

## Airtasker and the Australian freelance workers: The reflections on the gig economy

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the possibilities of gig economy and how mobile devices play a critical role in this. The ability of the Australian people to venture out in this idea and the way it takes shape through mobile devices have also been understood. Through a qualitative method of data collection, 5 Australian freelancers have been interviewed. The aspect taken into consideration is evaluation and examination of their use of Airtasker and similar apps that are accessible over mobiles. The studies also intended to understand the role played by the mobile devices in shaping the decision and action of Australian people venturing into the creative media section of gig economy. Through qualitative analysis, the findings of this study indicated that inclusion of the freelancing work with the freedom to travel and/or study makes it a better alternative than the full-time stable employment with limited leaves and time to work on one's hobbies. Moreover, freelancers have the flexibility to adapt their own timings and rates based on the works that they are taking into consideration. The freelance job opportunities through the use of mobile apps allow the receiving as well as the delivering end with the opportunity to finalize the gigs based on different parameters inclusive of time availability and preferences. However, there are issues concerning the ability of the freelancer to have a steady flow of income.

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### 1. Introduction

The trends related to the aspect of getting a degree and finding a job with a fixed salary have undergone a roller coaster ride in the modern society. The technological developments and the explosion in the Internet usage have led a large proportion of population other than musicians to look for 'gigs'. By gigs it refers to the fact that a large pool of skilled population prefers to work on their own, which in layman's terms refers to freelancing. The works of [Sundararajan \(2015\)](#) have picked lines from Hillary's speech, which suggest that the future lies in gigs and gig economy and there is a shift from the prospect of looking for full term employment with security, paid holidays and retirement benefits. Some of the start-ups like Uber and Airbnb further promoted this idea and spread the belief that anyone across the world can become an entrepreneur. Thus, the creative industry also got affected positively and

the number of freelancers has risen who are on the constant lookout of finding opportunities to use their creative skills ([Webster, 2016](#)).

#### 1.1. Gig economy, new media, and work opportunities

When in the year 2008, on September 15<sup>th</sup> one of the largest investment bank Lehman Brothers collapsed, it became evident that the economy has been doomed. Through the financial crises and the unfortunate loss of several jobs, the workers and the employees were faced with financial crunch and there came a time when the employed ones started fearing job loss. After this incident, the employees got extremely careful and also developed a constant worry about keeping their bosses happy. As highlighted in the works of [Hamilton et al. \(2017\)](#), the gig economy has been the result of the fears that surrounded the large pool of employees since the times of bank collapse and recession. This has led to the birth of the entrepreneurs and the freelancers who look for jobs at their own free will. Thus, the traditional economic systems have undergone a change and the integration of the modern technology has led to the rise of the websites and mobile

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applications used by freelancers to get contract-based jobs.

The rise of new media brings several threats to traditional media such as Youtuber, Blogger, and Instagramer. Nowadays, anyone could be the editor and/or actor. The home live cast, the online video as well as subscription television services are all threatening the traditional media (Gorman and McLean, 2009). At the same time, it's also allowed existing variety of media foams. Such as micro-influencer who shares their own interest in specific field frequently. With a shift in the working strategies and the economic model of gig economy, the new media and technology allowed every creative industry workers no longer tied with Organizations, but can become an independent existent. Sundararajan (2015) has highlighted that the inclusion of the practices related to the development of the mobile applications dwell on the fact that there is an upsurge in the number of mobile users. Moreover, the smartphones help the individuals stay connected through social media and also use various apps on the move (Hogan, 2017). Through the ability to receive regular updates and stay connected even while one is away from the computer, it gets easy to keep a track of the available opportunities and grab them before they are gone. Thus, it is a smart way to gather work opportunities through the use of gigs and related apps.

## 1.2. Airtasker

Airtasker is one of the most popular apps that have surfaced in Australia with the provision of the job opportunities and help to the consumers at both ends. Airtasker is the trusted community that provides people with their work to freelancer within a few minutes. It is usable through either its mobile app or the online network. The website and the app both are user-friendly and there is a simple dashboard where one can either post a task or browse through the tasks. The multiple offers that are posted online as against a response to the task helps the consumers find out the flexible staff at the best available rate. In the works of Manyika et al. (2016), it has been highlighted that the technological advancements have been responsible for bringing the service providers and the service receivers closer. This is observed in case of Airtasker as well wherein the individuals who work as a freelancer can look for a variety of opportunities based on their need and select them based on their preferences. This makes Airtasker is one of the several apps and websites that provides gig job opportunities in the gig economy.

