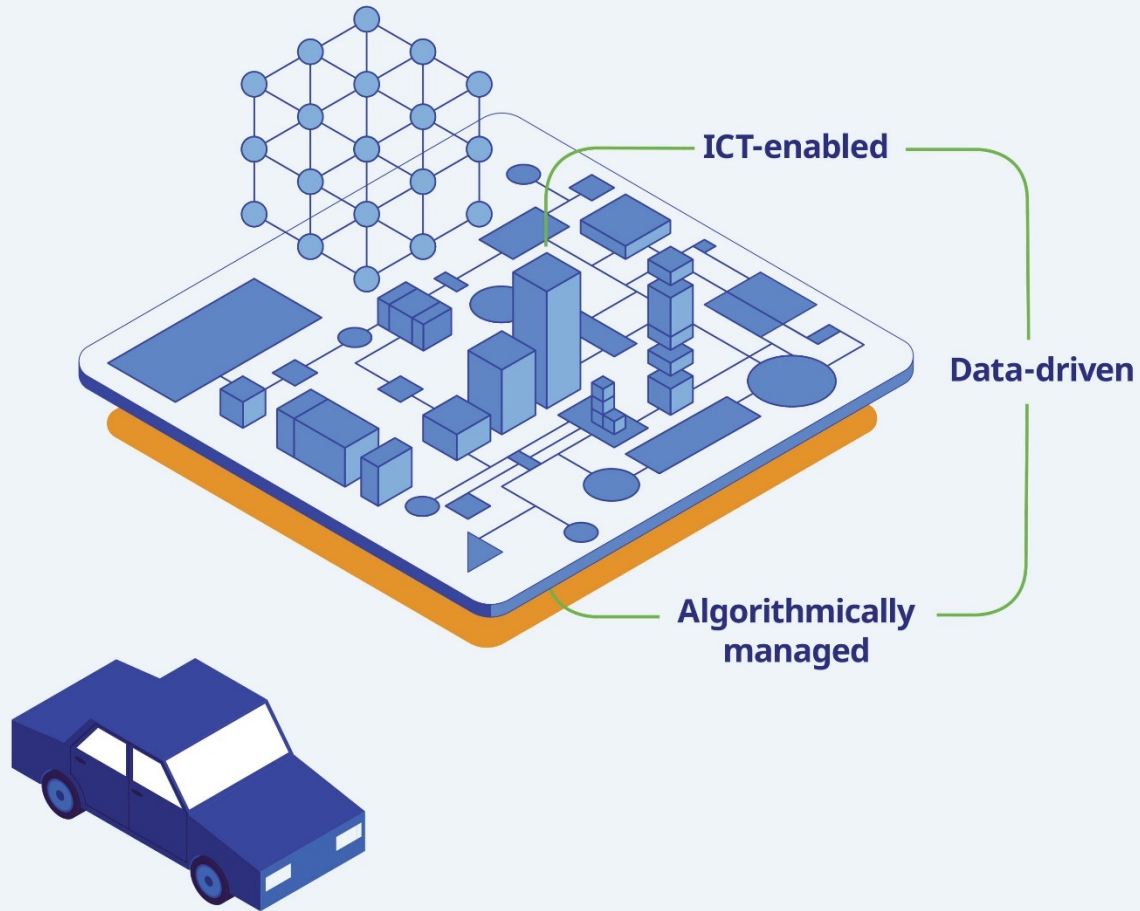


► Exponential growth in the number of platforms

► Rise of the digital labour platforms

- Cloud computing and infrastructure
- Use of big data and algorithms
- Availability of venture capital funds
- Innovative ways of working, and flexibility for both workers and businesses
- Increasing relevance with COVID-19 pandemic

► Features of platform business model



• Workers directly employed by the platform

99designs	139	1,200,000
Appen	800	1,000,000
HackerRank	200	11,000,000
Meituan	54,580	3,987,000
PeoplePerHour	50	2,400,000
Rappi	1,500	25,000
Uber	26,900	5,000,000

