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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

TEENS “PAID TO PLAY” VIDEO GAMES IMPACT COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION RESEARCH

Atlanta, GA - August 9, 2011 – The GLITCH Game Testers, a group of African American teen video game players, completed a 3rd summer of quality assurance (QA) work for clients in the game industry. GLITCH is an outreach program run by the Georgia Institute of Technology and Morehouse College and also serves as a platform to conduct research on computer science education. Research findings indicate notable success in increasing interest in computer science.

The generous support from The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation was critical to GLITCH’s Summer 2011 successes. With the \$25,000 Pathways to Success Grant, 15 high school students were paid as full time testers and took part in computer science workshops this summer.

Or research findings indicate that paying these young men may be a critical component in leading them to value the contributions they can make in the world of technology. While many of them start the program excited to be “paid to play” video games, the rigors of quality assurance work and computer science workshops soon lead them to see video games in a new way.

Students now talk about games as software that they can control and manipulate rather than just media they consume. This change in attitude is also reflected in other choices. Over the course of the program GLITCH had 33 participants. Of the 16 who have left (graduated?) high school, 15 have or intend to start this fall in college with 13 pursuing computing related majors. Before the program, only three participants intended to pursue further education in computing.

Georgia Institute of Technology’s (Atlanta, GA) College of Computing is one of the topped ranked public schools for computing and a leader in developing contextualized computing education. Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA) is a pre-eminent historically black college for men with a legacy of outreach in the Atlanta area. Glitch is the dissertation work of Betsy DiSalvo under the advisement of Dr. Amy Bruckman in the Georgia Tech Electronic Learning Communities lab. Other investigators include Dr. Ken Perry and Dr. Charles Meadows of Morehouse and Dr. Mark Guzdial of Georgia Tech.

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