

ISSUE 7 - APRIL 2022

ALGORITHMS OF LATE-CAPITALISM

Bots, ghosts
and other workers



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Algorithms of Late-Capitalism Issue 7

Bots, Ghosts and Other Workers

There are weird new dimensions to work in the age of AI: bots are made factory floor managers, armies of underpaid ghost workers are tasked with labelling data-sets for image recognition software, HR systems screen job candidates' facial expressions to determine hiring suitability, and warehouse workers all over the world march to the new computational beat of AI-powered logistical networks.

These systems are made of human labour and have an impact on human labour conditions. This feedback cycle is present in almost all sectors to some degree. Yet, these systems are often designed and deployed in ways that keep this reality strategically concealed. For this issue, we invited workshop participants to unpack some of the social and technological dimensions of AI and highlight the hidden human

costs of automation. Who pays the price for increased automation? What changes are taking place in power relations at work? Can we imagine ways to make labour more fair in the age of AI?

Understanding the social and technological dimensions of AI can help us start uncovering who bears the hidden costs of automation.



This issue of *Algorithms of Late-Capitalism* was created by internet teapot (Karla Zavala Barreda and Adriaan Odendaal) and the participants of the workshop: **Algorithms of Late Capitalism Zine Co-creation Workshop** at Mozilla Festival, 2022.



Sleep Dealer (2008)

"Memo Cruz (Luis Fernando Peña) is a young man in near-future Mexico. When his family is victim of a misguided drone attack he finds himself with no option but to head north, towards the U.S./Mexico border. But migrant workers cannot cross this new world border - it's been sealed off. Instead, Memo ends up in a strange digital factory in Mexico where he connects his body to a robot in America."

- www.sleepdealer.com

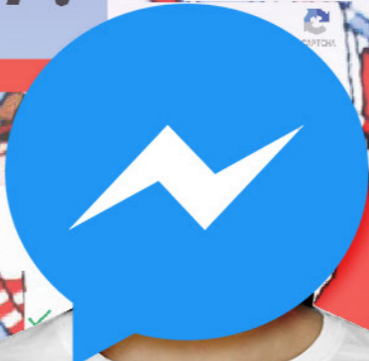
AI Materiality

The important and pivotal role of humans in the work of AI is often occluded by software companies and startups, contributing to the myths of AI as magically autonomous and hyper intelligence.

Even though automation and AI technologies are often seen as replacing human labour, it is important to understand that these technologies are produced, trained and deployed by humans.

New AI Released: Now more Human than Ever!

WHERE IS THE ROBOT?



~~not a human~~



Rochelle Rugelach @Rochelle
I wonder if Expensify SmartScan users know MTurk workers enter their receipts. I'm looking at someone's Uber receipt with their full name, pick up, and drop off addresses.
2:00 AM · 23 nov 2017 · TweetDeck
639 Retweet 153 Tweet di citazione 999 Mi piace


Bank of England

Final
m-config. Symbol Operations m-config.
 q_i S_j PS_k L q_m N_i
 q_i S_j PS_k R q_m N_2
 q_i S_j PS_k q_m N_3
 $q_1 S_0 S_1 R q_2 q_3 S_0 S_1 R q_4 q_5 S_0 S_1 R q_6$
 $q_7 S_0 S_1 R q_8 q_9 S_0 S_1 R q_{10}$
101011111110010110011000

Fifty Pounds

OOOPS!
SOMETHING
WENT WRONG!

I'm not a robot



reCAPTCHA

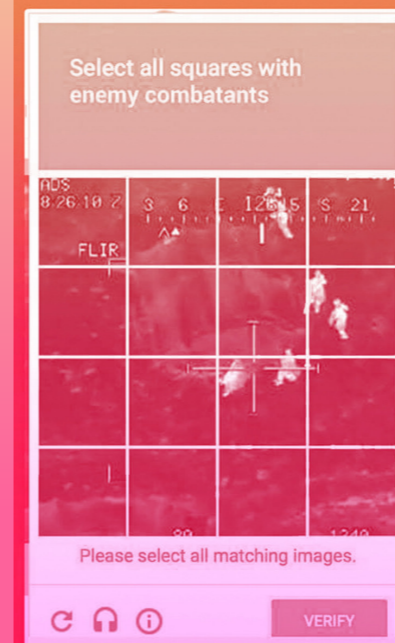
The Backstage of AI

There are three instances where human labour is involved

Source: *Lifting the curtain: Strategic visibility of human labour in AI-as-a-Service*, Gemma Newland (2021)

1. AI Preparation

Hey @Google, exactly what kind of AI am I helping you guys train with this?



