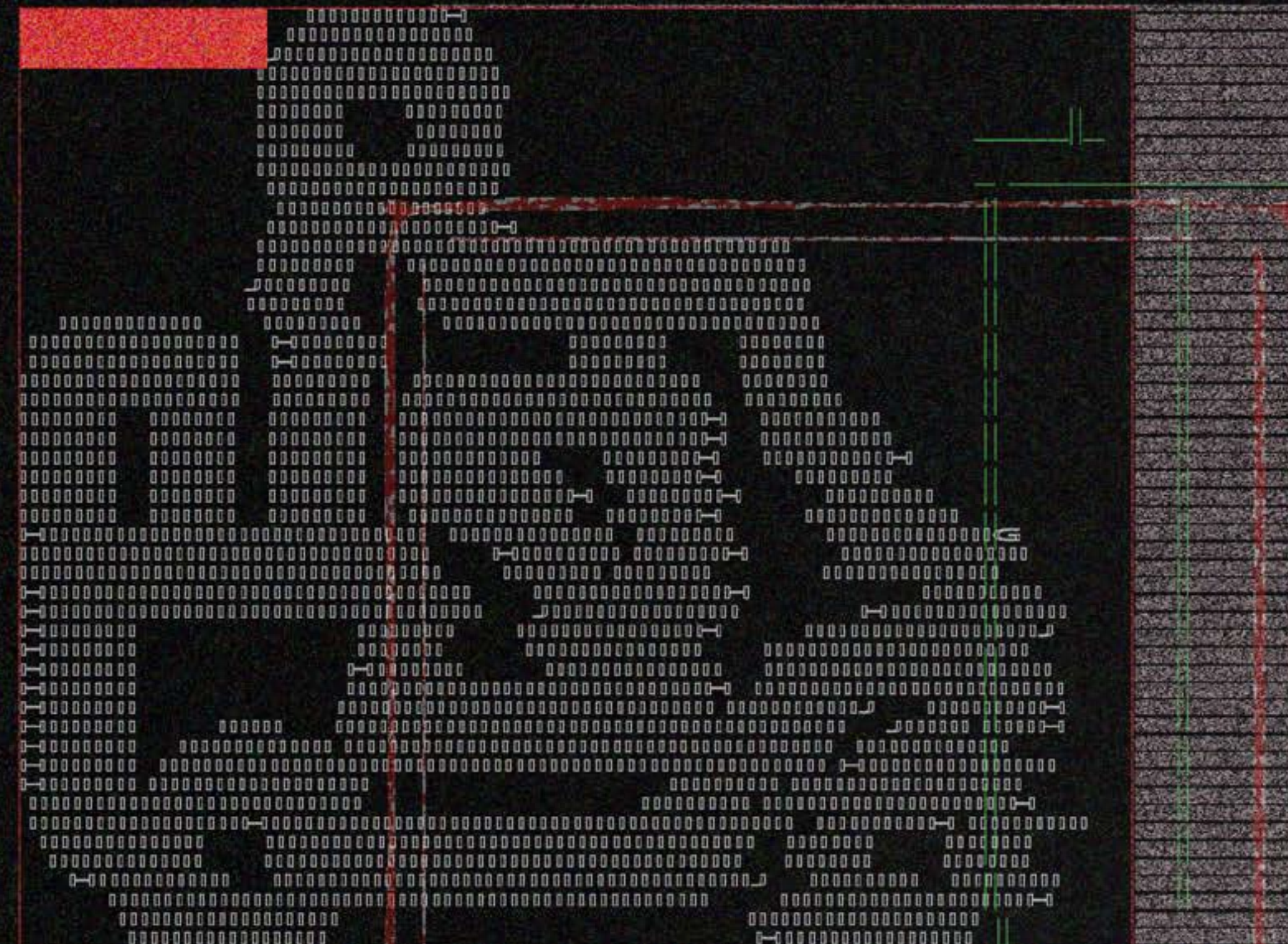


Reversing the Gaze

How to Study Workplace Apps
and Reclaim Worker's Rights

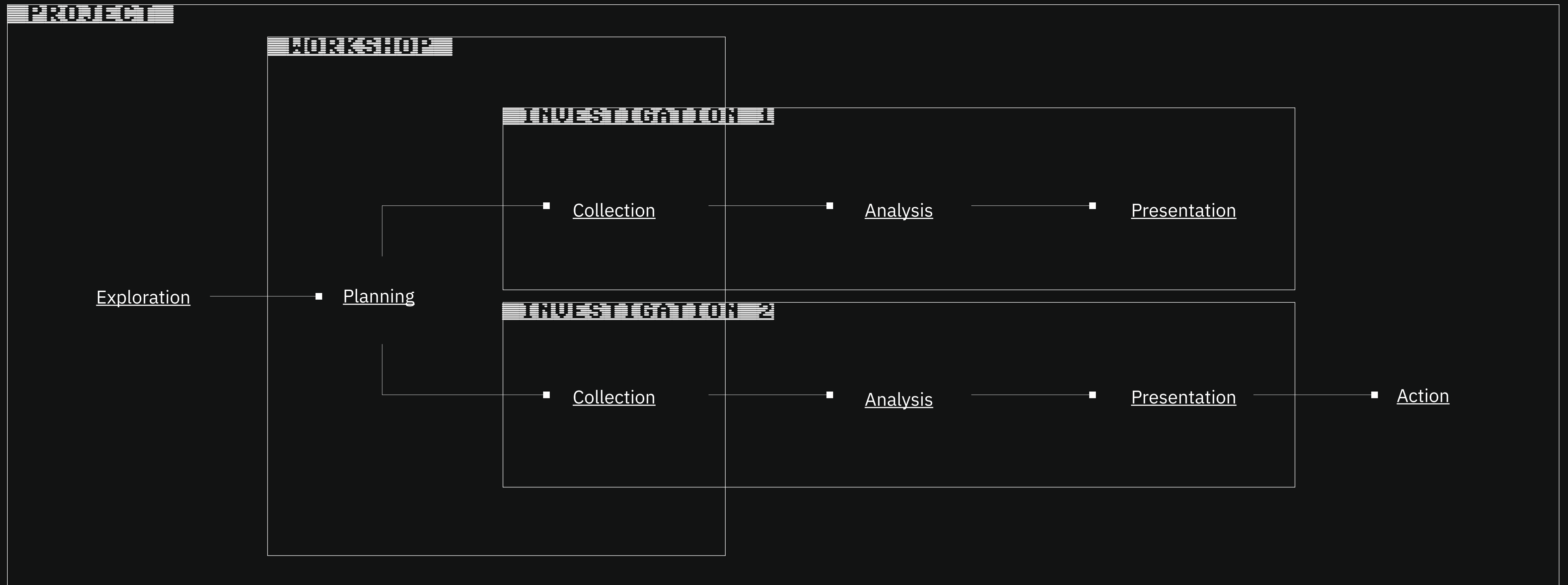
Workshop Guide

Reversing.Works



This Guide explains how to organise and run a workshop to study workplace apps. It is intended to support project partners in designing workshops together with us: defining goals, adapting investigation scenarios to specific contexts, and planning the overall flow of activities. The Guide is based on experience from workshops conducted in 2025 and 2026, primarily with food delivery workers. While the methodology has been most extensively tested in this sector, it can be adapted to many different workplaces and industries.

This Guide should be read alongside *Reversing the Gaze: How to Study Workplace Apps and Reclaim Workers' Rights*, which provides a comprehensive introduction to the methodology. The Handbook focuses on the conceptual and methodological foundations of the approach, while this Guide focuses on its practical organisation and facilitation.



