

# FOP Seminar: 'Review Articles n the Future of Work'

EU-OSHA

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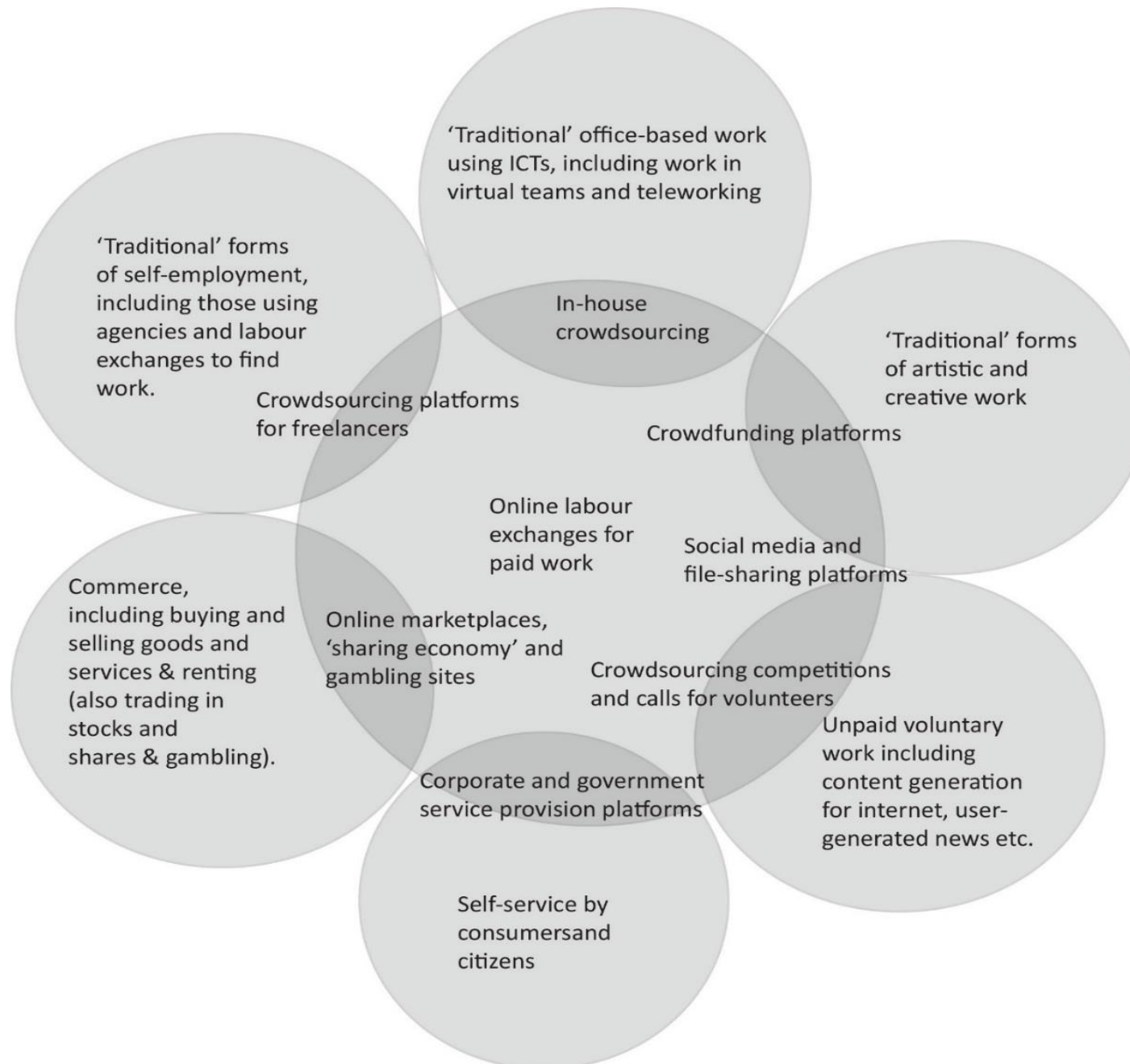
**Online labour exchanges, or 'crowdsourcing':  
implications for occupational safety and health**

# Confusing terminology to describe the emergence of new phenomena

- Crowdsourcing
- Workforce on demand
- Cloudsourcing
- Human cloud
- Sharing economy
- Digital labour
- Prosumption
- Co-creation
- Digital commons
- Peer-to-peer networking
- Playbour
- Mesh Economy
- Virtual work



# A convergence of existing trends, now reaching critical mass



## Some general trends in crowdsourcing

- Rapid expansion of major corporate players (e.g. Amazon, Airbnb, Uber, Elance) helped by:
  - Effective systems for international money transfer
  - Sophisticated use of big data – targeted advertising
  - General network advantages (size and international spread make it more likely that consumers can find what they want where they want it)
- Concentration of ownership (e.g. merger of Elance and Odesk) and entry of large global corporations into the market (e.g. Coca Cola, Ford, Google)
- What began as a telemediated one-to-one introduction of individuals ('sharing economy') is increasingly involving corporate clients e.g.
  - Commercial property companies using Airbnb
  - Companies using Taskrabbit and Homejoy to substitute for normal employees
- Emergence of new companies (e.g. Wonolo) specifically designed to cater to business market (substituting for temporary work agencies)

# No single employment model for paid labour – some key variables

	Professional status			Work Mode		Place of work			Employment Status		Final client		Main job or supplement	
	Manual	Clerical	High-skill	Online	Offline	Home	Empl. site	Other	Empl-oyee	Self-empl.	Individ-ual	Com-pany	Main job	Second-ary job
Elace oDesk			*	*		*				*		*		
Click-worker		*			*			*		*		*		
Task-rabbit	*			*		*				*		*		
Wonolo	*	*			*		*		*		*			
Star-bucks	*				*		*		*		*			
Mila	*				*			*	*		*			
Axiom			*	*		*				*		*		

# Variety of issues relating to occupational safety and health risks

- Physical risks to online workers
- Physical risks to offline workers
- Psycho-social risks, linked *inter alia* to:
  - Precariousness
  - Unpredictability
  - Work intensity
  - Traumatic stress due to exposure to pornographic or violent media images
  - Interaction of impacts from multiple jobs
- Difficulty of disentangling risks to workers from risks to consumers and to general public
- Ambiguities/gaps relating to insurance coverage
- Ambiguities/gaps relating to legal and professional liability
- Ambiguities/gaps relating to coverage by European Directives and national regulations
- What is the legal status of online work exchange platforms?
- Who is the employer?

# Opportunities and risks

## Opportunities

- Enables access to work for people who would otherwise be excluded (eg people with disabilities, carers, people in developing economies)
- Provides affordable services to consumers on a just-in-time basis
- Provides new opportunities for flexible ways to combine work and private life
- Reduces risks for employers and customers
- Enables low-cost entry into market for new enterprises or firms trying out new products or services
- Enables social innovation

## Risks

- Lack of training – risk of substandard / dangerous work
- Loss of commitment
- Loss of quality control
- Precariousness
- Race to the bottom (undercutting of good employers)
- Health and safety risks to general public as well as customers and workers
- Lack of regulation may lead to criminal activity (e.g. money laundering)
- Unravelling of national / EU regulatory environment

For more information go to:  
<http://dynamicsofvirtualwork.com>  
[http://www.cost.eu/domains\\_actions/isch/Actions/IS1202](http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch/Actions/IS1202)



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