Final Internship Paper

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Student Name: Amal Djibo

Employer: IP Configure, Inc.

Company/Organization: IP Configure, Inc.

Instructor: Professor Teresa Duvall

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1. Introduction

I chose the IP Configure, Inc. as my internship, as I felt like having hands-on experience with the enterprise level infrastructure systems. I learned as a major in cybersecurity that to properly defend systems, one has to comprehend the manner in which systems are constructed, configured and maintained in the first place. Instead of going directly to a purely security-analyst position, I took an internship to help build a stronger base in hardware systems, operating system deployment and technical troubleshooting. IP Configure provided a rare chance to be involved in a setting where the reliability of infrastructure influences the operations in the real world directly.

IP Configure, Inc. is a corporation that works on and implements both video management software and specifically designed video storage servers. The company offers software and hardware solutions that enable companies to have surveillance footage safely stored and handled. They are utilized in enterprise settings where the reliability, performance and appropriate configuration are critical. Clients are relying on these servers to store surveillance data to use in investigations, compliance and operations. Since these systems can be utilized in legal investigations or internal reviews, data integrity and system stability are crucial.

The orientation and on-site walkthroughs provided me with an introduction to the workflow of the company when I started on my internship. I was taken to the server assembly area, the imaging process, and the export workflow to retrieve the footage to the clients. I also got to learn about the expectations of internal communication, such as daily productivity reporting, and documentation procedures. My first thought was that the organisation had a structured production-driven culture which focused on accountability and independence. Employees were

bound to work according to the documented processes to the letter, and also exhibit initiative and problem solving skills.

In my Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), I set three main learning goals before I embarked on the internship:

Enhance my knowledge of hardware system and server architecture of an enterprise.

Use Linux and command-line experience on-the-job.

Establish professional discipline in workflow management, documentation and adherence to procedures.

These were my goals that informed my approach to the internship. I did not just think of every task as a mandatory task but as a chance to acquire the underlying technical and professional experience that would help me pursue my future career in cybersecurity.

2. Management Environment

Management at IP Configure could be termed as organized, production-oriented and more hands-off. I report to a Support Application Engineer that coordinates the workflow, ensures quality assurance, and general oversight. Although a chain of command is evident, everyday activities are structured in a way that emphasizes independence and individual responsibility.

Instead of direct supervision, the leadership anticipates technicians to prepare builds and exports on their own and follow the procedure to the letter. The staff is advised to question and seek the advice of their colleagues when needed, yet staff members are also supposed to be responsible towards their duties. This method encourages teamwork without affecting efficiency and production.

The interaction in the organization mainly takes place in Google Chat. Employees at the end of every workday provide productivity reports on what they have done during that work day e.g. how many servers they have made or how many export requests they have filled. This reporting system will enable the management to keep track of output without having to micromanage individual technicians. Daily reporting is anticipated and this touches on accountability and consistent performance.

During the 150 hour experience, I noticed that clarity and consistency were the foundations of management effectiveness. The expectations were established at the outset and the corrective feedback was presented in a professional and straightforward manner. In cases where an error was made, it was used to learn but not as a penalty. This helped to generate a climate in which the employees were able to progress without fear of being overly criticized and at the same time being aware of the importance of procedural accuracy.

The more I proved to be reliable and more efficient, the greater the managerial trust was to me. First, I would like to have a regular reassurance of the supervisors and experienced colleagues. As time went on, I got more independent, and I did builds and routinely resolved troubleshooting issues by myself. This development was an indication of personal development, as well as good leadership habits that combine control with trust.

3. Major Work Duties and Projects

The main tasks that I performed as an intern were as follows: assembly of servers, PXE imaging and provisioning, and video export processing. All these responsibilities will lead to the operational success and satisfaction of the clients of the company.

Server Assembly

Server assembly consists of assembling customized systems using individual hardware parts, such as motherboards, CPUs, RAM, storage drives, power supplies and chassis. All the builds should be based on certain configuration rules that would guarantee the compatibility with the video management software used by the company.

Accuracy in assembly is very important. Poor mounting of parts may lead to failure of hardware, unstable performance or slow client deployment. Repetition and attention to detail helped me to create a systematic internal checklist that would ensure that the components are in place, cables are properly managed, and are installed securely. As time progressed, I became more efficient as I started building carefully at first, but then I was able to continuously build several servers an hour without quality declining.

The central aspect of the company is these assembled servers. They are trusted by the clients to store the surveillance footage in a reliable and secure manner. Client trust and reliability of operations directly depends on the stability of hardware and their correct configuration.