• Workers mediated by the platform



The report draws on the findings of surveys and interviews

12,000 workers in **100** countries

- ▶ Freelance, contest-based, competitive programming and microtask platforms
- ▶ Taxi and delivery sectors

Representatives of:

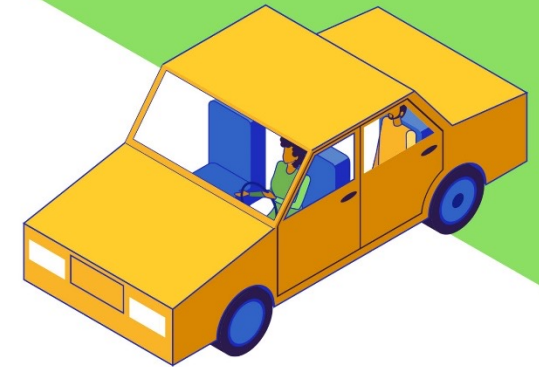
70 businesses of different types

16 platform companies

14 platform worker associations

► Who are the platform workers?

- Majority are below the age of 35 years
- Often highly educated, particularly in developing countries
- Mostly men, but women are also finding work on platforms
- Women comprise:
 - 4 in 10** workers on online web-based platforms
 - 1 in 10** workers on location-based platforms
- Opportunities also for persons with disabilities and migrant workers
- Classified as independent contractors or partners or self-employed



► What motivates workers to perform tasks on platforms?

- Complementing pay and flexibility (freelance and microtask)
- Improving skills and career opportunities (competitive programming)
- Lack of alternative employment opportunities, work flexibility and better pay (taxi and delivery)
- For many women (developing and developed countries): work from home or work flexibility is an important motivating factor



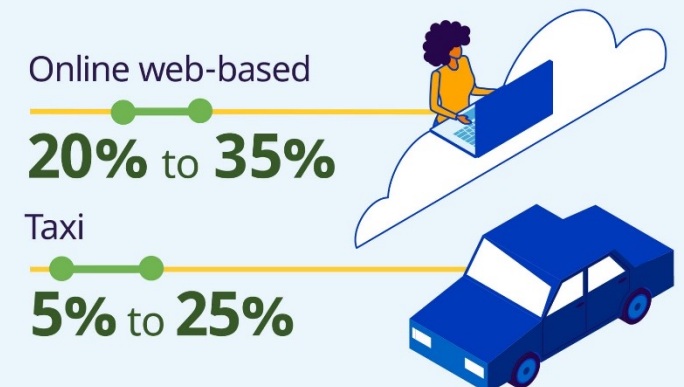
► Earnings vary across countries and types of platforms

- Most workers earn less than the average on online platforms (US\$3.4)
- Location-based platform workers earn more than their traditional counterparts in the taxi and delivery sectors
- Differences can be observed between countries and gender:
 - **Workers in developing countries tend to earn less than those in developed countries on freelance platforms (60 per cent less)**
 - **A significant gender pay gap can be observed on some platforms at the country level, while the findings are quite mixed globally**
- Commission fees have a major impact on incomes
- Working hours are quite high in location-based platforms
 - 65 hours in taxi sector; 59 hours in delivery sector per week
- On online web-based platforms workers spend 8 hours in a typical week performing unpaid work

Hourly earnings



Commission fees

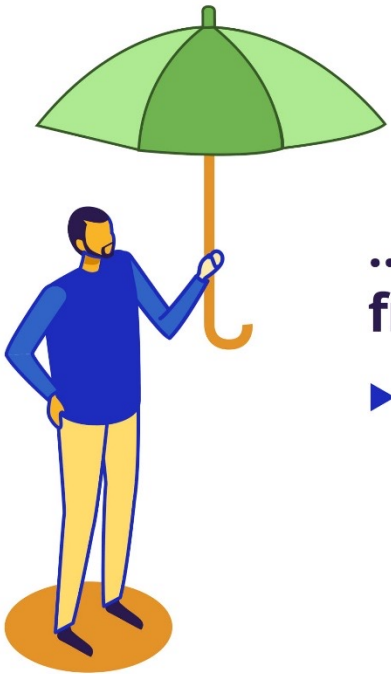


► Poor social protection coverage...