## 2. Objective of this study

- Firstly, it aims to explore how Airtasker helps creative freelance workers to get jobs and earn money

- Secondly, the aim is to investigate the methods used by them in order to create a network with the potential clients
- Thirdly, it is aimed that the literature that exists in relevance to the gig economy and the mobile application usage for finding job opportunities is reviewed and gaps if any are identified
- Lastly, it is aimed that the opportunities and the challenges concerned with Airtasker and other similar apps are verified

## 3. Literature review

### 3.1. Conceptualization of 'gig economy' and 'creative media'

Before analyzing the role of mobile device over the behavior of creative media people of gig economy it appears necessary to have an understanding about the specifications of the gig economy and creative media. As for the gig economy, Friedman (2014) specified it as a typical kind of labor market or environment where job positions are available on temporary, on contract, or freelance basis rather than permanent job options. It has been specified by the King (2014) that this kind of system contains the processes where independent workers or individuals contract with the organizations are made as short-term engagements. In their views, it could be considered about the gig economy that it undermines the traditional concept of economy, which depends on full-time workers. Unlike the traditional full-time workers based economy, which rarely changes positions besides encourages building lifetime career, the gig economy promotes the self-employment of skilled people by engaging them in short duration commitments (Aloisi, 2016). These specifications about the gig economy projects it a system where organization and people prefer to work in short-term or temporary commitment than that of permanent or long term engagement with specific organization. The corresponding views of the scholars highlight the key attributes or specifications of the gig economy.

Another significant aspect of the study is the creative media industry. Defining the specifications of the creative media industry Dahlén (2005) specified that creative media industries are the typical kind of industries, which contains their roots in demonstration of personal talent, skill or individual creativity. Such aspects been supported by Dahlén et al. (2009) who defined the industry in context of its wealth and job creation ability which is especially dependent on the exploitation or generation of distinct kind of intellectual property. With the advancement in the information technology and rapid penetration of Internet within the public it became possible for the users to create and spread distinct kind of message, information or facts across variety of channels. For the creative media development and transfer or sharing across the people specific media are adopted as website development, photography or retouching of images,

print design, illustrations, film editing, sounds or music, etc. Regarding the creative media segment of the industry it has been propounded by the [Sefton-Green and Soep \(2007\)](#) that majorly following seven kinds of creative industry sectors exist, like art and craft, advertising and marketing, architecture, product, graphic or fashion designing, broadcast media (like TV, radio, films and photography), technological sectors (like IT, computer services, software, etc.), publishing, work presented in galleries, museums and libraries, and work or performances in art, visual arts and performances.

### 3.2. Trend of people venturing into gig economy and creative media

The presence of gig economy has been witnessed from several years while several of the reports indicate continuous increase in its presence across specific economies. Among the countries, America could be seen as the trendsetter and major contributor of transforming the concept of gig economy into reality. As per an estimate almost one third of the working population of the America is already working under some sort of third economy arrangements ([Kuhn, 2016](#)). Experts and scholars believe that this number is mere a start of the expansion of gig economy and it will surely increase in near future. Behind such a trendsetting, a great role has been played by the rapid digitization, breakthrough innovations within the information and communication technology, and growing preference within the people to work with autonomy, freedom and flexibility in working approach ([Webster, 2016](#)). Such aspects provide adequate base for encouraging the people to support the idea of gig economy and make active contribution in establishment, promotion and sustainability of the gig economy.

As per [Barzilay and Ben-David \(2016\)](#), as the global boundaries have got shrunk because of the modern digital world, now the possibility of working remotely also got increased substantially. These facilities have enabled the organization to hire the people for short-term contract or as freelance workers, where sometimes it not even required visiting the office place for work. [Aloisi \(2016\)](#) highlighted that a majority of the people or organizations are quite enthusiastic about the gig economy because of the win-win situation offered by it. As the employees can work with more freedom, autonomy and flexibility to work from home or any remote place facilitating greater work-life balance. While, at the same place organizations have privilege to select desired candidates from a whole lot of applicants and that too without any obligation to hire people in permanent job roles. Besides that technology has provided the base where both organization and individual could come along, discuss their needs and expectations, and work or coordinate effectively to perform various kinds of operational works.

Expansion of the gig economy has boosted the interest the people venturing in the creative media sectors of the industry. The rise in technology with rapid penetration of internet and handheld devices has encouraged several of the people to get involved in activities requiring the skill, talent across the virtual platform. As per [Kenney and Zysman \(2016\)](#), the key factors which support the present age trends of venturing in the creative media industry can be noted as: social media storming the workplace, companies relying on creative media for brand promotion, extension and value creation, and social media advertising hitting the stride or gaining popularity in present work. Such aspects caused substantial increase in the interest of youth to deploy the advanced information and communication technology, social media and own personal skills to create their own image within market, which attracts work for them.

