The Behavior, Information, and Technology lab (BITLab) at Michigan State University is hiring up to 7 full-time undergraduate students for a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program this summer. We are looking for motivated students interested in gaining research / internship experience and willing to learn about new technologies. The BITLab works on a wide range of projects that encompass Computer Science, Human Computer Interaction, and Social Science.

As an interdisciplinary lab, we provide students with the opportunity to work on research projects with the potential to improve our understanding of how technology and people affect each other. The majority of our research projects are team-based and involve both technical computer science and social / behavioral components. Students working in our lab will gain experience working in an interdisciplinary team. Students will also have the opportunity to help guide the research being conducted and the flexibility to design and test their own solutions to problems.

The following lists some example projects that an applicant could participate in. To see more BITLab projects please see our website at: http://bitlab.cas.msu.edu

- **Security Behavior** - What do people do to protect their computer and data from security threats? Is what they do effective? In this project we are tracking the different types of security behaviors people engage in on their own computers and determine how effective those behaviors actually are.

- **Online Communities** - How do people decide whether they should participate in an online community like Facebook, Wikipedia, or Reddit? What do they pay attention to? What information do they seek out? In this project, we are trying to understand decision-making about online participation, and how these communities grow and change.

- **Algorithmic Curation** - What is the role of filtering and recommendation algorithms in shaping what we read online from sources such as Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites? How does this affect what we contribute and communicate about online? In this project we are working to understand the social and technical forces that shape information access and use in an increasingly personalized online environment.

- **Crowdfunding** - What makes crowdfunding websites, like Kickstarter.com, work so well? We are investigating how these websites function, including trying to understand how different rules on these sites affect whether people contribute, when donors are willing to contribute to a project, and whether the project succeeds.

**Computer Science positions**

We are interested in hiring undergraduate computer science students who are currently enrolled in a 4 year university and have taken at least two programming classes. Applicants must be willing to learn about new programming languages and technologies. Research is about pushing boundaries; we expect that the majority of students will need to learn at least one new skill to complete their project. Some examples of programming topics a student might get to learn are: Firefox plugin building, Python, Web Development, data visualization, Windows programming, and apps for mobile devices.
Social/Behavioral positions

We are interested in hiring undergraduates who are currently enrolled in a 4 year college/university and are excited about understanding how people think, behave, and interact with technology. Applicants should be interested doing research; previous research experience and/or coursework in research methods or statistics is strongly desired. An ideal candidate is interested in taking an idea and running with it. Research is about learning new things and pushing boundaries; we expect that the majority of students will need to learn at least one new skill to complete their project. Projects students work on may include designing and running experiments, interviewing, analyzing qualitative data, and survey development.

More Details

All positions are full-time (40 hours per week) research positions in MSU’s College of Communication Arts and Sciences. Positions will begin on May 19, 2014 and continue through July 25, 2014 (10 weeks). All positions will pay between $15-$20 based on experience, which will total $6000-$8000 for the whole summer. All students will be assigned a faculty member as their advisor for the summer. Additionally, students will work with either a doctoral student or faculty mentor on a day-to-day basis while completing the project. Students will decide on a project in consultation with their mentor and advisor, and will carry out that project over the course of the summer. By the end of the summer they should produce a finished product (poster, paper, software, etc.) that they can be proud of, show to future employers or admissions committees, and present at an end-of-the-summer student research symposium. Periodically through the summer there will be additional activities to help train students in research, ethics, and the practicalities of doing research as a career (e.g. applying to graduate school).

To apply, please send a resume, an unofficial copy of your transcript, and a brief statement of interest to reu@bitlab.cas.msu.edu. We will begin reviewing applications on March 24th, 2014 and will continue until the positions are filled. The statement of interest should include why you are interested in one of these positions, what you are hoping to do for a career, and how this position will help achieve those goals. Additionally, if there is a specific topic or specific types of work you are interested in, include that also.

Due to the requirements of the funding, undergraduate student participants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States or its possessions. An undergraduate student is a student who is enrolled in a degree program (part-time or full-time) leading to a baccalaureate or associate degree. Students who are transferring from one college or university to another and are enrolled at neither institution during the intervening summer may participate. Students who have received their bachelor’s degrees and are no longer enrolled as undergraduates are generally not eligible to participate.

A flyer is available.