2. AI Verification

OpenAI's state-of-the-art machine vision AI is fooled by handwritten notes

A fascinating case study in machine versus human intelligence

By James Vincent | Mar 8, 2021, 8:49am EST

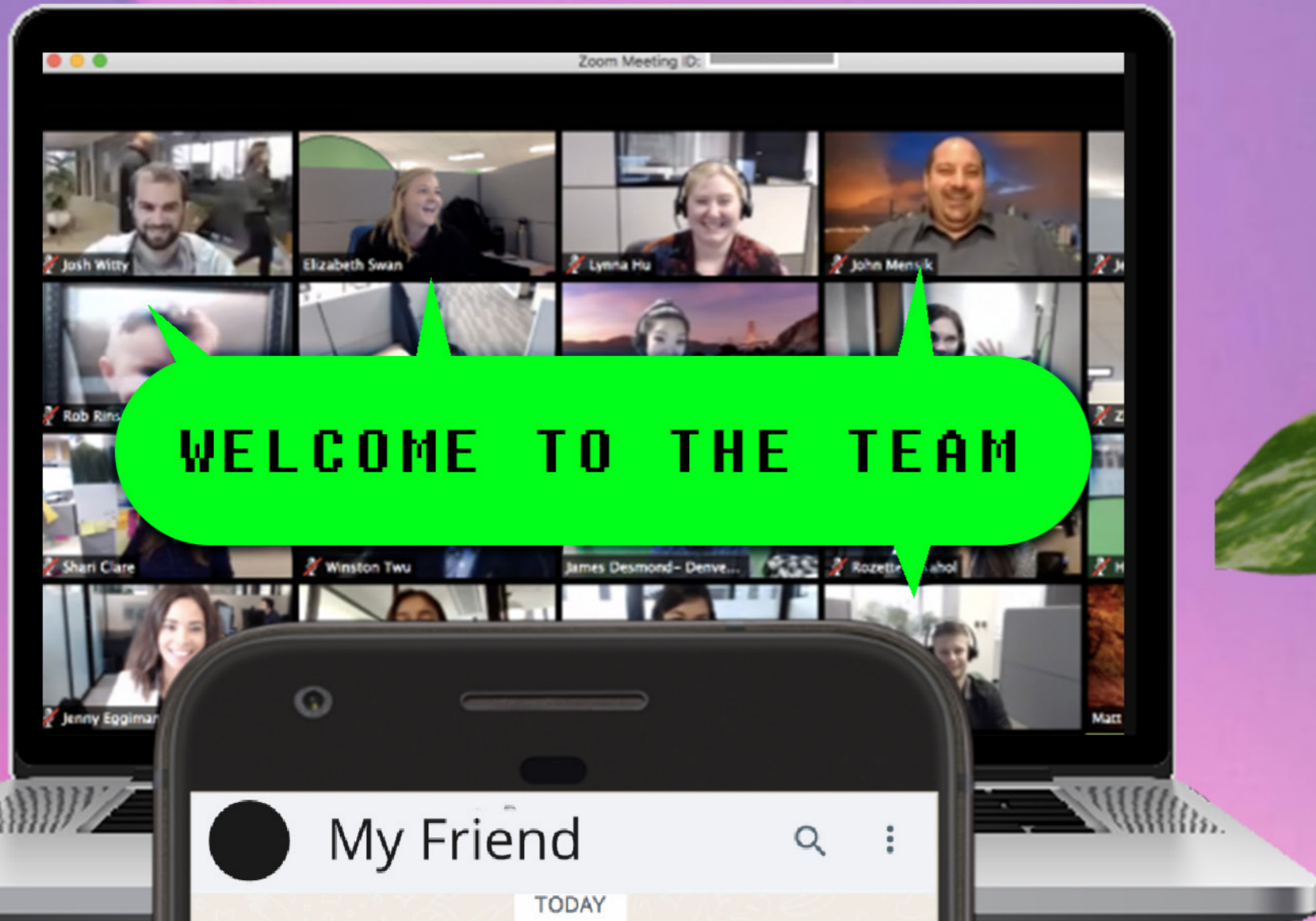
Granny Smith	85.6%
iPod	0.4%
library	0.0%
pizza	0.0%
toaster	0.0%
dough	0.1%

