

Open Source Community Specialist (Interim)

We are hiring for a short-term position with [Children Helping Science](#) (CHS) and [Psych-DS](#), two open source projects hosted at MIT. This is an interim position, covering a parental leave absence with hand-off periods on either side. The Community Specialist will support the day-to-day operations of these projects, which involve working with researchers to facilitate their projects, project management with the Psych-DS/CHS team, and working with MIT administrative staff to keep things running smoothly. A part-time (at least 20 hours/week) version of this role will focus on these core duties, while a full-time position will also have some latitude to become involved in additional research, community, or infrastructure projects.

Because both projects involve working closely with researchers to understand and implement the exact requirements of their studies/datasets, this job is envisioned for someone with graduate-level experience in psychological research, but open to recent graduates or people who are preparing to enter a PhD program. The position will run from December 2023 to Summer 2024, and so would be ideal for someone who is currently looking for work and starting another role for the 2024-2025 academic year. There is some flexibility on the starting timeline, but the candidate *must* be available for at least some regular hours during December 4-22, 2023, for onboarding and establishing processes for working with the rest of the team. Compensation will be consistent with MIT pay scales (which reflect cost of living for the Cambridge, MA region) and the candidate's qualifications and experience. All work for the position can be done remotely, but MIT requires that the person hired be both able to work and physically located in the United States.

About the projects

CHS is an online platform for online studies with babies & children currently in use by researchers at over 100 institutions, with a participant pool of over 10,000 families. In addition to maintaining the website/software, the CHS team also provides training & support for researchers using the platform, organizes study peer review, and works with a variety of collaborators on both research and infrastructure projects. Among other goals, CHS is currently working toward a large software release that will expand CHS capacity to support mobile studies and a broader range of data collection, accompanied by work with the researcher community to ensure that these tools are usable and accessible.

Psych-DS is a new data specification designed to help researchers converge on standard practices for organizing, documenting, and sharing our datasets in the behavioral/social sciences. Current work (along with MIT software staff and volunteer open source contributors) focuses on building validation and other software tools for Psych-DS, and on working with researchers to build datasets in order to test and create training materials for these tools.

Specific duties

- Work with researchers to set up and troubleshoot projects using both the CHS platform and the Psych-DS standard
- Conduct internal review of CHS studies and collaboratively design solutions for studies being adapted from other platforms
- Curate example Psych-DS datasets and work with software engineer to clarify how specification requirements are communicated
- Attend daily standup meetings and assist with project management (e.g. github issue tracking)
- Improve documentation and prepare new training materials for researchers
- Respond to timely issues such as feature releases and site outages by coordinating with the software team and communicating with the research community
- “Triage” communications with collaborators and MIT staff to ensure that all enquiries are handled smoothly
- Prepare internal progress updates to track project milestones and software usage

Requirements

- Bachelor’s degree or equivalent experience in developmental psychology or a related field
- Experience conducting psychology research online, ideally with the Children Helping Science/Lookit platform
- Knowledge of experimental methods including study design, stimulus construction, data management, and statistical analysis/data processing pipelines
- Familiarity with some of: Github, R, Javascript, ReadTheDocs, Lookit, JSPsych, BIDS
- Experience contributing to open source projects, in any capacity
- Strong communication and collaboration skills, with the ability to work effectively in remote settings with researchers, software developers, other university staff, and with families of children.

(This is meant to give a sense of the kinds of skills that would be most helpful to a person doing this job; you should not refrain from applying if you are missing one of the exact items above)

How to apply

Please send an email directly to mekline@mit.edu with a cover letter, CV, and the contact information for two professional references. (References will not be contacted until after candidate interviews.) Candidates should apply as soon as possible, with review expected to begin November 13th.

MIT is an equal employment opportunity employer. We value diversity and strongly encourage applications from individuals from all identities and backgrounds. All qualified applicants will receive equitable consideration for employment based on their experience and qualifications, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin. See MIT's [full policy](#) on nondiscrimination. [Know your rights](#).

Employment is contingent upon the completion of a satisfactory background check.

MIT considers equivalent combinations of experience and education for certain jobs. All candidates who believe they possess equivalent experience and education are encouraged to apply.