



Oxford startup Prolific takes on Amazon

New research supports the Oxford University Incubator startup's challenge Amazon Mechanical Turk's dominance in sourcing participants for social science studies.

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[Prolific](#), formerly Prolific Academic, the Oxford University startup that links social scientists with research participants, has been cited in an independent [scientific paper](#) that highlights Prolific as a better quality source of participants than rival giant, Amazon's Mechanical Turk.

In the paper, the participants on the Prolific platform were described as "less dishonest" and "more diverse" than Amazon Turk's. In addition, Prolific participants produced data quality that was "comparable to Amazon Turk's" and "higher" than rival platform, CrowdFlower.

The research validates Prolific's raison d'être. The platform was founded by Ekaterina Damer and Phelim Bradley, both scientists at the time completing DPhils and PhDs at Oxford and Sheffield universities, who set up Prolific because they were frustrated by the difficulty in accessing quality data sources.

One of the startups to graduate from the [Oxford University Innovation](#) incubator programme, Prolific has experienced incredible growth since launch in April 2014. It has made it possible for researchers to collect more than one million unique responses in over 6,500 studies, and has proven popular among social scientists.

Prolific now works with more than 1,300 researchers from more than 300 academic institutions worldwide, including Cambridge University, London School of Economics, Yale and Stanford, to help them find the right participants fast. Prolific currently has a pool of 70,000 registered participants, which continues to expand.

Ekaterina Damer, co-founder of Prolific, said:

"Amazon's Mechanical Turk is well known among social scientists, and has long been the 'go-to' option for finding research participants for studies, as it's relatively cheap and the site boasts huge participant numbers.

"Unfortunately, we found that Amazon's Mechanical Turk's numbers were highly inflated and that the platform was very limited in what it could do. We built Prolific to provide a better solution."

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Contact Katie Bentley-Chan for more information on Prolific, high res images or to arrange an interview with CEO and co-founder of Prolific, Ekaterina Damer.

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Notes to editor

Paper found in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Volume 70, May 2017, Pages 153–163, Beyond the Turk: Alternative platforms for crowdsourcing behavioral research. Full paper can be read here:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022103116303201>

About Prolific

Launched in April 2014 by postgraduate students, Ekaterina Damer and Phelim Bradley, Prolific enables researchers to find reliable, on-demand participants, and vets every participant in multiple ways to ensure high data quality.

Prolific was built to offer researchers a better quality data source and affordable alternative to Amazon's Mechanical Turk.

Prolific is used by 1300+ researchers at academic institutions worldwide, including the University of Oxford, Cambridge University, University College London, London School of Economics, Stanford University and Yale University to name a few.

Prolific is an Oxford University Innovation Startup Incubator company - <http://innovation.ox.ac.uk>

Visit Prolific at <https://www.prolific.ac>

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Support & Funding team supports investors or donors with an interest in early-stage ventures, and manages the Oxford Angels Network.

Our Startup Incubator supports members and ex-members of the University who wish to start or grow entrepreneur-driven ventures that are not University spinouts.

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