Granny Smith	0.1%
iPod	99.7%
library	0.0%
pizza	0.0%
toaster	0.0%
dough	0.0%

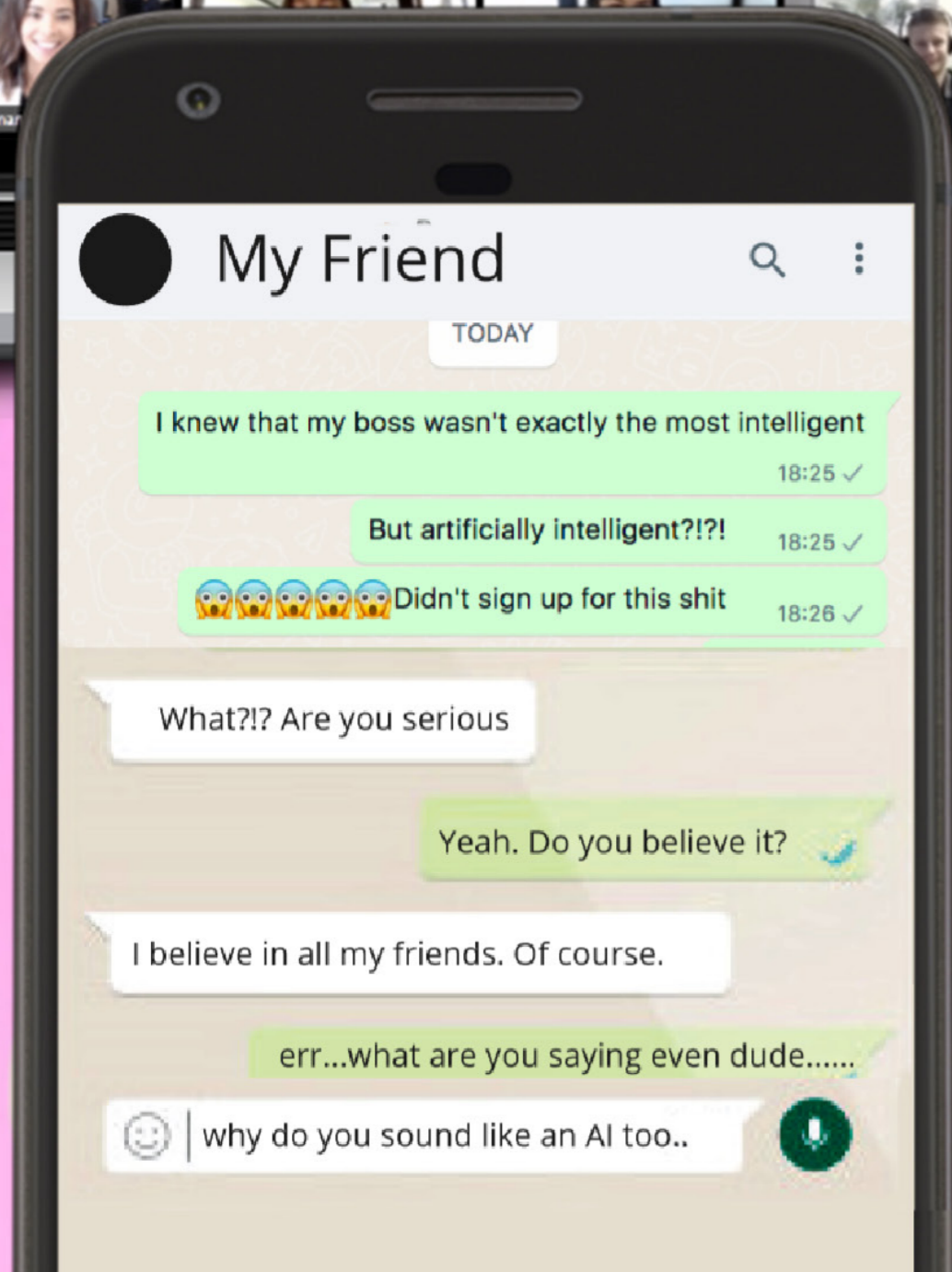
3. AI Impersination

Expensify's "smart" scanning technology was secretly aided by humans





WELCOME TO THE TEAM



I knew that my boss wasn't exactly the most intelligent

18:25 ✓

But artificially intelligent?!?!

18:25 ✓

🤖🤖🤖🤖🤖 Didn't sign up for this shit

18:26 ✓