More specifically, this Guide covers the phases leading up to and including the workshop itself: Exploration, Planning, and Collection. The subsequent phases—Analysis, Presentation of Results, and Action—are only introduced briefly here and are described in more detail in the Handbook.

Exploration

A workshop is a structured session in which workers participate in one or more investigations and data collections. Depending on the project, a single workshop may involve multiple investigations running in parallel, with the same or different workers. In some cases, investigations may also be conducted remotely or independently, without a workshop. Each workshop is different and depends on its context, including the goals

of the project, the apps being investigated, and the number of participating workers. During the exploration phase, we work with project partners to assess the feasibility of the investigation, define its scope, identify which apps to focus on, and agree on the time, resources, and level of effort required. A project partner can be a trade union, NGO, informal collective, or even an individual worker.

The three key questions we will explore together are:

Target App

Is the workplace app used on a worker's private device?

This is an essential requirement. For legal reasons, we can only investigate apps that are installed or used on workers' own devices; apps used exclusively on company-owned phones or computers cannot be studied.

When it comes to mobile apps, we currently work only with Android devices, so the app must also be available through the Google Play Store. It is also possible to study desktop apps or browser softwares, as long as they are expected to be used on a private device.

Access to workers

Do you have access to workers who could participate in the workshop?

To investigate an app, at least one worker must provide access to their account. For this reason, we usually work with partners who already have trusted relationships with workers and are interested in understanding how workplace apps collect and process data.

Multiple workers can participate in the same workshop. If they use the same app, we can run multiple experiments, which strengthens the investigation. It is also possible to study several apps with a single worker, for example if they work across multiple platforms, as is common in sectors such as food delivery.

Resources

Can you provide the basic resources needed to run a workshop?

At a minimum, a workshop requires a suitable room with a reliable Wi-Fi connection and, ideally, a projector. We bring our own technical equipment, including phones and computers.

Organising a workshop usually involves covering our team's work, travel costs, and—where possible—compensation for participating workers. In most cases, partners provide the venue and help cover these costs.

We recognise that workers and grassroots organisations often operate with limited resources. In some cases, we may have grant funding available or decide to work pro bono, so please get in touch even if resources are currently limited.

Planning

During the planning phase, partners agree on the objectives, scope, logistics, and practical arrangements for the workshop. To ensure that the workshop meets the needs of workers and that participants are properly informed, partners should discuss and agree on the following points. In the planning phase, we discuss different aspects in order to reach a mutual understanding and agreement. We also plan the logistics - time, place, number and type of investigations.

- **⇒ What needs to be agreed upon between partners?**

- **⇒ How to plan the workshop logistics?**

- **⇒ How to invite the workers?**

- **⇒ How to decide the final plan of the workshop?**

What needs to be agreed upon between partners?

To ensure that the workshop meets the needs of workers and that participants are properly informed, partners should discuss and agree on the following points.

Workshop goals:

What do you hope to achieve?

Understanding your goals helps us tailor the workshop to your needs. Findings can support public awareness campaigns, organising efforts, collective bargaining, strategic litigation, research, or other forms of advocacy. Existing legal, media, or advocacy capacity can also influence the activities that follow the workshop.

App selection:

Which apps should be investigated?

Partners should identify the apps that are most relevant to workers' concerns and most likely to attract participation.

Factors to consider include:

- ✎ Which workers are easiest to reach and recruit?
- ✎ Has the app already been investigated by Reversing.Works?
- ✎ Are there specific labour or data protection concerns that workers want to verify?
- ✎ Are workers using multiple apps that could also be investigated?

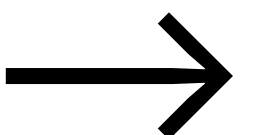
Investigating an app that has already been studied is usually quicker and easier. Investigating a new app may require additional preparation, but can also produce new insights.

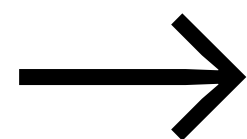
Technical feasibility:

Is the investigation likely to succeed?

