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Steven Rohall and Li-Te Cheng

1 Rogers Street

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Dear Mr. Rohall and Mr. Cheng:

I am interested in your web application developer internship position which you posted to MIT’s UPOP job list.  In particular I am interested in building a next-generation discussion system.

I’ve been thinking about how people communicate for a long time.  The first website I built was a question and answer site; it never went anywhere, but it got me interested in the field.  In 2007, when the Facebook platform first came out I built an application, GridView, which quickly rose to be one of the top 100 apps on Facebook, peaking at 1.3 million users.  My first year at MIT, I worked at the MIT Media Lab on a research project to see if seeing what your friends buy influences what you buy.  Last summer, I worked at German national railway, Deutsche Bahn, designing the user interface for one of their new iPhone apps and prototyping a GIS service to pull data out of silos.  This month, I am working at a financial software firm where we are thinking about idea marketplaces (my boss actually worked at IBM research in the 90s).  In addition, I may start on a Sloan research project to see if the news people read in their news reader biases their political views this upcoming semester.

I am both a management and computer science major, with a particular interest in how people communicate and collaborate.  I’ve paid close attention to this where I’ve worked in the past, and I think formalizing these thoughts at IBM research in Cambridge will be a great experience.  I am not interested in computers solely as a mathematical machine, but as a tool for humans to use to boost productivity and creativity.

I have worked with jQuery and Django somewhat, as well as with PHP, HTML, JavaScript, CSS, MySQL extensively.

I hope that we can get some time to talk about whether I would be a good fit for the summer at IBM.

–Michael Plasmeier