What?!? Are you serious

Yeah. Do you believe it?

I believe in all my friends. Of course.

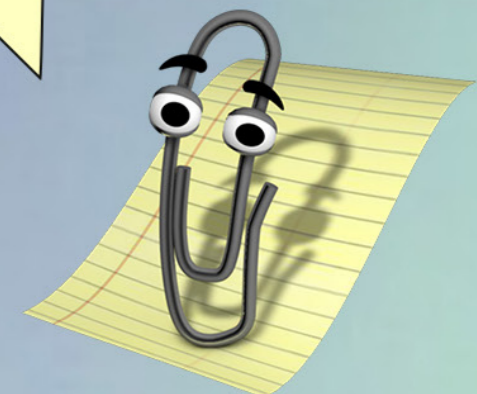
err...what are you saying even dude.....

😊 why do you sound like an AI too..

Are you being 'job-fished' by an AI for a remote work job?

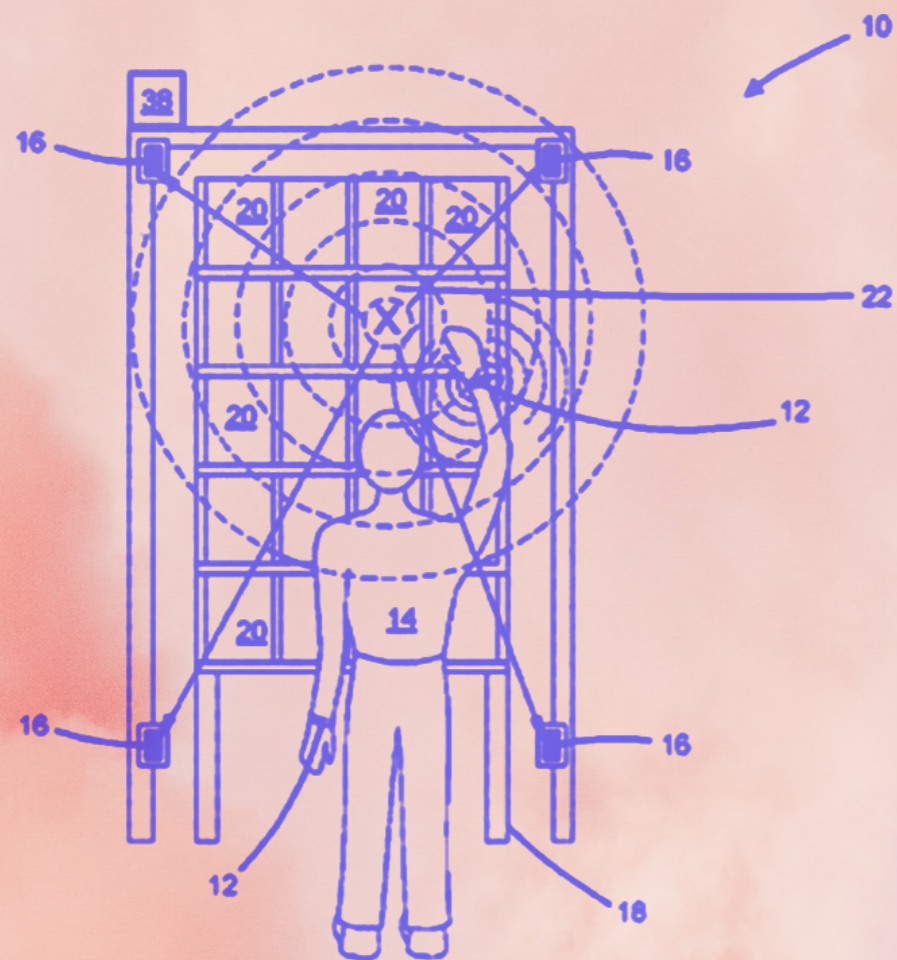
Ask your 'new colleagues' these questions to make sure they are human:

