Tianchi (Maverick) Mo

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Dear Researcher,

I am a computer science PhD student at Stony Brook University. I will graduate this summer, and I am currently hunting for a full-time job.

I have cerebral palsy, which causes me severe physical disabilities. For example, I cannot stand or sit without support or hold things in my hand; I can use only one finger when typing, and I cannot use the dictation input effectively because of my dysarthria.

My research area for the PhD degree is applied data structures and system algorithms (I have attached my resume/CV for your reference). However, during my job search, my interest in accessibility-related jobs (e.g., a postdoctoral researcher position) grew because I realized that, **in the area of accessibility and assistive technology, I could turn my disability into an asset to make the world a bit nicer. This is a career field I really can and hope to devote myself to.**

I would like to ask if there is a chance that I could join your team as a full-time assistant researcher or postdoc. I consider myself a qualified candidate for accessibility/assistive technology research because:

First, I have a wide range of knowledge in computer science. I am experienced in Python/C/C++/Java/Shell coding. I did a perfect job in all my graduate courses, including Machine Learning, Database, and Data Science. The projects on applied data structures and algorithms I participated in during my PhD career equipped me with good research and collaborating skills. All these experiences should enable me to design, develop, analyze, and optimize accessibility and assistive technology, and I am also a quick learner. Therefore, professionally, I am confident in switching my area.

More importantly, my own disabilities have given me insight ("field knowledge") into what is really needed for people living with physical disabilities. For example, I am interested in assistive technology that helps people with upper extremity impairment to use electronic devices with less suffering since, in my daily life, the typical layout of the keyboard and trackpad on the laptop gives me a lot of pain because it is too wide for me; and because I can't fully extend my arms, I must pull the laptop very close to me, which makes my eyes hurt easily. I also hope to participate in voice recognition projects because my dysarthria always leads to a lot of errors in voice recognition, and fixing them is even more painful than using manual typing 😆. I know people with dysarthria are highly underrepresented in voice recognition research, and that's why I am very interested in making voice input less biased.

If possible, I hope we can have an online meeting so you can know more about me. I sincerely hope to have a good chance to enter the world of accessibility or assistive technology research and apply my passion, professional CS background, and life experience to help other people living with physical challenges by improving their quality of life. **If you are interested in me and want to know more about me from a third party, please contact my PhD advisor, Professor Michael Bender (bender@cs.stonybrook.edu), and my dissertation committee chair, Professor Steven Skiena (skiena@cs.stonybrook.edu).** They are more than willing to talk with you about me.

If I am not lucky enough to work with you, I would still appreciate your advice and suggestions because I know you are a top explorer in the area of accessibility and assistive technology. If you know anyone interested in working with people with cerebral palsy or any place hiring people with disabilities to do accessible computing-related research, or if you have any other suggestions, please let me know. Your advice will be highly valuable to me and deeply appreciated.

Many thanks for reading my letter.

Sincerely,
Tianchi (Maverick) Mo