In creative sector of the gig economy a significant portion of involvement is of those people who offer great sense of productive efficiency, creative skill and knowledge and availability as per the need of the employer ([Kenney and Zysman, 2015](#)). Such aspect increased the participation of the people within the creative media sector of the gig economy. Besides several of the online creative media tools and platforms emerging within the society which has increased the scope of creative media venturing of people. Several of the creative media people like photographer, broadcaster, programmers, ad agencies, etc. have started adopting the new age technology of communication or digital tools for performing creative work. The active adoption of creative media tools by the people has even caused evolution of new kind of creative media publishers, like bloggers, youtuber, tweeteraties, etc. Besides several of the creative media tools have come in existence, like Twitch, Livestream, and Priscope, which offers effective creative content development, testing and sharing with client or with community ([Highfield and Leaver, 2016](#)).

### 3.3. Factors influencing the trends of gig economy and creative media participation

From the above section it became clear that gig economy and creative media venturing trends have witnessed unprecedented boost within past few years. Within such trends great role has been played by several kinds of factors responsible in creation, development and sustainability of such trends. An attempt to find out the reasons or factors for that led to views of [Waitt and Gibson \(2009\)](#) that highlight the economic reasons as being one of the critical factors for the development of gig economy. For that they illustrated the case of employer who is unable to afford hiring full-time employees for their work requirement, which has seasonal, or situation variance. The option of hiring temporary or part-time employees enables the organization to find the needed resource for business, which could relieve employer from stress of busy time or timely

completion of specific project. Situation is quite common to business organizations irrespective of the industry, thus holding valid acceptance to logical expression.

Beside the point of employer [Waitt and Gibson \(2009\)](#) also specified the employee's aspect of consideration and specified that in general people look for more than one position to afford the lifestyle they actually want, and several of them change their career path many times within the lifespan. Thus, gig economy in that context appears more like a reflection of that trend but at comparatively large scale. The trends of adoption and expansion gig economy is getting higher and experts have prediction to witness unprecedented increase within that, as almost 40% of population working under the gig economy influence ([Winter, 2012](#)). Such predictions are not mere imaginations but based on the visible hints and relative forecasting, which indicates potential increase in number of short-term jobs. On prime factor for that is highlighted by [Roberts and Townsend \(2016\)](#) that workforce of this digital age is getting mobile while the work can be performed from anywhere. This aspect has caused decoupling of job and location, and provided opportunity for freelancers to select specific job, while employer gets more options to choose from the available eligible candidates.

Support to these claims was provided by [Gornostaeva and Campbell \(2012\)](#) who highlighted the significance of digitization in increasing the efficiency and reducing the manual work or workforce requirement. Apart from hiring the full-time employees now companies could get their work done with part-time and temporary workers. Not only is the availability of the temporary staff or digitization but financial pressure on organizations are also critical factors which influence the organization to hire temporary or part-time staff to meet their situational business needs. In addition to that it was highlighted by [Arvidsson \(2007\)](#) that in gig economy business firms get advantages to in terms of saving of resources like office space, benefits and training requirements. Even if they can hire the specific experts for certain projects their maintenance would be costly if appointed as full-time. For the freelancer the gig economy offers opportunity to search for better opportunities and achieve improvised work-life balance than the full-time job. Moreover, that the selection of job would be the choice of the person rather than he is being forced to do something.

### **3.4. Role of mobile technology in creative media industry of gig economy**

A key aspect of study is to explore the role played by mobile devices in influencing the decision and action of creative media people in gig economy. In that context it appears necessary to examine the scholarly view about the role of mobile technology in creative media industry of the gig economy. In views of [Duffy and Pruchniewska \(2017\)](#), the situation of

economic collapse has stimulated young people to think about the ways to make the work lighter, cheaper and more accessible. Meanwhile great help was provided by the big ideas of young people and their respective understanding of mobile technology. Through knowledge of mobile technology it became possible to interact, share info and perform defined tasks with utmost preciseness and efficiency without the need to visit the workplace. The mobile devices offered great accessibility to the employer especially in remaining connected with the temporary staff, establishing communication, and getting updated about the progress on assigned project. The concept of gig economy is not much new but the adoption of practices of assigning the freelance work through website or mobile app is comparatively new development. Hence, to provide nuanced understanding it need to provide stimulate research work in these emerging issue.

As per [Berg \(2016\)](#) the mobile devices help in getting or accessing the new gigs from nearly any place on earth and even in a more convenient manner than those other portable devices like laptops or tabs. The temporary or part-time working individuals usually get their individual gigs from the websites or mobile apps where some could be short and some could require detailed working or more time in explanation of the facts. Depending upon the interest and capability to work user can choose the job as per own convenience. With completion of one gig another becomes due and steady income flow. The mobile devices help in accessing and evaluating the gigs while doing any other tasks or without need to visit specific place or carrying bulky equipment. The mobile devices caused agility in assessment and evaluation of the gigs could enable to achieve effective flexibility, gain variety and pursue passion. The development of more efficient smartphone and computing devices even enables specific gig worker to execute the assigned requirements of tasks, like performing specific social media activity (blogging, tweeting, Facebook post, etc.), filling out small surveys, etc. ([Berg, 2016](#)). The active use of mobile technology is done within the creative media sector of gig economy to easily access the gigs, develop content from anywhere, being connected with employer, quickly get and send updates about the real-time project progress, and ensure effective connection with employer and relative community simultaneously.