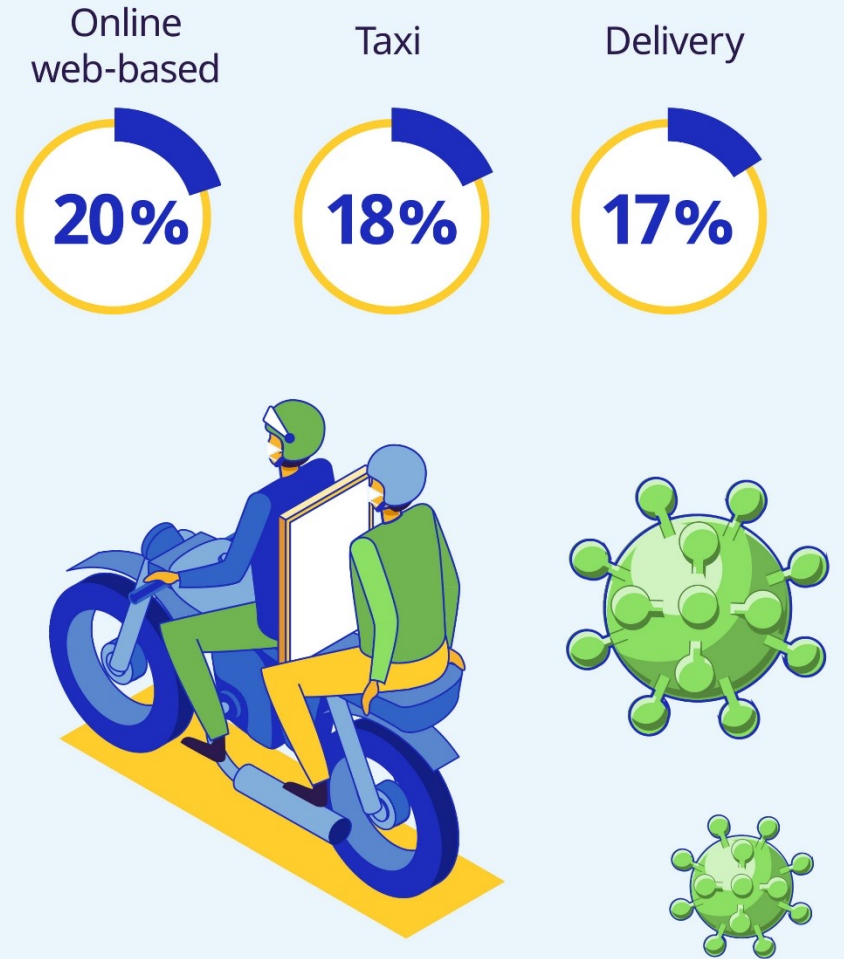
- Majority of workers on digital labour platforms are lacking social protection coverage
- Large gaps in health insurance; work-related injury provision; unemployment and disability insurance; and old-age pension or retirement benefits

...leaving platform workers at risk from COVID-19

- On location-based platforms, **7 out of 10 workers** indicated not being able to take paid sick leave, or to receive compensation, in the event they were to test positive for the virus



Social protection (access to pension)

