ISD | Institute for Strategic Dialogue

JOB DESCRIPTION – APPLIED AI / DATA ENGINEERING INTERN

Role	Applied AI / Data Engineering Intern		
Reports to	Senior Digital Methods Manager	**Direct reports**	N/A
Budgetary responsibility	None	**Resource responsibility**	None
Safeguarding	None	**Key relationships**	Digital Analysis Unit, Research teams
Contract	4-6 months (20-40 hours / week depending on candidate availability)	**Location**	Remote in US, US East Coast preferred
Salary	$20/hr	**Level**	Intern

About ISD

ISD is a fiercely independent 'think and do tank' dedicated to safeguarding individual rights, democratic process, national security and public safety against the rising tide of authoritarianism and extremism globally.

For 20 years, ISD has been at the forefront of analyzing, exposing and combatting all forms of terrorism, extremism, foreign interference, digital manipulation and authoritarianism, helping equip institutions, individuals, communities and the private sector with the tools, policies and skills to achieve impact at scale. We have innovated and scaled sector leading policy and operational programs–on and offline–to push back the forces threatening democratic processes and cohesion around the world today.

We partner with governments, cities, businesses and communities to turn cutting-edge data and insight into action; trialing and delivering evidence-based solutions across society; and empowering those that can impact positive change at scale. Our research also shapes and informs our education and civic action programs as well as the training and policy support we provide to central and local governments, frontline practitioners, companies and international organizations.

About the Digital Analysis Unit

ISD's Digital Analysis Unit (DAU) is a central hub for digital methodologies and technology within ISD. Working closely with analysts and managers in the research team, the DAU is responsible for overseeing research methodologies across ISD projects, selecting appropriate tools and technical partnerships, providing internal training and upskilling, and ensuring standardized research practices across various projects and entities.

In collaboration with strategic technology partners, the DAU leverages data analytics, natural language processing, open-source intelligence (OSINT) techniques, and rigorous ethnographic research to enable ISD researchers to gain real-time insights into extremist, hate and terrorist networks, movements, and online narratives. It also supports ISD's efforts to identify instances of covert content manipulation, identity deception, and misleading behaviors with the goal of countering the spread of false information.

As well as monitoring online risks, the DAU provides empirical evidence to guide ISD's digital policy work on assessing the effectiveness of social media platforms' efforts to mitigate online harms in-line with digital regulations, including policy enforcement, content moderation.

Role Purpose

We are seeking an **Applied AI / Data Engineering intern** at ISD-US to help build and scale our AI-powered research infrastructure. You will contribute to the design and implementation of data pipelines that process millions of social media posts, integrate LLM APIs for content classification, and develop tools to help researchers analyze online harms more effectively.

Responsibilities

- **Platform & Pipeline Development (40%)**
  - o Support the development of a social media analytics platform.
  - o Contribute to the development of a low-code tool by building ETL workflows that process large-scale social media data, including handling uploads, data standardization, and bulk indexing.
  - o Connect to social media APIs (e.g., X, Reddit), manage rate limits, handle authentication, and pipeline data reliably and efficiently.

- **AI & LLM Integration (40%)**
  - o Design and implement classification systems using OpenAI, Anthropic, and other LLM APIs to detect violent rhetoric, hate speech, and other indicators of online harm at scale.
  - o Experiment with and drive innovation around the use of AI technologies to enhance the organization's technical capabilities, including identifying opportunities to improve workflows through new and existing technology.

- **Research Support (20%)**
  - o Contribute to technical tasks for 1-2 ISD research outputs (examples of past research available [here](), [here](), and [here]()).

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Expectations

We expect all staff, consultants and volunteers to:

- Commit to ISD's vision, mission and Guiding Principles
- Foster diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity at ISD
- Demonstrate respect for others and safeguard those who are vulnerable
- Carry out their duties in accordance with ISD's policies and procedures
- Always adhere to risk management and security instructions

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We endeavor to recruit a range of candidates into ISD, to strengthen our team and contribute to our inclusive organizational culture. We particularly welcome applications from candidates currently underrepresented across ISD – including those from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, those with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. We have tried to make this recruitment process as accessible as possible, but please let us know if you have any access requirements that you would like us to be aware of.

Competencies

These reflect ISD's Guiding Principles which we expect all members of the team to embody, regardless of seniority and role. How these competencies are assessed is outlined in ISD's Performance Review Process.

Guiding Principles	Competencies
Integrity	- Personal integrity - Focus on quality
Collaboration	- Respect for others - Commitment to the team
Agility	- Efficiency and effectiveness - Problem Solving
Courage	- Strategic thinking - Growth Mindset

Specific Requirements

These are a priority for this specific role, and form part of our assessment during recruitment, probation and ongoing performance management. They are also a framework for focusing continuing professional and personal development.

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, training and qualifications	- Degree-level qualification or relevant experience in computer science, software engineering, or a related field - Understanding of and commitment to ISD's core mission	- Ability to design scalable data pipelines with clean, maintainable error-handling approaches - Knowledge of Elasticsearch, cloud platforms (AWS or GCP), or workflow orchestration tools

	Competent and confident in use of full Microsoft Office suite	
Experience	• Proficiency in Python and JavaScript • Familiarity with LLM APIs (OpenAI, Anthropic) and prompt engineering • Experience working in a dynamic remote-forward environment	• Experience working with REST APIs • Flask and general web development
Skills	• Strong, systematic debugging skills, with clear documentation practices • Ability to work independently with light supervision, proactively identifying and solving technical problems, and in a team • Exceptional written and spoken English • Clear, fluent, and concise oral and written communication skills • Outstanding attention to detail • Highly organised with the ability to be flexible, multi-task, and respond proactively	• Comfortable working with SQL and NoSQL databases • Ability to perform "glue work": integrating multiple systems, tools, and APIs