December 6, 2018

To the management at Filter Digital:

We are the Research Assistants and Program Coordinator working for Filter Digital on-site at Facebook Reality Labs (formerly Oculus Research) in the Seattle-Redmond area. Inspired by Filter's own company values, we have decided to **be courageous** and **take change into our own hands** by standing together in proposing changes to improve our working conditions.

We take pride in the vital contributions we make to the cutting-edge AR/VR research taking place at Facebook Reality Labs. However, we are also struggling to make ends meet without equitable pay and benefits. Many of us work second jobs, have subpar living arrangements, and/or cannot afford necessary medical care for ourselves and our families. We barely make enough to cover our necessary living expenses, let alone contribute to any savings. Many are simply one emergency away from possible homelessness.

As you know, the work we perform is a critical component of the overall mission of Facebook Reality Labs. The RAs and Program Coordinator work alongside full-time research scientists, engineers, developers, and technical program managers to plan, set-up, and implement a variety of complex user studies. This work includes writing initial study protocols, piloting and testing study protocols, writing code for studies, writing and submitting regulatory documents in accordance with legally-mandated deadlines, piloting new prototypes and equipment, recruiting and scheduling participants, moderating user study sessions, storing/cleaning data, handling sensitive safety/confidentiality procedures, writing up-to-date documentation on proper use of data collection equipment/prototypes, and much more.

Because we use confidential early prototypes and complex data collection equipment in our user studies, our RA roles require specialized skills and knowledge beyond what is typically required of RAs in more traditional user research settings. These skills are absolutely essential for maintaining participants' safety while collecting the high-quality data necessary for our Research Scientists to continue their work. Without the RAs and Program Coordinator, the user studies program at FRL would be unable to function.

In light of this, we are united in collectively calling for the following changes:

Free ORCA Cards

In alignment with the benefits provided to Facebook employees and other vendor services at Facebook (e.g. Facebook Cafeteria Workers), we should be provided with a free ORCA card for commuting to and from work. Travelling for work is a significant cost burden for RAs. Because of the well-documented housing crisis in our area, many of us cannot afford to live near where we work. We also cannot afford the expenses of driving to work (e.g. car payment, tolls, gas, maintenance, etc.), making us reliant on public transit as our main source of transportation. With the addition of new user studies buildings in both Seattle and Redmond, free Orca cards are an especially critical necessity.

11 Paid Holidays per year (while maintaining 10 days of PTO)

Facebook closes its offices to employees for 11 holidays per year, but RAs only receive paid time off for 5 of these holidays. During these office closures, we effectively can't work (e.g. external participants are not allowed inside the building, no remote access to key confidential documents and data, other employees that are necessary for running our user study are not present). This forces us to (1) take unpaid days off, or (2) use 6 out of our 10 days of PTO to cover the income we lose during these breaks. Because of this, we should be provided with paid holidays in alignment with Facebook's paid holiday schedule.

5 days of sick leave per year (while maintaining 10 days of PTO)

RAs and Coordinators on-site at FRL have no sick leave and must use PTO when they miss work due to illness. After accounting for unpaid holidays, we have very little PTO left to cover sick days. This puts us in a position where we continue to work while sick, as we cannot afford to stay home. This negatively affects not only our health, but the health of our co-workers and research participants. Because of this, we are asking for a minimum of 1 hour of sick leave for every 40 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year. This is a more than reasonable request and is consistent with rates established by sick leave laws in Seattle and neighboring cities.

Wage Increases - The current starting hourly pay for RAs is $22/hr, while the starting pay for User Studies Program Coordinator is $26/hr. This is well below average when compared to Research Assistant and Program Coordinator pay at competing tech companies. It is also not a livable wage in King County. Many of us work second jobs to make ends meet, live in substandard housing arrangements, and forgo medical care due to cost. Because of this, we propose the following hourly rate increases:

- RA 1 starting pay of $30/hour minimum, with possible raises to $32/hr after six months
- RA 2 starting pay of $34/hour minimum
- User Studies Program Coordinator starting pay of $36/hour minimum

The changes outlined above should be implemented while maintaining all other current levels of benefits (including healthcare costs) and should apply to Research Assistant and Program Coordinator roles across all SOWs between Filter and Facebook Reality Labs.

We respectfully request a written response from Filter by EOD December 21, 2018. Because we are asking for these changes collectively, we request that Filter address us collectively in any correspondence regarding this matter. To ensure information regarding these changes is communicated accurately on both ends, we would also like to discontinue our individual check-in calls during the two weeks between the delivery of this letter and the requested response date.

As we have learned from Filter's own company values, **honesty isn't always easy, but it is always necessary.** We've taken your advice to **be courageous** in sharing our struggles and proposing necessary solutions. And now we hope that you will **open your mind to new ways** and **do what you know is right.** After all, **when one of us succeeds, we all do.**

Sincerely,

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