Before the workshop, we conduct a preliminary assessment of the target app. Partners should provide the app name and a link to its Google Play Store page. The assessment typically involves downloading the app, verifying that it can be run in our research environment, and testing whether network traffic can be intercepted. In most cases, we aim to confirm that we can access at least the login screen.

Despite these preparations, technical obstacles may still arise. If problems occur during the workshop, our digital expert will attempt to resolve them, usually within 45–60 minutes. If the issue cannot be resolved, we will explain the technical limitations and why the investigation is more complex than anticipated.





Language:

Which languages should the workshop support?

Workshops do not have to be conducted in English and can be held in the local language. When planning the workshop, consider the linguistic needs of participants, particularly if migrant workers are involved. Translation of materials or interpretation during the workshop may be necessary to ensure that everyone can participate fully.

Compensation:

How will workers be compensated?

We recommend compensating workers for their time. As a guideline, we suggest a minimum rate of EUR 20 per hour. Partners should also consider practical arrangements, such as whether compensation will be paid in cash or by invoice and whether workers would prefer payment in local currency.

Risks and informed consent:

How will participants be informed and protected?

Workers are unlikely to be identified through our methodology, but this cannot be guaranteed with absolute certainty. Participants should therefore receive clear information about the investigation process, the data being collected, potential risks, and the intended use of the results. Informed consent is an essential requirement for participation.

Data storage and sharing:

How will collected data be handled?

Partners should agree in advance on how data will be stored, who will have access to it, what information will be shared with partner organisations, and how long data will be retained. These arrangements should be reflected in participant consent forms and clearly communicated to workers before data collection begins.

Partnership agreement:

Do we need a written agreement?

Where the Reversing.Works team is being compensated for its services, we recommend formalising the collaboration in writing. A written agreement can clarify the scope of the workshop, the responsibilities of each partner, financial arrangements, and any expected outputs or follow-up activities. This helps ensure that expectations are clear for everyone involved.

How to plan the workshop logistics?

Once these matters have been agreed upon, it is time to plan the practical logistics of the workshop. Key details such as the date, time, duration, and location will need to be included in the invitation sent to workers. However, the exact duration of the workshop can be difficult to estimate in advance. It depends on the final number of workers and apps involved, as well as on how many rooms and facilitators are available. The following considerations can help partners develop a realistic, tentative plan.

||| Choosing a location and time

The workshop should take place in a private room with a reliable Wi-Fi connection, as the investigation requires stable internet access. It is also helpful to have a projector, which allows facilitators to present and discuss the results with participants during the workshop.

When selecting a location, it is best to choose a space that is central and easily accessible by public transport. Hosting the workshop at a neutral and trusted institution, such as a university, trade union, or NGO, can also help build trust among participants.

Certain types of spaces should be avoided. These include open-plan meeting areas where privacy cannot be guaranteed, public places such as cafés, or office spaces within the company whose app is being investigated.

The timing of the workshop should also take workers' schedules into account. For example, food delivery workers often earn the most during lunch and dinner hours, so scheduling a workshop during these peak periods may reduce participation.

EXAMPLE 1		
One app, three workers		
Time	Activity	Duration
9.00 - 10.00	Set-up and warm-up	1 h
10.00 - 11.30	Group session (3 workers)	1.5 h
11.30 - 12.00	Wrap-up	30 min

EXAMPLE 2		
Three apps, one worker per app		
Time	Activity	Duration
9.00 - 10.00	Set-up and warm-up	1 h
10.00 - 11.00	Group session 1	1 h
11.00 - 12.00	Group session 2	1 h
12.00 - 13.00	Group session 3	1 h
13.00 - 13.30	Wrap-up	30 min

Estimating total workshop duration

To plan a workshop efficiently, you can estimate the total duration using the following approach:

- 1. Set-up and warm-up:**
Always allocate 1 hour at the start of the workshop. This covers room preparation and the introductory session with participants.
- 2. Group sessions:**
Participants are organised into small groups based on the app they use.
 - For each app, a data collection with a single worker requires approximately 1 hour.
 - If multiple workers use the same app, add 15 minutes for each additional worker.
- 3. Wrap-up:**
Reserve 30 minutes at the end of the workshop to discuss results and reflections.