### **3.5. Factors influencing mobile technology adoption in creative media**

The advancement in technology caused unprecedented change not only in personal life of the people but also transformed the ways of communication, nature of work and entertainment achieved by the people ([Carr et al., 2017](#)). The mobile technology could be acknowledged as a new wave of expansion of opportunities, which through support of Internet facilities is exploring the new avenues of work and growth opportunities. More

and more people are getting virtually connected through social media, while mobile technology enabling us to ensure effective connection among the people irrespective of the place and time. The mobile technology adoption in creative media sector induced people to adopt new skill and get new jobs. The mobile technology adoption trends are caused by a variety of factors, like being efficient alternative to traditional website, high usability, quick access and connectivity facilitation, and fast growing users of mobile technology.

According to Mayer (2015), the mobile technology appears as an effective alternative to traditional websites, which are accessible on desktop or laptops, but less interactive or adaptive to mobile phones. The app based on communications and content creations enables the people working in creative media to work efficiently and more effectively. The mobile technology offers great accessibility and connectivity convenience, thus offering effective usability to the people. Through mobile devices people can access the gigs available to them, evaluate them and accept or work on them as per their convenience and competence. Moreover, the connectivity offered by the mobile devices provides priceless value to the users.

But, amid of on-going technological revolution where the new smartphones are evolving each day where various new technological features are minimizing the issues and upgrading the usability of the mobile devices (Barzilay and Ben-David, 2016). Due to significant technological improvements the mobile devices became more efficient, effective and user-friendly. Now mobile devices perform various other functions besides calling facilities and offers almost equitable performance. The growing number of the mobile phone users has influenced almost every segment of the industry and creative media segment is not untouched of that. Several of the self-employed people are earning more than average earning rate by effectively capitalizing the opportunities prevalent in form of high mobile and online content users. Increasing mobile phone usage has though also strengthen the competitiveness among the content creators, and people with effective skills are often paid well in industry.

### **3.6. Mobile devices caused changes in the decision and action of creative media people**

Use of mobile devices has undoubtedly caused improvement in accessibility and connectivity of the users. However, it simultaneously influenced the decision-making activities and actions of the people, especially in creative media industry. The decision making activities including the decision related to the way the products and services are produced and delivered. It has also improved the variety of services as well as products available under the category of creative media. One example of this is the increase in the use of technologies and the rapid development and adoption of new technologies, which are both incremental and drastic

improvement in the field of creative media. As per Kenney and Zysman (2016) the extensive use of mobile devices within the creative media industry caused increase in competition between the content creators and made them to live at verge of delivering the best content to ensure survival or retain the user base. It means that creative content demand has increased at a rapid pace as the users like to associate with the creative media people who offer information or entertainment rich content to the user. Through the mobile devices content creator people could also get benefit to catch the market trend and accordingly develop the latest, entertaining and insightful content for the people. The mobile devices have therefore increased the accessibility and connectivity of the content creator, it offered privilege to skilled people to get new gigs related to content development for specific employer (Kuhn, 2016). Through mobile devices they can effectively check the new gigs and take decision on whether to accept the offer or not. By mobile device based on accessibility it became easier and fast to assess the offer, make the decision and take the action. Moreover, the mobile devices provided the ability to perform certain creative media related activities like video posting, Facebook posting, tweeting, blogging, etc. through mobile devices. Such aspects indicate the mobile devices effectiveness in improvising the actions and decision making capabilities of the creative media people.

Another area where there has been a significant change due to the mobile technology in creative industry of the gig economy is the earnings of the people. Due to the advent of the mobile technology, the creative industry has seen a mixed response to the earning potential of an individual. The income of an individual in creative media in a gig economy varies for a number of factors such as location, experience and the client base. Thus, the income levels vary greatly. In Australia, there are a significant number of workers in the creative media industry. According to a survey which was conducted by the Loop, it was found that out of the 1127 members around 43% of the freelancers were paid on a project basis while 37% were paid by the hour. The median hourly rate for graphic designers can range from AUD 30 to 75, for web designers it is from AUD 31 to 75 as well. For producers, the rate is AUD 25 to AUD 63, marketers and PR executives it ranged from AUD 22-69. Similarly creative and art directors and writers and journalist earn a similar range. The Directors and cinematographers earn the highest with AUD 40-120 based on the work experience along with the photographers who earn around AUD 55- 182. Thus, the income varies significantly.