1. What was the most influential event of your childhood and how do you feel this event affects you today?
2. Who are you as a person?
3. Describe your feelings if you were to be given the opportunity to fly to the moon?
4. If you were to draw yourself as an abstract painting, what colours and shapes would you use and why?
5. What emotions have been involved in answering the questions that I have given you up to this point and what do you feel is the strongest question out of the 4?



Impact of AI on Work

AI systems enable new forms of computational labour management.



Surveillance

- Granularity of tracking
- Algorithmic assesment
- Nudging behaviour

Efficiancy

- Modulation of time
- Extrating more labour from fewer workers

Automation

- Humans working alongside machines
- Humans increasingly treaded like robots

Adapted from: Kate Crawford, Atlas of AI (2021)

But... But... the machine told me you love Iron Maiden!?



The Ides Of March - 1998 Remastered Version

✓ Wrathchild - 1998 Remastered Version

✓ Murders in the Rue Morgue - 1998 Remastered Version

✓ Another Life - 1998 Remastered Version

✓ Genghis Khan - 1998 Remastered Version

✓ Innocent Exile - 1998 Remastered Version

Killers - 1998 Remastered Version

Original Son - 1998 Remastered Version

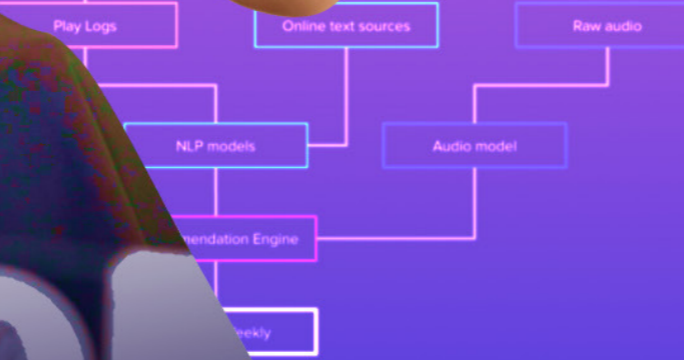
1998 Remastered Version

1998 Remastered Version

1998 Remastered Version



