Capstone Reflection

When I began my time at ODU, I was coming freshly off of graduating TCC with an associates in cybersecurity, so I already had a goal in mind for my time here, furthering my knowledge and getting a bachelor's degree in cybersecurity. My skills were at the fundamental level but still developed to the point that I could jump in at the 200 and 300 level of courses, skipping over basic introductory classes and theory, getting into lab environments and learning ethical hacking, networking architecture, and other essential skills for cybersecurity. When the time came for me to start at ODU, I was rather excited as at the outset I had some knowledge of cybersecurity due to already having a degree and I expected the things I learned to be much in the same vain as what I had already learned. However when it comes to uncertainties when I began, I had some hesitation when it came to my own knowledge. I often felt lesser than my peers in terms of skill and knowledge, despite being equals in our learning path.

The growth in my learning and understanding of cybersecurity was most shaped by my internship at ODU's IT Help Desk. I worked there for about two semesters and during that time I was faced with diagnosing hardware and software issues, finding solutions to these issues, and implementing or telling someone not as technologically literate as I am how to implement the solutions. One of the largest challenges I faced in that time was talking with non-technically minded people about complex technical issues in a way that didn't make them feel like they did not understand.

Across the artifacts I chose for my portfolio, I came away with an overarching pattern of technological competency that reflects a deep understanding of the ways computers work and how they can be maliciously used to gather information to potentially undermine security. I also have found a theme of well researched topics being explained in a way easily understood by the layperson without losing much meaning in their importance. One of my most deeply held personal values is that of privacy, and most of the artifacts I chose have in some way to deal with the privacy of ones internet traffic, data, and information, my education in cybersecurity teaching me strategies to protect not only my own information, but also the information of others who place their trust in my expertise. A turning point I noticed while reflecting on this was during my CYSE 301 course, teaching me strategies to defend attacks, the motivations behind them, and how to insulate the things I protect from future risks.

As I look forward to the future of my career, the future of my eportfolio must be considered. The skills I learned within web design are likely going to be useful for miscellaneous tasks I may be required to perform during downtime, as well as for certain personal projects I do not wish to divulge. Though within my skillset I do see some gaps when it comes to coding and creating basic software to automate tasks, to address this I intend to learn better coding strategies and to practice simple software creation. On the matter of continuing my eportfolio, I will not be, as anything I am likely to do in the future will most probably be proprietary, secret, or otherwise unable to be shared in a publicly accessible manner such as a portfolio. While it will not be updated, learning how to present the information I wish to share in an easily digestible manner

will help me in spades in the future, even if the portfolio itself is left in the state it is in now.

Though, throughout my time in IDS 493 and in building my ePortfolio I have begun learning the basics of web design and contrast theory when it comes to readability of websites, as well as learning how to communicate my skills more effectively, translating hard, technical knowledge into easily understood terms for someone without my educational background in cybersecurity and information technology. The finding of artifacts for documentation throughout this course has also given me a chance to look back upon my work to gain a sense of confidence in moving forward with cybersecurity as my area of expertise. I believe that having a bit more documentation regarding some of the lab work I have done in various classes would have benefitted the creation of this portfolio, and as such advise anyone taking this course in the future to document labs with screenshots even when not required. Looking into the future, however, I will not be updating my portfolio, as many of the things I will likely be working on as my career develops will be confidential, technical systems that cannot be shared publicly.