Although there are good pay scales being offered to people working in the gig economy, yet there are some downsides of this industry as well. One of the downsides is the reduction in the incentives and the pay being offered to the people working in the gig economy, not only in the creative media industry but also in the other industries. Another major

disadvantage is that gig workers feel isolated from the employers regarding their future. At last another argument is that through such employment, the firms bypass the strict unfair dismissals lawsuits as the workforce is not a full time workforce (Friedman, 2014). Thus it is clear that there are potential downsides of this economy as well.

#### 4. Research methods

This study is to find the answer of the question that what role the mobile devices plays in influencing in influencing the decision and action of Australian people venturing into creative media domains of the gig economy. The phenomenological qualitative study is adopted to conduct in order to discover true inner meaning and new insights of influencing under gig economy from interviewer's "lived experience" (Waters, 2000). Conducting in-depth interview is to avoid limitation of phenomenological qualitative research and minimize the bias or error. The open-ended questionnaire is used to gather information which might be missed or overlooked. The result has analyzed from 5 creative industry freelance workers who are working as photographer, videographer and podcasters. Additionally, the qualitative method limitation for interview is interview bias. This bias arises from the interplay between interviewer and respondent. The voice, feature, gender, age, style of dress, or other nonverbal characteristic may have some unknown influence on a respondent's answer. The phenomenology research is flexible on research question designing. Thus, the interviews or questionnaire may conduct researcher's personal preference. Lastly, random sampling errors are not avoidable. Interviewees are mostly from Airtasker app, in other words, they may have some similarity and it will bring similar result to the research.

There are five creative workers who are targeted. All of them are residents of Australia who are

between 20 and 40 year's old. This set of interviewees is chosen because of their shared experience of being freelancer in creative industries at least more than one year. Four of interviewees are from Airtasker, the most used mobile app for artists (Mack, 2017). As well as fifth interviewee is discovered by snowball sampling methods during two-month periods. Interviewees who participate in research will get a gift card from researcher as a reward. However, it is voluntary and the interviewees may end their interview in the research at any time without risk or harm. In this study that all the personal information will not be shared outside of the university is going to be explained before the interview.

In this study the intention was to better understand how interviewee's freelance working experience affect their choice and actions as well as the influence on new media. Each interviewee has at least more than one year experience on freelance work in Melbourne. Data were collected through in-depth, audio-recorded interviews of five freelance workers, including three men and two women within 20-40 years old. Two of them are professionals in their field; two of them are amateurs and one student. The result is analyzed from both advantage and downside of affection to creative workers in gig economy. These results is narrowed down and organized. In addition, open-ended questionnaire is being conducted for extra information.

#### 4.1. Data analysis

Table 1 shows the respondents' profile. Participants are males and females, aged from 24 to 38; they represent the various occupations including birthday photographer, printing making drawler, professional podcaster, professional photographer, and amateur photographer. All of the respondents who participated in this study stayed in Australia.

**Table 1:** Demographic profile

| Participants Name | Age | Gender | Occupation   |
|-------------------|-----|--------|--|
| Heshan            | 24  | M      | Birthday photographer                                      |
| Michelle          | 26  | W      | Semi-professional photographer and Printing making drawler |
| Shuyang           | 28  | M      | Professional podcaster                                     |
| John              | 32  | M      | Professional photographer                                  |
| Anna              | 38  | W      | Amateur photographer                                       |

A qualitative approach provided rich description to this research by their lived experiences. The result of interview and questionnaire research show that due to uncertain income for freelance work, non-of them are considering stopping or stopping finding steady jobs. However, within those participants, four creative workers (80%) are considering keep freelance work in the future even if they have stable job. One of interviewee is going to stop his freelance work due to his personal reason. He said: "I am studying IT, for me it's a personal decision. So, I'm going to quit this job soon and find a stable job relative to IT (Shuyang, professional podcaster, age 28)".

John, a professional photographer, said: "If I have a studio in the future, I will keep using Airtasker (age 32)."

All of the interviewees started their creative work for interest, also childhood dream. Four of them (80%) are doing freelance work to support their income; only one of them is for interest. Moreover, all of the interviewees believe even with a number of clients bank and works, freelance work is not enough to support their daily life. A birthday photographer Heshan who have four years photography experience and one year Airtasker use experience said: "I am taking a gap year between study and work. I graduate from engineering last year. I'm looking for either do further study or going to the

workspace of engineering. So, in this gap year, I'm trying to build up my portfolio as freelance photographer (age 24)."

Michelle, a semi-professional photographer and printing making drawler also said: "It's not enough to support my life but good to build report or establish a good relationship with them, so that, hopefully in the future they can contact you again or pass your details on other clients, and then it comes down to you as a freelancer to make sure that you are actively applying yourself for jobs and building relationships and getting your name out there as much as you can, because can't rely on the Apps like Airtasker, Instagram or website to bringing those jobs for you one hundred percent (age 26)."