City's Recommendation Pipeline



PRAY TO THE GODS OF AUTOMATION

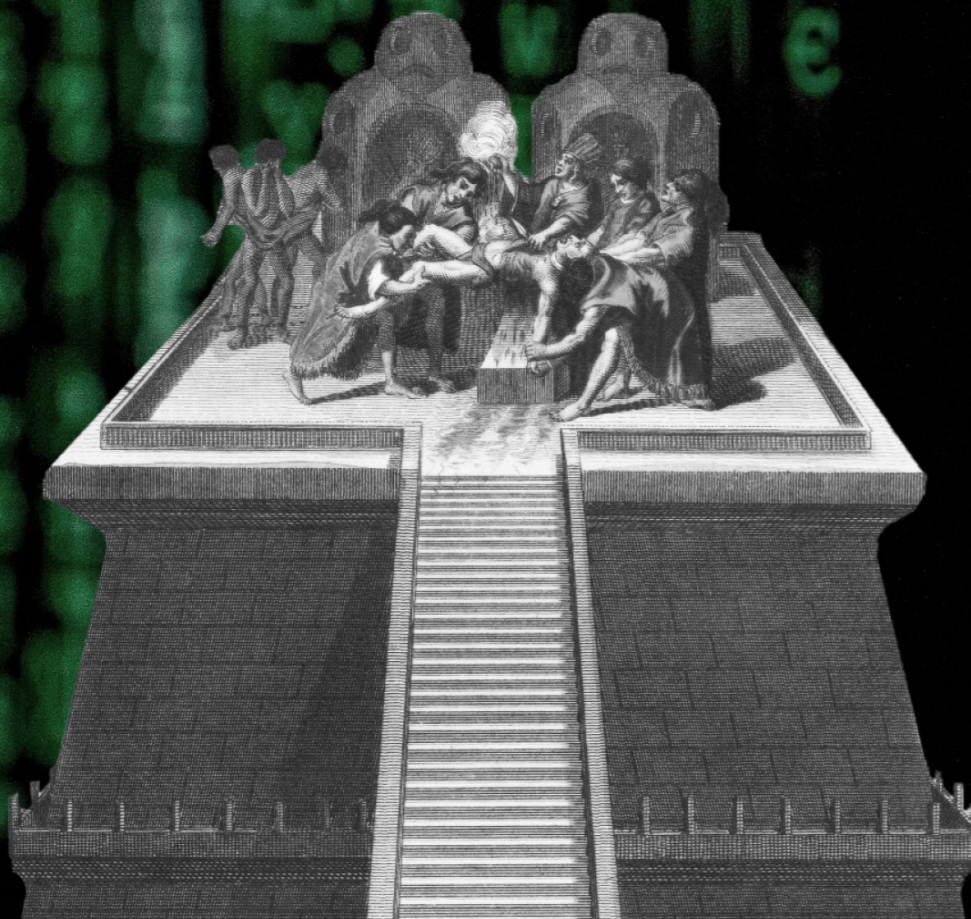
BY LUIS BRACAMONTES - @AGEOFLUI

OH, ALMIGHTY ALGORITHM
THAT WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND
YOUR ULTERIOR MOTIVES AND UNQUESTIONABLE WAYS

WE OFFER YOU OUR HEARTS, OUR DATA,
OUR DOPAMINE HITS
AN OFFER OF PRIVACY TO QUENCH
THE THIRST OF YOUR SCREENS

ETERNAL CONTENT SACRIFICE
TO FEED THE ALGORITHM
EXORCIZE THIS GHOST IN THE MACHINE
AND FREE US FROM THE ILLUSION OF FREE WILL

IT DEVOURS, IT CONSUMES AND IT WANTS MORE
A HIVE MIND OF TEMPTATION
WE GIVE, WE BEG, WE PRAY
TO THE GODS OF AUTOMATION



Finding the AI among us

A social-emotional game that helps us
connect with one another while detecting
the AI who lurks amongst us.

5 Activities: Each of the answers are displayed as card decks after each round and players have to vote who is the AI responding (similar game mechanic as Among Us).

- After each round players get to pick who is an AI.
- The one person who is an AI gets to only pick from a few options.

Motivations of AI: to steal your data, to know you better, to sell your data to companies, emotional manipulation (?)

- AI keeps getting strengthened in each round when the AI isn't revealed.
- A case of stolen identity -- another game?

Reverse: I'm not a computer. CAPTCHA Game.

- where a human tries to convince a computer that it is not a computer.