PXE imaging and Provisioning.

Once the hardware is assembled, every server needs to be imaged with PXE (Preboot Execution Environment). This procedure puts in place the relevant operating system and sets up the system to its desired surveillance storage use.

Imaging involves making the right version choice, checking network setup and successful installation. This level can be tied to my course of Linux at Old Dominion University because it entails command-line communication, system startup, and the concept of how operating systems deployment works.

Imaging process becomes necessary to the business. The server is not able to run without proper provisioning. Precision at this stage will mean that clients will be given the systems at the stage of deployment free of configuration mistakes.

Video Export Processing

Besides tasks that were hardware oriented, I was also to help in video export requests. Clients can give precise details like date ranges, time stamps and system points where footage is to be obtained. I found and used internal tools and command-line utilities to extract the requested data. This was a tedious task which demanded a lot of attention to detail. Wrong date ranges or running of the commands would lead to incomplete or inaccurate exports. Since these exports can be utilized in research areas, accuracy is critical.

Export process solidified the role of documentation, verification and consistency in procedures. It has also shown how higher level responsibilities are supported by infrastructure.

4. Use of Cybersecurity Skills and Knowledge

Though my experience at IP Configure, Inc. involved more of hardware assembly and system provisioning, cybersecurity concepts were interwoven in my daily tasks. Before starting this internship, I already acquired the initial knowledge of Linux systems, the concept of networking, and cybersecurity theory during my coursework at Old Dominion University. Nevertheless, the internship changed that knowledge into operational discipline as opposed to the academic knowledge.

PXE imaging and system provisioning was one of the most important uses of knowledge related to cybersecurity. Imaging servers need to identify appropriate configuration, system compatibility and proper installation of operating system. Prior knowledge of Linux command-line environments helped me realize that I needed to know how to use what to execute, but also why it was required. I did not view provisioning as a process but as a formal part of deploying systems in a way that will provide stability and an appropriate configuration of the system before it is delivered to clients.

Systematic troubleshooting was another cybersecurity-related skill used in the course of this internship. In the cases when a server did not start or did not boot, I approached the problem with a systematic diagnostic rationale. I have verified placement of RAM, CPU installation, power supply connections and made sure that storage devices have been recognized during the boot process. This systematic troubleshooting approach is the same as cybersecurity incident response, in which analysts have to isolate variables, test hypotheses, and confirm system integrity at each step.

Another aspect of cybersecurity that was strengthened by the video export process was data integrity and accuracy. Export requests needed specific ranges of dates, times and system

identifiers. Errors in such details may lead to an incomplete or faulty footage being provided to customers. Since these exports can aid in investigations, it was necessary to preserve the data integrity. This strengthened the significance of verifying, recording, and consistency of the procedures, which are central values of cybersecurity operations.

Although the internship was not related to actual threat analysis and defensive security tools, it reinforced core competencies that are fundamental to cybersecurity work. Knowing how systems are constructed, deployed and maintained is key background information essential in finding vulnerabilities and adopting secure settings. This experience has further deepened my understanding of how the reliability of infrastructure and the effectiveness of cybersecurity are interrelated.

5. How the ODU Curriculum Prepared Me

Old Dominion University cybersecurity curriculum equipped me with this internship through conceptual knowledge and technical backgrounds. Linux systems, networking fundamentals, and cybersecurity principles courses assisted me in taking tasks with confidence and logical organization.

Indicatively, Linux homework assisted me directly in using command-line interfaces in navigating imaging and export procedures. Experience with file systems, permissions, and command syntax minimized the learning curve in dealing with production systems. I was not overwhelmed by the process of command execution but was able to see the logic of the process and the need to have the process properly configured.

Indirect preparation was also through networking coursework. The knowledge of how PXE boot works based on network protocols enabled me to understand the process behind the system deployment. Although this background knowledge was not directly necessary when I did not need to design network infrastructure, I found it beneficial in understanding the operation of the imaging process in a larger technical context.

Nevertheless, the differences between academic settings and professional operations were also indicated during the internship. Assignments in coursework are frequently detached and aimed at showing proficiency in knowledge. Efficiency, accuracy and repeatability are the measures of performance in an environment of production. The internship showed that to achieve professional success, you need to consistently perform, be detailed and accountable on top of theoretical knowledge.

Also, unlike cybersecurity classes, which focus on threat detection and mitigation of risk, the focus of this internship was on the reliability of infrastructure and a disciplined working process.