Anna, age 38, amateur photographer indicated: "I think lots of people using it for additional sources of income, as back up source of income. I think because of people are straggle with income, straggle with money, so they want become entrepreneur. The additional income helps me pay for my bills, gym memberships, for my classes. That's the benefit I will get".

Even though, the advantage of creative workers venture to gig economy also is oblivious. Hashan shows: "I really enjoy the travelling and looking to see new things, experiencing it and taking images to help you remember what happened. So, keep the moment, that's why I started and get the pay now. If I can go travel, it's a goal now."

The professional photographer John showed advantage of mobile devices in gigs. He has been doing photographer for 15 years and Used to have his own photography studio at Portugal. He said: "The mobile devices are supporting my life. Because as I said before, we can have the phone on us all the time and I'm not always on the computer, so, it helps that I'm getting the job on the phone or whenever on the trains. Because speed is very important nowadays, because people are an inpatients, for example, some time they don't wait for many offers to choose one, sometimes haven't travel offers enough to compare to choose."

Michelle also shows: "It's very easy, very straightforward, less time consuming and straight point." It is an advantage to creative workers.

#### 4.2. Innovation of the industry

The creative workers used to be required to find sponsor or employer to start their job. The number of artist's germination was cut down at this stage (Mack, 2017). But now, gig economy helps them to do their own choice. The epoch brings new media different appearance, this new platform and economy system become the nexus of creative workers to do their individual and creative works. It is innovation of the creative industry.

Shuyang said: "The advantage is you can do your own thing, such as you can choose your content. If you have a team fork with you, you can decide together. What's everybody wants or what the audience wants. If you have ever done radio station

like I did four years ago, there were lots of people having decision to make. Such as senior producer, advertisers, your leader, your boss, what they want was the thing actually matter."

Michelle shows: "Currently I have found a photography jobs on Airtasker, which have been successful and expanded different opportunities, such clients or jobs I never consider doing before. Otherwise, most of my business comes from Instagram, having my own account and website."

#### 4.3. Freedom on time and works

Flexible on time, is the most attractive advantage for creative workers. Creative workers can arrange their time and schedule, it is the attractive point of freelancers.

Heshan point out: "I can do any job I want, really. What I don't want, I wouldn't do; what I want, I would do. That's the advantage of it".

Michelle said: "The advantage is I can choose my own rates and time. I choose my client as well. Client can come up to me, but if the job is either too far or beyond my skill set, then I can choose to say no, politely. She also said: "Obviously, the reason I use mobile App because it is convenient and so flexible. I guess, I can be anywhere in the world or any time, also I can go online and start searching for job."

Anna illustrates: "So, for downsides it is not secured on income, but I do enjoy the flexibility. You could manage your time. If you want to go travel around, you could easily arrange your time. But now, if I want to take a month off, it is impossible. As freelancer, you are your own boss, it means I could set studio at home, so I don't have to wait. And all the money come through will come to my pocket, it means I got more control, I'm working for my-self."

Shuyang indicates: "And the interesting thing I found over the years was even I put my show to traditional radio, even they played it, it is not as popular as podcast platform. Apparently, different audience has different taste. People who are using traditional radio listen in the car or at home, and using cellphones have completely different taste Mobile Devices as Social Platform is to build up Client Base in the City Sphere.

There are 20,038 residents in Melbourne CBD (City of Melbourne, 2017). It is difficult to know every one or all the potential clients. However, with the mobile devices support, it can be easily find someone or match up an individual task to right person. It is a connection cable between clients and creative workers.

Michelle said: "Some clients have taking my business card and provide me offer for future works. It is good way of establishing future business and it is important that you do meet them. Because, in Airtasker, it might be a once of job, it's necessary to build a good suport and respect. Therefore, if you show them you got good personality and willing to work and then they might contact you for future work. You don't have to going to Airtasker again. It's building your own client base, so, instead of finding

new client each time, it's good to have a solid foundation. If client keep coming back to you, I guess it will become your main sources of income as well. I don't rely on just one App, we got multiple platforms to find jobs."

John also said: "The advantage is in terms of marketing because that way I don't need to spend money on marketing looking for customers. To find customers we need to rely on marketing, either from Instagram or Facebook. But on Airtasker, it prevents me from spending money in marketing."

#### 4.4. Speedy of the city life

Many interviewees illustrate that less time consuming and searching technics satisfied people who like in city life style. These provide conveniences to both creative worker and clients.

Michelle said: "On the apps I can pinpoint specific job I'm looking for, such as photographer. Also, I can read through the requirement of the job and only apply for the job I am interested in so that doesn't waste anyone's time. It's efficient enough for me to use instead of calling people or emailing people. (The information) It's all there, I just need to go through, have a look. Again, it's very easy, very straightforward, less time consuming and straight point."

