

Celeste Meraz-Luna

CYSE 368

Spring 2026

Professor Duvall

TA Joshua Russell

Earth Viability Center Inc.

Reflection #2

Internship Reflection Paper

Second 50 Hours

Working as an intern on the Place4Us platform for another 50 hours has given me a deeper understanding of how collaborative technical projects evolve over time. During the first stage of the internship, my focus was primarily on learning the platform and adjusting to the team. During this second set of hours, I became more involved in the research and development process and started contributing more directly to the improvement of the platform. This period helped me better understand the importance of independent research, initiative, and contributing ideas in a professional setting.

One important part of my work during this period was reviewing the work by interns from previous semesters. Looking through their research and documentation helped me gain a clear idea of how the projects/tasks have developed over time and what directions might be useful for future improvements. This process also helped guide my own work, especially when I began researching user privacy rights and policies.

The values of initiative and critical thinking are the most important things I've learned. In this internship, tasks are not always assigned with exact instructions, which requires me to take initiative and determine the best approach to solve the task. At first this approach felt challenging because I am used to structured assignments with specific directions. However, this type of independence reflects how professional environments operate. This skill of being independent is very important when working in cybersecurity and technology related fields. This is where I thought about the question of "Is this a field I see myself growing in?" Since this internship has me out of my comfort zone.

During meetings with the other interns, I also worked on building confidence when sharing my thoughts and opinions. Hearing the perspectives of other students in the same major has been helpful because everyone approaches problems differently. Listening to their viewpoints helped me think more critically about my tasks.

In addition to working on technical tasks, a large part of my work during this period focused on improving and rewriting the Terms of Use for the platform. The goal was to make the document clearer while also strengthening the responsibilities of both users and the platform itself. Because the platform involves user participation and data sharing, it is important that users understand how their data is handled and what their rights are. While working on this task, I also learned how policy documents can support cybersecurity practices by establishing clear expectations for acceptable behavior and privacy protection.

On the other hand, to answer the question "Do you find your work rewarding and meaningful?" The second 50 hours have been more challenging but also rewarding. I became more comfortable participating in discussions, contributing ideas, and working independently on research tasks. The experience has helped me see how my coursework connects to real-world

applications, especially in areas related to cybersecurity, privacy policies, and system governance. It has also helped me develop greater confidence in my ability to approach open-ended problems and propose potential solutions.