Kevin McKenna

Reflection Paper 2

Date: 06/10/24

ODU Summer 2025

Professor Theresa Duvall

TA Ashley Robinson

Internship Reflection Paper

Second 50 Hours

Working in my internship for the second 50 hours has given me a newfound understanding of what it takes to succeed in the field of cybersecurity. As an interning as an analyst for a small cybersecurity firm, I have the added benefit of working directly under the business owner. The first fifty hours consisted of basic on-boarding tasks and other more "research-oriented" learning. This second time block has gotten me introduced to the more hands-on tasks in which I really had to apply some of my knowledge collected from various coursework throughout my degree.

As of this finished 50-hour time block, I was tasked with wiping the drives of 5 laptops for various business's and reinstalling the operating systems to ensure that the laptops were ready for various clients. Furthermore, I was sent home with a firewall appliance known as "SonicWall" to install and test various templates in a sandbox environment, after which I will be given permissions to manage about 100 of his small business client's firewall networks, which I am quite excited for.

The value of researching emerging cybersecurity technologies and utilizing a sandbox environment to fully test and understand their capabilities with little risk are two of the most important things I've learned about getting started in the field. For example, I am able to create a test environment with SonicWall, set parameters and templates for the firewall, and then log on with my work laptop to verify that the templates are functioning properly. This is a nice feature as I do not have to stress about ruining the security of established clients for the company I'm interning with. Furthermore, it allows me to gain first-hand experience and essentially visualize what I will actually be doing very soon.

In addition to work, I have also been studying for various certifications such as the industry standard CompTIA Security+ that is essential to obtain in order to succeed in the workforce. My supervisor has directed me to very good resources as well as provided me with study material and advice on how he was able to succeed in the field. So not only is this an internship relationship, but also one of mentorship as well. We have also discussed the possibility of me coming into the company full time at the end of the internship, should he have a remote job available for me at the end of summer.

Overall, the second 50 hours of this internship have been instrumental in allowing me to truly get a feel for working in the field of cybersecurity, as well as what is expected for me to succeed. It has also shown me just how many different types of security applications and resources are out there, and the vast amount of knowledge I need to gain to become a subject matter expert on at least a few of them such as "Cyberdrain" and "SonicWall", as well as the requirement to learn how to utilize resources such as Microsoft Azure.