John showed: "It's easier on that way. For example, Airtasker, the mobile is very important. The person who post a job, doesn't wait for many offers, also do not have patience to wait for or response. Especially nowadays, everybody has a cellphone on them 24/7, everyone have five minutes break to check their messages. Speed is very important, in the city; people are impatient all the time. For example, sometimes they don't wait for many offers to choose one, sometimes haven't travel offers enough to compare to choose."

#### 4.5. The challenge

##### 4.5.1. Limited personal sources

From above result, being freelancer has many advantages to creative workers. However, it also has downsides like any other things. Power of group or organization can't be ignored, such as Murdoch's empire (Lisners, 2013), it can completely subvert the facts. As freelancer, they don't belong to any organization, company or group. Thus, there will be limitation on individuals as well as shared spaces. This also effects on their income as well.

"I miss studio. Because we have more ability to do photo shoot and attract lots more customers to the studio itself. Especially without studio they offer so little, some of them only offer 70 dollars, which cost me only can rent studio for two hours. If I have studio, I will be able to take those kind of job (rent out studio) said John.

Shuyang showed: "Locally, I can't find perfect place for recording. I used to have my own recording

room, but now, I have to redecorating everything and design the sample stuff. I have to do everything under arduous conditions. Another thing is, as other creative jobs, you have to generate your ideas. It is hard to maintain the job always being attractive and have different points of view. You have to think it all the time."

##### 4.5.2. Competition on single creative works

From the result it can be seen that the biggest challenge is competitive in any single job. Especially for those amateur or beginners. On Airtasker as example, after clients post the job requirement, participants can offer a job and revise the price that they can offer. However, the challenge is generally the price that clients provide is either lower than market price or they will accept the lower price offer.

Heshan said: "The most challenging thing out of website and apps is there are lots of people applying for the same job. Lots of people throwing lower numbers (bit the job with cheaper pay). When you apply for job as amateur or hobbies level, it is quite competitive. Because lots of people applying for it. You don't know what the other offers are. So you don't know yours is equal or lower than the others, you don't know if you can bit it. So far, I only got two jobs in a year."

Michelle also indicated: "Some issues I have faced are not enough jobs out there and too competitive some times. Especially on Airtasker, you are competing with other people who also have the same skills but maybe offering more or maybe the price are much cheaper or maybe they can start immediately. Those are the challenges I face, try to compete not only finding jobs but also with others in the creative filed as well."

John said: "the competition is the difficulty I found on Airtasker. Anybody could compete there, so, the only hopeful reason that they are going to choose me I think is my photo will stand out against beginners.

As beginner in photography, Anna found it is much harder than others. She said: "I started Airtasker for one year, but it's really competitive. I found I'm more successful in Gumtree. I only get two jobs on Airtasker within one year period."

##### 4.5.3. Value reduction on creative works

The competitive of creative works also reduces value of single creative works. For example, in order to win a task, participants have to provide lower price than market charges. However, in other words, this brings significant cons to creative industry.

John got his personal understanding to this phenomenon, he said: "When I started Airtasker, I charge 50 dollars for six hours, three hours for birthday party photography. Although it is boring because you don't know any one, I also took three more hours for editing. I only did because it was my first job (on Airtasker) and for five star rating. The



main App I use is Airtasker. Sometimes it's have a wedding shooting; sometimes it's about small jobs, such as birthday parties. I have been using Airtasker for three years. I found Airtasker is ridiculously competitive, I'm having problem, because when I do wedding photography, as photographer I will charge for 2000 dollar, but on Airtasker it is impossible."

Michelle also has deep feeling for it, she said: "What they want, how much they are willing to spend and that's the problem with creative industry. A lot of people believe that they can pay cheaper for creative jobs, such as architect, photography, landscaping or interior designing. Anything like that, a lot of people believe they can spend a little bit less and have more, which is often not the case."

Anna believes: "I think sometimes people who post the job, want to provide more cheaply. Then they can beat the job easily."

Heshan said: "Generally, customers don't really require for experience, always go with cheaper choice. So, those who only have few years' experience have to compete with those who have no experience and offer lower pay. Freelancer is great when you are in the university, but outside of it doing that full time as competitive as when you were at university. Because, everyone can buy camera these days, it costs only couple hundred dollars. Anyone can buy it; anyone can use it to make money."

"Because people are tell how much they want to pay. Even photographers, they will offer less than customer actually ask. I had a friend, every time somebody ask 500 dollar for the wedding, he will offer 450 dollar, so make sure will get the job. But consequence for that is creative market is going lower and lower and now we have people provide wedding photography for 300 dollars." Said John.

But Michelle also found: "Some of them want cheap price over quality, but then some people still willing to pay quality over the cheap work. So that is the conflict, between what is the client want and what we can provide."

