Old Dominion University

IDS 493 Electronic Portfolio Project

Assignment 2: Personal Narrative

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Introduction

This essay will serve as an exploration into why I choose to pursue a career in Cybersecurity. One that looks through a retrospective lens on past events that got me interested in Cybersecurity and what compelled me to make this career commitment. The factors that led to my initial decision was my fascination with technology, the key individuals in my life that served as role models were all in technology related fields, and many ill-advised decisions made on the internet as a younger person prodded my curiosity towards the security side of information technology.

Role Models

Throughout my life, there have been several key moments that directed me toward the path of Cybersecurity as the main focus for my academic career. From a young age, I have had several role models in my family who have set the example of higher education and earning a career with longevity and scalability. My mother, an I.T. professional, my father, an instructional designer, my stepfather, a senior software developer, and my eldest brother, a data scientist. All great role models and one of the main reasons why a career in one of the STEM fields was my first choice. But there are so many careers to choose from in STEM and for a while I was overwhelmed with the idea that I must commit to a single field for the rest of my life. What I did know is that I did not want to do the same thing as one of my family members. I had an urge to find my own path in something new to my family.

First Experiences

To begin to understand why I have made the career decisions I have, I must start with the lessons I learned as a younger person on the internet. From a young age I was afforded a hand-me-down laptop from my eldest brother with full access to the internet and all the wonderful capabilities it brings. I was able to do whatever I wanted, make social media accounts, access any webpage, sign up for any deal I thought sounded amazing, and worst of all, download anything my young mind thought would benefit me. As you can imagine, this freedom on the internet would cause many blue screens, viruses, and hacked accounts. At the time, it did not make any sense to me. Why was computer running slow after downloading free games or why can I not access my social media account after providing personal information to a stranger online who promised a lump sum of cash. It was always too good to be true and I couldn't put it all together until high school when I started to have a basic understanding of computers and the internet.

Now I am Interested

According to Emily Smith in "The two kinds of stories we tell about ourselves," the "stories tend to focus on the most extraordinary events, good and bad, because those are the experiences we need to make sense of and that shape us." (Smith). In my opinion, this exemplifies my poor decisions on the internet as a child and the role models I have in the technology fields. For me, there were no lasting effects, just lost accounts and many factory resets of an old laptop, but at the time this was devastating and piqued my interest. As I grew up and started to realize how debilitating something like this could be to an organization, especially

because all organizations rely on technology in one way or another. I started to gain an interest in what it takes to prevent experiences like mine and if I could make a career out of it.

Conclusion

Using casual coherence as explained in McAdams's discussion, I chose to pursue my major in cybersecurity due to certain "narrative accounts" of my life that made me think and want to know more, how, or why these things happen to me (McAdams). From my natural interest in technology, the many uneducated decisions on the internet before high school, to the role models in my life that demonstrated a great work-life balance and financial stability. By the time I graduated from high school, I knew I wanted to learn more about Cybersecurity. I also felt a calling of sorts because this was the time when the field was marketed as disparate and in need of educated and motivated individuals. It felt to me as the stars had aligned, and I had found something that interested me and was in demand. Now, I am finishing my Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity with a minor in Information Systems and Technology. I completed my Security+ CE with CompTIA and I am educated, motivated, and ready to start my dream career in Cybersecurity.

References:

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