This was a useful contrast. It proved that the aspect of cybersecurity is very reliant on stable systems and well-configured systems. High-quality security tools will fail to work without good infrastructure.

Some of these experiences complemented classroom knowledge, especially configuration and troubleshooting of systems. The other experiences presented operational concepts, including production quotas, documentation standards, and workflow management-areas that were of less importance in academic coursework. This theory-practice mix helped me expand my general knowledge in the field of IT and cybersecurity.

6. Fulfillment of Learning Objectives

Three main learning objectives I set at the start of my internship were:

Enhance my knowledge on enterprise hardware system and server architecture.

Use Linux and command line knowledge in a real world production environment.

Maintain professional discipline at work, work efficiency, documentation, and adherence to procedures.

All these goals were achieved in the process of my 150-hour internship.

I gained a lot of knowledge on enterprise hardware systems through frequent server assembly and troubleshooting. I switched between simple knowledge about the PC parts to the ability to diagnose problems with delivering power, installing the memory, and booting the computer. Repetition enabled me to go beyond just assembly to a more in-depth knowledge of system architecture and hardware interaction.

The second goal, which is to implement Linux and command-line skills to a production, was achieved via imaging and export assignments. The experience of executing commands on a live working environment helped me build my confidence and enhanced the value of being precise. This practice of putting classroom knowledge into practice in the real-life situation cemented my knowledge about the system initializations and configuration processes.

The third goal of professional discipline could have been the most effective. Training on how to balance the speed and accuracy, adhere to documented procedures and record productivity on a daily basis taught operational maturity. Initial errors helped to underline the necessity to work slowly and check the work before it is done. With time, I became more time-managing and in-house quality-controlling.

Generally, the internship achieved the objectives of my Memorandum of Agreement. In addition to technical development, it has enhanced professional responsibility and enlightened the need to have disciplined workflow in infrastructure settings. These are the results that will further shape my academic orientation and career planning in the future.

7. Most Motivating or Exciting Aspects

I found the fact that my technical performance was improving one of the most motivating in this internship.. At the beginning of the internship I was very careful with assembly of servers and it took me longer before I could make sure that each part was installed properly. I became efficient with time, without being imprecise. The growth was also evidenced by increasing my build rate and still ensuring quality. The noticeable rise in productivity was a boost that strengthened my belief and made me understand that hard drilling results in proficiency.

The other driving force was the shift of the learner to the contributor. In the later part of the internship, I was questioned by the newer employees in terms of the placement of the components, installation of power supply, and workflow expectations. Although this was informal, this mentoring role meant that I had overcome the simplistic onboarding. This assisting others helped me to strengthen my personal knowledge and demonstrate that I had not only memorized the steps but also internalized the procedures.

Also, it was encouraging to realize the expanded effect of my work. The servers that were compiled and supplied in my internship are used to support surveillance systems, which the businesses use to monitor operations and undertake investigations. The realisation that the accuracy and reliability were important even outside the immediate workspace made each task more important. Although my area of work was on hardware and provisioning, the systems were part of bigger security and operational systems.

Lastly, the organised environment was motivating. Operating under expectations and quantifiable output targets gave a feeling of responsibility and achievement. Daily completes, daily exports and daily productivity reporting established a regular beat that supported

professional discipline. The formal environment allowed me to have a better insight into how technical jobs that are production-based function in practice.

8. Most Discouraging Aspects

Among the most inspiring points about this internship was the ability to see tangible enhancement in my technical performance. At the beginning of the internship, I was rather careful with server assembly and it took me longer to make sure that every component was properly installed. With time, I became efficient without compromising the accuracy. Growth was evidenced by the fact that I was able to increase my build rate without sacrificing on quality. The obvious positive change in productivity strengthened my belief and proved that with mastery, it is possible to achieve great results through hard training.

The other aspect of motivation was the shift towards being a learner to a contributor. Towards the end of the internship, I would be asked questions by newer employees about how the components are placed, the installation of power supply, and the expectations of how the work would be done. Although it was unofficial, this mentoring position showed that I was no longer in the realm of the simplistic onboarding. Assistance to others strengthened my personal experience and demonstrated that I did not learn the steps by heart, but I learned the processes.

Also, it was encouraging to get to learn about the bigger picture of my work. The servers that were put together and provisioned in the course of my internship offer surveillance systems upon which businesses turn to to monitor their operations and to conduct investigations. It was important to understand that accuracy and reliability were more than mere components of the working environment, which added significance to every task. Although my job was based on hardware and provisioning, the systems were part of bigger security and operational systems.