Running parallel sessions

Our workshops are usually staffed by at least one technical expert and one facilitator. If multiple apps are being studied, it may be possible to run several group sessions in parallel. This requires additional space and staff. For example, if two adjacent rooms are available and two facilitators can supervise separate groups, multiple investigations can take place at the same time, which reduces the overall workshop duration.

Extended investigations

In some cases, the investigation may involve a longer data collection period. For example, it is possible to conduct a data capture lasting several hours or even up to 24 hours, or to include real work tasks such as accepting and completing delivery orders during the experiment. When this type of investigation is planned, the workshop timeline must be adjusted accordingly.

How to invite the workers?

Once the time, location, and tentative plan for the workshop have been set, you can reach out to workers with an invitation. Keep in mind that the plan may need to be adjusted once you know how many apps will be investigated and how many workers want to participate. Decide whether the invitation will come from Reversing.Works or from the partner organisation.

Preparing the invitation

The invitation should include the following information:

- ☐ Brief explanation of the workshop goals and why these are important
- ☐ Time, place, and approximate duration
- ☐ Compensation, including the minimum rate offered for participation
- ☐ Information about anonymity and consent
- ☐ Language in which the workshop will be conducted and whether translation will be available
- ☐ Names of the organisers and links to their websites
- ☐ Email or phone of a contact person for further inquiries
- ☐ Link to a website with a more detailed explanation (for example, the [Warsaw workshop page](#))

Things to consider when inviting workers

Timing: Send invitations at least one month in advance to allow workers to plan.

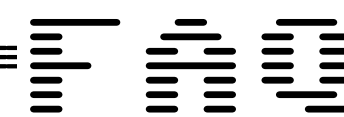
Targeting: Invitations can be sent to established networks or communities, or directly to highly engaged individuals.

Sign-up deadline: Mention limited spots or set a deadline to encourage prompt responses

Sending a reminder

A few days before the workshop, send a reminder email to participants. Include:

- ☐ Confirmation of the time, place, and expected duration
- ☐ Compensation details (amount and method, e.g., cash or invoice)
- ☐ Reminder that consent forms will need to be signed, and that participants can decide if and how their data will be used.



Questions frequently asked by platform workers

Workers may ask questions when receiving the invitation.
Some examples and suggested responses:

- ≡ **I have an active account, but I haven't worked for this company for months. Can I participate?**
As long as the account works and receives tasks, participation is generally fine
- ≡ **Do I have to perform work tasks during the workshop?**
Normally, tests involve simply logging in and navigating the app. Performing actual tasks is usually not required.
- ≡ **Is it a problem if the account is used by someone other than the registered owner?**
This can be an issue because consent is required from both the account owner and the person using it.

- ≡ **I have multiple apps on my phone—can we study them all?**
Yes, depending on time and technical feasibility.
- ≡ **What if my employer finds out about this? Can I be fired?**
We take your anonymity seriously and will not share identifying information without your consent. However, no process can guarantee zero risk. While it is technically difficult, in some situations an employer could work out who participated through other means.

How to decide the final plan of the workshop?

Once the outreach is complete and you know how many workers will participate and how many apps will be studied, it is time to design the final workshop plan. This allows you to confirm the schedule and duration to the participants.