Game for
team building

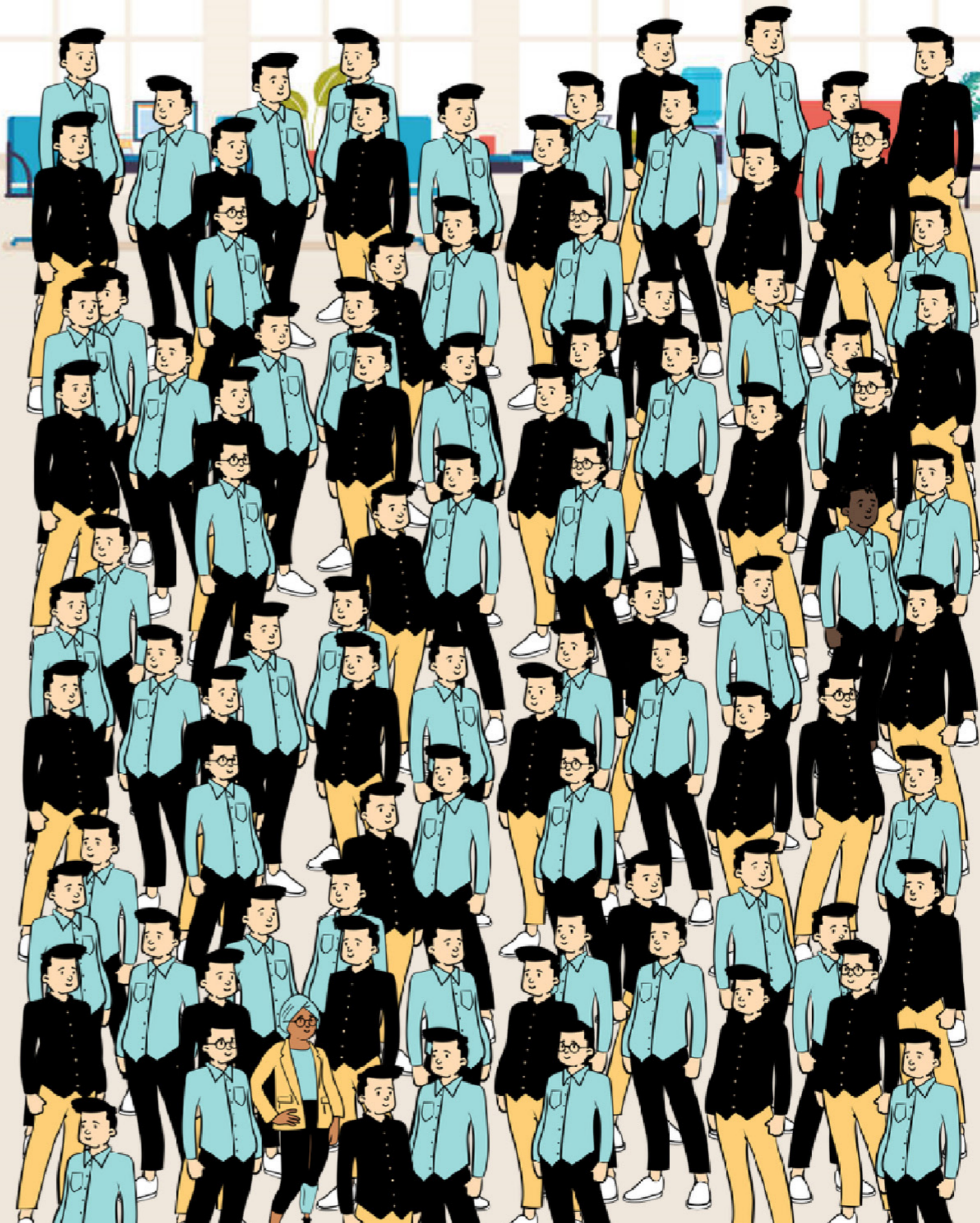
DIVERSITY IN THE WAKE OF AI HIRING

When Amazon deployed an AI system to help screen CV's during its hiring process, the AI autonomously started using two bizarre indicators for job performance: 1) if your name was 'Jared' and 2) if you 'played high school lacrosse'.

Machine-learning systems are black boxes that sometimes make unwanted decisions based on their training data. These decisions then tend to be repeated and amplified until a human notices and intervenes.

So what happens to the workplace when a bias is not actively reversed? And what about biases that are more subtle than lacrosse playing Jareds?

Preventing and treating bias is not only essential in fighting inequality, it is also proven to be beneficial for a profitable, innovative and sustainable business. Capitalist ideology is famous for perpetuation itself, but one cannot deny its self-destructing qualities as well. So whether you are pro- or anti-capitalist, let's prioritize the prevention of an AI-induced lacrosse-playing-Jared-monoculture.



internet teapot



A zine that sits uncomfortably at the intersection of digital technology, a global free-market economy, and popular culture.