Narrative Essay

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Introduction

When one is young many interactions and experiences tend to shape much of one self's later perspectives as well as one's interests. For myself I had old school values like being forced to play in dirt for most of the day and always making sure my bed was made after I woke up just to name some values that may not be as prevalent in today's environment. Though whenever I was bored at home, I played video games with my older brother which immersed me into the "cool" world or at least "cool" to a four-year-old. Yet looking back on those times of playing games with my brother would plant a seed of interest in how games are made. The many different genres having various mechanics with endless possibilities sparked a question of "how do they make this?". As a result, this would lead to the foundation that grew into the aspect of learning computer science which then led to cybersecurity with a hint of law. This is being amplified by my hobbies, coursework, and my internship shaping into my goal in the present.

Early Influences

Video games were the key element that would point into the world of technology. Playing across the genres specifically RPG, first person shooter (FPS), and strategy which would give great enjoyment but also some skills like critical thinking, overcoming obstacles, the appreciation for a challenge, creativity, and the fulfillment of succeeding. I would not have realized that all the games I played would influence me to such a degree that I would later go to college to learn them in depth as well as the hardware and software used to create them. If it was not for the influence of my older brother, I do not know what another path I would be on. Those moments with my brother unknowingly would be what decided my future.

Discovering Programming and Computer Science

Now after my younger years playing games with my older brother into my late teenager years and early college life, I had a shift from a player to a potential creator by trying programming. I never had any exposure to programming until my first college classes at Tidewater Community College (TCC). When I chose my degree in computer science, my aim was to learn programming and create a miniature project, even though I did not have a clear vision at the time. However, that did not come to fruition because I lost my confidence once I realized how much of a challenge it would be. I always enjoyed a challenge which is why I did not shy away from completing the assignments yet outside of class was a different story. I tried to create small games on the level of minesweeper or 2048 but to no avail. The programming language I learned was C++, which is a very rigid language with no room for error, or you will spend hours debugging issues. This even followed me as I was taking classes at Old Dominion University (ODU). After taking a class called Unix, I hit my breaking point. My ever-growing doubt about creating games did not diminish, and I realized that I needed something, anything before I gave up. Which led me to look for another degree so that I could apply what I learned from computer science. That search ended when I found cybersecurity and I found what encompassed intrigued me, resulting in me switching my degree path.

Expanding Interest for Cybersecurity and Law

Though my initial interest into cybersecurity came from trying to use "skills" and basic understanding of principles from computer science to still complete a degree in technology it slowly built into pure interest after taking some classes like Linux. Today, Linux has become my main interest in cybersecurity because of what it is capable of and its efficiency. I enjoy learning the commands and tools that you can use within Linux such as Metasploit or John the Ripper (password cracking tool). Linux being an operating system which means that it is the system which

manages all software and hardware for any given system just like Windows. As such, understanding how to use it has become a great skill and hobby. In addition, to taking an interest in Linux I also branched off into law a little because of a cyber law class I took which delved into how cybercrime and traditional laws often collide as well as complement each other. Much of this interest came from my professor, who is an active FBI agent handling cases that dealt with cybercrime giving real and practical stories that are also shown within a portion of the assignments. By the end of this course, my interest in cybersecurity also expanded into law. Thus, I decided to do an internship with the ODU police department to gain more insight into traditional law and see how ODU deals with cybercrime.

Internship with ODU Police

My internship with the ODU Police gave me the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of daily life for law enforcement and law interpretation. I completed this internship over the summer semester and enjoyed certain aspects. With this internship mostly being inspired by wanting to know what I learned from my cyber law class in actual application first-hand. Although there was not much in regard to cybercrime I did learn much about how traditional law is categorized and interpreted. Every section of law has multiple codes that are detailed enough to apply but vague enough to leave discretion for officers as well as lawyers or judges to use in reference in various situations. With cybercrime becoming more prevalent as technology advances, I was able to visit the ODU investigation unit. There they deal with fraud cases centered around online mobile transactions. Adding further that each law is categorized by infractions, misdemeanors, felonies, and capital offenses. Now, cyber laws fall within these categories but also is determined by further classifications that are determined by: individuals, property, organizations, society, and cyber-dependence. As a result, it can also become hybrid crimes in which crime deals

with both sides within law. I learned a great deal during my internship and enjoyed riding along with officers asking questions about law gaining various interpretations. This internship is an invaluable experience that may not deal with Linux or other technology directly but the relationship between actions and consequences of misuse of technology which further shows that my career path of cybersecurity will be one I will enjoy.

Cybersecurity Career Goals

After completing my internship, I see how every class I take is a step towards a career that I haven't even decided on. With the internship giving me new perspective on law and my classes showing me just how much is at risk every second online, it really makes me want to do a job that deals with both aspects of law and cybersecurity. Though both go hand in hand in certain areas the knowledge I have has made me aware of something I want to do but I lack confidence in acting since the inability to overcome Unix, and endless doubt is overwhelming especially now since I am nearing the end of my academic career. Nevertheless, through learning how to make an online portfolio to truly market myself the goal of doing cybersecurity while also intertwined with law seems not only possible but realistic. This also coincides to what I learned from reading an article "People who believe their lives are meaningful tend to tell stories defined by growth, communion, and agency" (Smith, 2025). Though I do not tell many stories, even though I believe that my life is meaningful on my own, I am defined by my friends and the choices that have led me to where I am right now in life. I want to eventually specialize in a role that uses cybersecurity to protect systems from attackers but also to support legal investigations to combat such actions. Thus, in my current point of life my future career path is still forming, but every experience I have whether in the classroom, my internship, and potential personal projects my future goals and career will be defined.

Conclusion

Looking back, every stage in my life so far has been built upon the one before it, even if I did not realize it before. What began as simply enjoying time with my older brother playing video games of various genres planting memories that would be my foundation of curiosity that grew into an interest in technology. My attempts at programming may not have turned into anything similar to the games I played and still play to this day, but they gave me soft skills of critical thinking, persistence, and problem-solving. From there, pushing back some of the doubtfulness of my programming skills, my transition to cybersecurity allowed me to gain back motivation to continue with something new, which is my future. Adding a further layer, through my coursework and internship with the ODU police department, gave me more knowledge of laws that led to a unique path of cybersecurity and law for myself with hopes of a career within the two fields. As I continue working and looking towards my future my path will not be a straight one but will be a collection of what has led me to this moment embracing every step and opportunity.

Work Cited

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