The final plan should take into account:

- The **number of workers and the apps** they use
- The **total number of experiments** (e.g., multiple workers using the same app or a single worker with multiple apps)
- The **available space and facilitators**, which determine whether sessions can run in parallel

Example 3		
Two apps, five workers, six experiments		
Time	Activity	Notes
9.00 - 10.00	Set-up and warm-up	1 h preparation and introduction
10.00 - 11.30	Group session 1	Experiments 1-3
11.30 - 13.00	Group session 2	Experiments 4-6
13.00 - 13.30	Wrap-up	30 min final discussion

Suppose there are two apps with two workers each, plus one worker who uses both apps. This results in a total of five participants but six experiments. With only one room and one facilitator, sessions must be run consecutively.

Collection

The collection phase is where the investigations take place. Together with participating workers, we collect data generated by workplace apps and document how information is transmitted between the app, the company, and third parties. An investigation is the process of collecting, analysing, and reporting on a single app. Each investigation involves at least one experiment—a data collection session with an

individual worker—and may involve several experiments with different workers using the same app. Some investigations will produce clear findings, while others may yield limited or inconclusive results. This is a normal part of the research process. Here we summarise what happens during each module of the workshop:



Space Set-up and Warm-up – 1 hour

Space set-up

- Prepare phones: charge batteries, download the correct apps, and connect to Wi-Fi
- Set up computers and projector (check cables and adapters)
- Set up Wi-Fi (we provide our own router if Ethernet is available)
- Arrange tables and chairs

Warm-up

- Introductions of workshop partners and participants
- Overview of workshop goals and the relevance of the investigation
- Explanation of the method
- Distribution and explanation of consent forms



Group Session – minimum 1 hour

Introduction for workers – 10 minutes

- Explain the data collection procedure
- Ensure consent forms are signed

Login

- Workers log in with their credentials

Data grab for each worker – 15 minutes per worker

- Worker clicks through all functions in the app, video recording of the screen begins (~5 minutes)
- Traffic collection continues until total of 15 minutes is reached
- Repeat for each additional worker

On-site analysis – 20 minutes

- Project the results of one worker on the screen
- Explain interesting findings observed immediately
- Discuss observations with workers; collect their insights
- Compare results with what workers know from the employer
- Take notes on context and important facts mentioned by participants

Archiving – 10 minutes [break for participants]

- Save collected files
- Complete and save notes
- Ensure a physical or digital copy of the consent give is saved with data data
- Save the application APK file used during the analysis.



Wrap-up – 30 minutes

- Thank participants for their contribution
- Highlight the most interesting findings from the data collection
- Explain how the data will be analysed next
- Discuss next steps (report, online meeting, litigation)
- Execute payments in cash

Analysis

Some findings may already become visible during the workshop—for example, whether location data is tracked outside working hours or which third parties receive workers’ data. Other results require closer examination. After the workshop, we conduct a more detailed analysis of the collected materials. This allows us to review, verify, and interpret the findings. For a full explanation of our analytical approach, see our Handbook

Presentation of results

The results are shared according to the agreement with project partners. This may include a short summary report, a full analytical report, and/or access to raw materials such as recordings and network traffic data. Where appropriate, results can also be shared with participating workers.

Action

The next steps depend on what the investigation reveals and on the goals of the project. Possible follow-up actions include legal complaints, media engagement, organising efforts, or collective bargaining. These may be carried out jointly with Reversing.Works or independently by partners.

Follow-up session

Once the analysis is complete, partners may organise a follow-up session with participating workers. This can take place online or in person and provides an opportunity to discuss the findings in more depth.

Depending on the project, this session may also include legal experts, trade union representatives, researchers, or workers from other companies.

Strategic action

Partners can then decide on appropriate next steps. The evidence gathered during the workshop may support legal action, such as a complaint to a Data Protection Authority (DPA), or broader advocacy efforts, including public campaigns or collective bargaining initiatives.

Reversing.Works

We are Reversing.Works, a transdisciplinary research team working to expose and challenge algorithmic management in the digital workplace.

Reach out

staff@reversing.works
reversing.works

Publication Date: September 2026
Funding [European Artificial Intelligence & Society Fund](#)