

Introduction

I am completing my degree in Cybersecurity with the intent to pursue a career in cyber defense, incident response, and national security policy post my Naval Career commitment. Throughout my academic and military experience, I have developed a combination of technical and professional skills that directly correlate to cybersecurity environments. The three skills I will highlight are Leadership, Network and Programming, and knowledge of national and international cybersecurity policy and affairs. These skills are critical to the cybersecurity field because there is an expectation to understand technical systems, solve complex problems, operate within the broader national security and global threats, all the while leading teams of various sizes. My coursework and experience will demonstrate how I developed these skills and how they will prepare me for success in my future professional career.

Skill 1: Leadership

Skill Description

Leadership to me is about getting a group of individuals genuinely invested in a common goal while ensuring that I, as a leader, look out for their professional growth and success. In cybersecurity and military environments, leadership is paramount, especially because teams must respond quickly to rapidly evolving threats and operate under pressure.

Evidence of the Skill

One artifact that demonstrates my leadership ability is my leadership philosophy essay. In this essay, I was asked to reflect on my academic and professional experiences and to outline my approach to leadership, grounded in Determination, Loyalty, and Professionalism. This artifact reflects my understanding of leadership principles and their application in cybersecurity and military environments.

The second artifact is a letter I created to address my division. This document required me to communicate expectations, motivate personnel, and maintain professionalism. This experience strengthened my ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a group, which is essential when managing teams or delivering critical information.

The third artifact is my role as a team lead during a Python programming assignment. In this project, I was responsible for organizing tasks, ensuring team members stayed on track, and overseeing code integrity. I coordinated efforts and ensured that the final project requirements were met. This experience demonstrated my ability to lead a technical team while balancing problem-solving and programming responsibilities.

Professional Relevance

Leadership is a highly sought-after skill in cybersecurity roles where teams must collaborate across different departments to detect, analyze, and respond to threats. My leadership

experience prepares me to take initiative, manage responsibilities, and deliver results in team and supervisory roles.

Skill 2: Network and Programming

Skill Description

Networking and programming are essential technical skills in cybersecurity because they provide a foundation for understanding how systems interact and operate. Networks and programming strengthen problem-solving abilities and enable the development of vulnerability assessment.

Evidence of the Skill

One key artifact that demonstrates this skill is my final programming project, where I was tasked with demonstrating various programming skills and creating a program from scratch. This project required me to design the program's logic, implement functionality using structured code, and debug errors to ensure proper execution.

A second artifact is a networking project in which I was tasked with creating a business presentation to design, wire, and budget a university building's network infrastructure. In the assignment, I planned the physical layout of the network, selected and budgeted the necessary equipment such as routers and switches, and then presented to the professor, acting as "my boss", requesting approval to conduct the job. This project required both technical understanding and practical decision-making, as I had to justify design choices and ensure the network would meet operational needs.

A third artifact is an assignment where I created and explained a routing table. In this project, I analyzed network paths and determined how data travels between different networks. This assignment strengthened my understanding of how data moves across networks and how proper configuration ensures efficient and secure communication.

Professional Relevance

Networking and programming skills are highly valuable in cybersecurity roles because it is crucial to understand the very systems you are tasked with protecting. These skills allow me to analyze network traffic, identify misconfigurations, and understand how vulnerabilities can be exploited at both the software and network levels. In a professional environment, this knowledge would allow me to contribute to network defense, system hardening, and incident response efforts.

Skill 3: National and International Cybersecurity Policy and Affairs

Skill Description

Understanding cyber policy and affairs is critical for anticipating the future of cyber operations and their potential impact on national security, international relations, and organizational decision-making. This skill encompasses reviewing policies, threats, and adversarial strategies at both the organizational and global levels.

Evidence of Skill

One artifact that demonstrates this skill is my assignment analyzing the National Cybersecurity Strategy. In this project, I examined how the US approaches cybersecurity at the federal level and its priorities for protecting infrastructure and private partnerships.

The second artifact is my research paper on how Chinese cyber espionage focuses on intellectual property theft. This allowed me to review real-world cybersecurity threats and take a deep dive into nation-state activities. This project required in-depth research and critical analysis of complex geopolitical issues.

The third artifact is my analysis of the US Navy's cyberwarfare doctrine. This assignment connected the military background with my cybersecurity background, allowing me to see how both disciplines integrate into military operations.

Professional Relevance

This skill is highly valuable in government, defense, and intelligence roles. Understanding policy and global threats allows me to make sound decisions and actions aligned with the overall objectives of the organization or agency. My knowledge in this area prepares me to contribute to cybersecurity efforts and the implementation of a strategy.

Describing My Skills to an Employer or Supervisor

One of the key skills I developed is leadership. With experience in both military and academic settings, I have led teams in high-pressure, structured environments. For example, I have served as team lead on a programming assignment and as an Ordnance team lead deployed in the Middle East, where, in both positions, I coordinated tasks, ensured accountability, and managed projects to success.

Another skill I developed is networking and programming. In one of the projects, I had the opportunity to design and present a network infrastructure plan, including budget considerations, in a business setting. I also developed programs from scratch and created routing tables to demonstrate how data flows across networks.

I also developed knowledge of cybersecurity policy and affairs. In my research on Chinese cyber espionage and my analysis of the National Cybersecurity Strategy, I examined real-world threats and government responses to them. This experience strengthened my ability to connect technical cybersecurity concepts to broader national security and global implications.

Strongest Skill Reflection

The skill I consider the strongest is Leadership. This stands out because leadership is interdisciplinary and can apply to any situation or any mission. I have also developed leadership skills over the course of my professional and military career to handle both controlled and chaotic environments. Serving as a team lead during my programming assignment reinforced my ability to lead in a technical setting. I plan to continue applying this skill in cybersecurity roles that require coordination, quick decision-making, and leadership under pressure.

Applying My Skills Going Forward

Going forward, I plan to continue developing my skills in professional cybersecurity environments. I aim to strengthen my networking and programming abilities through hands-on experience while continuing to grow as a leader. I will also stay informed on cybersecurity policy and global threats to remain effective in an evolving field.