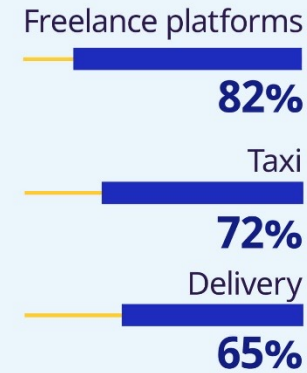


▶ Algorithmic management is defining the everyday experiences of workers

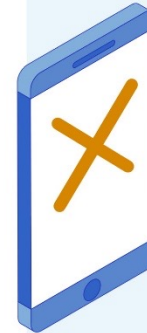
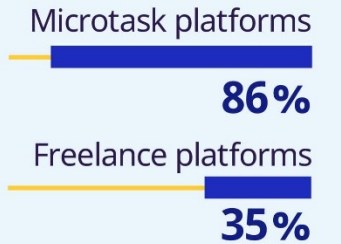
- ▶ Ratings and reputation are decisive for accessing work
- ▶ Rejection of work and low ratings are common
- ▶ Unable to refuse or cancel work without negative impacts
- ▶ Some workers face account deactivation
- ▶ Many are unaware of formal process for filing a complaint or seeking help
- ▶ Monitoring of work processes and tracking of workers



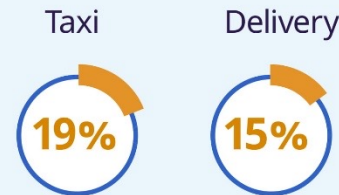
Workers' ratings are decisive for accessing work



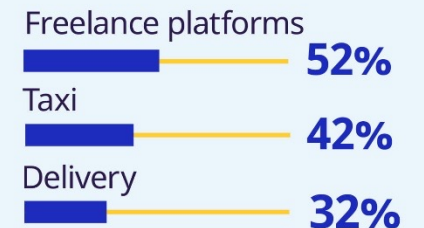
Workers whose work was rejected



Workers whose account was deactivated



Lack of awareness of a dispute resolution mechanism



Workers on freelance platforms

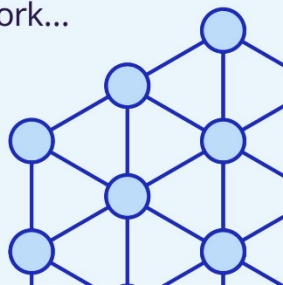


47% are monitored by their clients for hours **worked...**

46% are required to take screenshots of their work...

43% are required to be available during a specific time...

▶ **on a regular basis**



► Platforms redefining the relationship between formal education and access to work

- Workers' education is not necessarily correlated with their income levels on platforms
- Freelance platforms: **Skills often a good match (62%)**
- Competitive programming platforms: **Opportunity to learn new skills or upgrade their existing skill-sets**
- Microtask platforms: **Highly educated but performing tasks requiring low skills**
- Location-based platforms: **20% are highly educated**



► Diverse practices of regulation for platform workers across the world

Canada
Unreasonable dispute resolution process invalidated



United States
Diverse approaches to classification of platform workers



Peru
Establishment of fund for COVID-19 and data transparency



Uruguay
Digital social security contributions and tax payments for platform workers



Argentina
Prohibition of child labour, including through platform work



France
Right to disconnect for some platform workers

Spain
Mandatory employment injury insurance legislation



Brazil
Occupational safety and health coverage transcending employment relationship

South Africa
Anti-discrimination law applying to all workers

Denmark
Hilfr collective agreement pertaining to certain platform workers

Germany, Austria, Sweden
Organising online web-based platform workers

Korea
Work injury benefits extended to some platform workers



China
Work injury benefits extended to some platform workers



India
Social security benefits extended to platform workers



Indonesia
Work injury benefits extended to some platform workers



Australia
Occupational safety and health obligations transcending employment relationship



New Zealand
Occupational safety and health obligations transcending employment relationship



► A way forward through international policy dialogue and coordination

- Employment status
- Right to bargain collectively
- Adequate social security benefits
- Dispute resolution mechanism
- Fair termination process
- Fair payments and working time standards
- Non-discrimination
- Occupational safety and health
- Transparency and accountability in algorithms and ratings
- Access to local jurisdictions
- Data protection
- Portability of worker data and ratings
- Enabling environment for sustainable enterprises