#### 4.5.4. Unstable income

Working as freelancer on weekend to earn extra income or pay for bill is the result from this research. However, the disadvantage for freelancer, the instability or transitory income also cannot be ignored. Within all the participants, no one can answer average annual or monthly pay for freelance job.

Heshan said: "I won't be able to tell you, because jobs are very frequent. The highest amount was 250 dollars for 4 hours photographer job. The lowest amount was only 100 dollars for two hours as photographer and 300 dollars for 80hours as videographer. I am living with parents now and they are providing shelter and food. But, if I'm living by my own, it is not enough at all."

John also said: "I prefer photography, because it could earn lots of money especially on weekend. But problem for photography is it is not something

stable. I might get job or I might not. During winter, wedding photography does not work."

However, Anna gives positive comments: "If the weekend income (freelance income) could become surer, more secured income. I would like to cut down my every day work. But, biggest benefit for every day job is secure income, as secure as it can be. Nothing can be guaranteed today. I know if I go there Monday to Friday, my income pack will come every fortnight. But photography, whether today or future, after finishing my online course become as qualified photographer, photography income is always very up and down. You could have good month that lots of money is coming, but you also have bad month."

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

Through the literature reviewed and the interviews conducted, it has been found that the gig economy is the trend that is here to last. The main reasons behind the economic shift have been the instances of recession and collapse of the investment bank. It has given rise to the world of freelancers who look forward to work on their free will without the fear of losing their jobs. This also brings chance to those media industries. The fact that they have the freedom to choose the job that they want to do and reject the ones that they do not like supports the relevancy and preferential influence of the gig economy. As observed in the interview, the rise in technology with rapid penetration of internet and handheld devices has encouraged several of the people to get involved in activities requiring the skill, talent across the virtual platform. Moreover, through the interviews conducted, it has been found that the inclusion of the freelancing work with the freedom to travel and/or study makes it a better alternative than the full-time stable employment with limited leaves and time to work on one's hobbies. The freelancers can study and work all at the same time with the ability to bear their expenses through their own earnings (Hogan, 2017). Additionally, it has been found that the freelancers have the flexibility to adopt their own timings and rates based on the works that they are taking into consideration. The freelance job opportunities through the use of mobile apps allow the receiving as well as the delivering end with the opportunity to finalize the gigs based on different parameters inclusive of time availability and preferences. Furthermore, it can be concluded that behind such a trend setting a great role has been played by the rapid digitization, breakthrough innovations within the information and communication technology, and growing preference within the people to work with autonomy, freedom and flexibility in working approach. The employees or the free souls as they can be called, can work with more freedom, autonomy, and flexibility to work from home or any remote place, which facilitates greater work-life balance.

However, there are issues concerning the ability of the freelancer to have a steady flow of income.

There are also certain instances wherein the freelancers are looted and they are not given the promised compensation for the jobs done by them. There are times when there is no work for them and they are left with no source of income generation. It is also verified that the freelancers are required to create their own workspace, which can be a financial crunch in certain times of need. The freelancers also lose focus on the long-term goal and are filled with a strong emotion in the times of ample amounts of work. It has also been found that the freelancers have to wait for their payments long after they have delivered the work, which leaves an air of disappointment and fear of losing the earned money. Since the gig economy is on a rise there are a number of freelancers coming up who offer the similar services at a cheaper rate leading to intense competition in the market. Thus, despite the advantages there are certain drawbacks, which limit the motivated freelancers from taking a plunge.

## 6. Recommendation

Through the understanding of the different parameters and by weighing different pros and cons of gig economy and importance of new media foam allowing mobile devices in providing work opportunities, following recommendations have been identified:

- In order to limit the fraudulent activities, the freelancers should only accept offers from the consumers who have a detailed profile
- It is recommended that the freelancers make use of authentic payment receiving options and also ask for a 50 percent deposit before proceeding with the work
- There should be a check on the apps that are used by the freelancers in order to prevent themselves from falling into a trap
- It is also suggested that there is a copyright application in order to prevent others from stealing works uploaded by freelancers as part of their portfolios
- Earning while studying is the best option and therefore the freelancers should constantly look for ways to enhance their skills to survive in the competitive world
- It is also recommended that the media should help individuals and experts get their preferred jobs. That integration should be strengthened and refined for better results.

## 7. Further scope of research

The further research work can take into consideration the stride of the freelancers and their ability to sustain a living throughout their lives using freelancing. It has also been understood that the inclusion of the literature from the different countries and the use of different apps be compared and analyzed for the development of an enlightening

report. Furthermore, it is suggested that the freelancers who have worked for over several years are taken into consideration and are interviewed for their success proportions through gigs. The future research needs to identify the inclusion and importance of the media substance and digital acknowledgement of the practices. Finally, an additional study of the role played by the digital media and social networks in getting people stay in touch with profitable projects should be conducted.

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