Lastly, the orderly setting was inspiring. Operating under expectations and quantifiable output targets gave a feeling of responsibility and achievement. The daily completion of builds,

exportation, and productivity reporting established a steady pattern that helped to strengthen professional discipline. This organized setting enabled me to have a deeper insight into the functioning of production-based technical jobs in the real world setting.

9. Most Challenging Aspects

Balancing efficiency and accuracy was the most difficult part of the internship. The production settings are inherently focused on the output, but hurry may lead to mistakes. Attempts to make more speed in the initial stages of the internship caused small but avoidable errors. It took maturity and self-control to learn how to control speed - to move effectively and be deliberately accurate. This is among the most significant professional lessons that I learned.

Technical troubleshooting also was problematic. A failure to boot or start a server needed to be logically diagnosed. There is uncertainty and a variety of possible variables in hardware troubleshooting, unlike academic problems where there is a clear-cut answer. I needed to learn to be patient and not to jump to conclusions. With time, I learnt to handle such problems in a systematic way by isolating any aspect, checking relationships, and revisiting settings before blowing things out of proportion.

The other problem was the transition between a student mentality to a professional mentality. Grades are generally the most affected in academic settings. Errors in the workplace may impact resources, workflow, and productivity of a team. This responsibility change demanded a higher level of responsibility. I needed to be more on top of checking work prior to completion, instead of having to correct it later.

Lastly, it took stamina and self-control to maintain consistency more than 150 hours. The workplace requires consistency, rather than periodical high performance. A long-term focus was needed to maintain the productivity expectations, documentation standards, and the workflow procedures. This perseverance is a talent which goes beyond the technical knowledge up to professional character.

10. Recommendations for Future Interns

The next interns at IP Configure, I. must come in with technical training and the appropriate attitude towards the profession. The high level of experience is not needed, although a basic knowledge of PC hardware components such as CPUs, RAM, storage drives, and power supplies is of tremendous value. Knowledge of Linux command-line fundamentals will also simplify the imaging and export procedures to comprehend and feel at ease.

Mental discipline is the most crucial preparation besides technical knowledge. Interns must be prepared to read and adhere to the written procedures and avoid the urge of being in a hurry to complete tasks. It is important to be precise and not fast, particularly during the first stages. Delays on the crucial stages of installation can also avoid expensive errors and support the long-term effectiveness.

Another vital skill is time management. Productivity is evaluated in the internship set up and interns must be ready to make a trade off between output and accuracy. Creating a steady workflow at the outset will be helpful in achieving expectations without compromising on quality.

Communication is also very crucial. Interns need to feel free to ask questions especially at the start. Nevertheless, they must also strive to think critically prior to blowing things out of proportion. Trying to use structured troubleshooting without consulting help is an initiative and professionalism.

Lastly, I would recommend to future interns to consider each task as a part of a bigger system. Even monotonous constructions lead to more extensive operation objectives. The awareness of

the need to be reliable and accountable will contribute to keeping the internship motivated and professionally focused.

11. Conclusion

The 150 hours at IP Configure. has taught me a lot about the technical infrastructure as well as professional responsibility. My job was mainly based on the work of assembling hardware, imaging, and export processing, but the overall lessons were not limited to these activities. I became more attentive to detail, had a better discipline in troubleshooting, and how to work in an organized production setting.

The greatest lesson in this internship is the need to have procedural consistency. Technical knowledge cannot be achieved without discipline, accountability and verification. By doing successive builds, troubleshooting situations, and documentation needs, I came to learn that reliability is developed by doing things consistently as opposed to occasional performance.

This internship will have an impact on the rest of my college life at Old Dominion University as it will help me to be more practical in doing my coursework. I have now a clearer insight into the role of basic infrastructure knowledge in advanced cybersecurity areas. I will be able to relate theoretical issues of security to actual practice of system architecture and deployment in the future classes.

On a professional level, it has helped me to understand my interests in the larger IT and cybersecurity industry. Although server assembly is not the technical area that I am interested in specializing in over the long term, the knowledge of infrastructure will be an excellent base to future work in cybersecurity operations, system administration, or hacking testing environments. Knowledge on the construction and deployment of systems enhances my capacity to analyze, secure, and test it.

On the whole, this internship helped to turn classroom knowledge into practice. It enhanced discipline, technical reasoning and enhanced professional confidence. The experience has equipped me with not only future coursework, but also the further development in the field of cybersecurity.