Ride and Prejudice
Design and Bias on Peer-to-Peer Platforms

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how might platform design strategies mitigate or exacerbate user-to-user biases?
Uber And Lyft Position Themselves As Relief From Discrimination

Eliminating destination bias was initially an unintended byproduct of the ride-sharing apps — now it’s quickly being marketed as a feature.

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a concept map of platform strategies that can mitigate or exacerbate user-to-user bias

based on review of ~40 platforms across multiple contexts

informed by research on online community regulation
company-level diversity + inclusion
community composition
community policies + messaging
prompting + priming
matching, searching, sorting, filtering
presentation + authentication of personal information
reputation, reliability, ratings
data quality + validation
reporting + sanctioning
measurement + detection
A Diverse Workforce, A Diverse Community

Airbnb realizes that becoming a more diverse company will make it a stronger company. Airbnb wants to ensure its workforce is more diverse and has work to do to achieve this goal. The company will implement the Diversity Rule, a new Airbnb policy that will mandate that all candidate pools for senior-level positions include women and candidates from underrepresented backgrounds. Airbnb will also expand efforts to bring economic opportunities to minority-owned business and encourage more people from underrepresented populations to use Airbnb.
community policies + messaging

Anti-Discrimination Policies

Discrimination against passengers or drivers on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, or sexual orientation is not allowed, and can result in deactivation from the platform.

Lyft is committed to maintaining an inclusive and welcoming community, and our mission is ensuring who need rides most can access them. Refusing passengers with service animals is a violation of our terms of service. Discrimination of any kind may result in immediate deactivation.
matching, searching, sorting, filtering

User Feed

My Type Filter
Online Now Filter

Edit My Type Filter

Ethnicity

- Asian
- Black
- Latino
- Middle Eastern
- Mixed
- Native American
- White
- South Asian
- Other
- Not Specified
presentation + authentication of personal information
reputation, reliability, ratings
First, describe the incident.

Focus on what happened and save any descriptions of people involved for the next step.

Describe clothing from head to toe. Police say this is the most helpful to neighbors (and helps avoid suspecting innocent people).

When race is included, you must include at least 2 of the highlighted fields. (Why?)

- Hair: Hat, hair (include color and style)
- Top: Shirt, jacket (include color and style)
- Bottom: Pants, skirt (include color and style)
- Shoes: Shoe, brand (include color and style)

Now give the other basics

- Age: 32
- Build: 
- Race: black

Tell neighbors that you have already reported this to the police

Add this person
big thanks to our research team!
Jevan Hutson, Jessie Taft, Olivia Wherry