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IDS 493, Spring 2024

e-Portfolio Review Essay

4/20/2024

Throughout my time at Old Dominion University, I have undergone a great amount of personal development. During my tenure, I grew, not only in my scholarly and professional skills, but also in my interpersonal skills. However, in many cases, I also discovered something incredibly novel about myself; many of the skills Old Dominion University would teach others were skills that I had already been predisposed to. Many of these skills both the ones that I had been helped along to grow in by Old Dominion University, and those that I simply had all along and that only grew

One set of skills that I developed along the way was my cyber skills. Within my major, these skills were key to processing towards graduation and achieving my professional goals. Along the way, I was required to create and write a number of studies and papers regarding cybersecurity, and in the process, created a number of these papers that I feel exemplify my ability. The first of these papers, “DEFSA, ragnarlocker, and what it means to cyberdefense?” is an exploration of a cyber-incident that affected an international company. Within this essay, I break down the attack, its mechanical processes, and how it can be prevented in the near future. Through this essay, I emphasized upon my professional skills, as well as communicated the complex technical details of the case used as a central point of the essay.

The second paper that can be found within my portfolio, “Emergent Technologies as Relevant Cyberthreats,” explored future technologies and emergent threats that would endanger cybersecurity operations. Throughout the essay, I carefully investigated, analyzed, and explained these technologies in a manner that most cybersecurity experts could easily digest. However, this essay was far more than a simple review of easily-sampled literature. During the writing of the essay, I was driven to search through the emergent technologies and their related, advanced research papers. In the process, I found myself having to teach myself the advanced nature of the technologies that I was writing about, and soon found myself learning new, advanced concepts that none of my courses had required me to learn about prior. Throughout this, I also found myself falling further down rabbit holes, having to read the cited papers upon which my initial research papers were based. By the end of the paper, I soon found myself significantly more educated within the fields of rapidly developing technologies than my classmates and peers were.

The third essay, “March 2023 revision to the National Cybersecurity Strategy; Analysis,” was one of my attempts to review a national cyberdefense strategy. Within this paper, I was tasked with reviewing the viability of a recently-proposed revision to the United States’s current cyber-defense strategy. Throughout the paper, I had to quickly simplify the intrinsic points of the latest revision, and then communicate them within an easily digestible format. Through this, I found myself familiarized with the methods used to create effective leadership documentation for use in cyber-defense. Additionally, I learned how to disseminate leadership goals and directives in a format easily communicated to the layperson.

Through these three essays, I found a great deal of my knowledge in cybersecurity and its related skills to be significantly refined throughout my time at Old Dominion University. However, in the process of undergoing my tenure at Old Dominion University, I found myself developing skills in other areas. This grew to the point where I soon found myself developing a significant interdisciplinary lens through which I could view my academic and professional pursuits. Within my fourth essay, “Critical Analysis of Parasite (2019),” I found myself required to analyze the meaning of a critically acclaimed film. Within this analysis, I found myself not only needing to seek out artistic interpretations through which to view the film, but also soon found myself needing to learn about the cultures of a foreign land. In this process, I also found myself developing skills, not only as a cultural analyst, but also as a social analyst and an artist. Similarly, within my fifth essay, “Equifax 2017; a complete ethical failure,” I was tasked with reviewing a security incident, as well as multiple perspectives upon the ethical status of the nature of the incident. Finally, I was tasked with using a specified code of ethics to understand and analyze the incident before coming to a conclusion regarding the ethical standing of the actors within the incident, and then communicating that to the reader in a cohesive and coherent manner.

My sixth essay, “Is there a novel solution to weight-loss failure in America?” was my most interdisciplinary essay yet. Within this essay, I tasked myself with seeking a holistic, unified answer to a complex social question. Throughout this essay, I worked to find a number of different disciplines to consult regarding the offered question, seeking a number of different answers that could be considered within the unified, singular solution, and finding eleven separate research papers on the subject that led to a significant amount of information to

consider. As I proceeded through the project, however, I soon found a number of similarities between the studies, slowly finding a greater and greater amount of information to consider within my eventual solution. By the end of the project, I found approximately three different disciplines to consider that I had eventually developed a level of competency within, all of which I eventually managed to unify within an easily communicated, highly comprehensive solution.

Throughout my essays, I tackled a great number of issues and difficult questions for consideration. However, by the final few semesters of my tenure at Old Dominion University, I found a unifying trait in almost all of my essays that deeply reflected my skills; I found that I had a great propensity for seeking to communicate my findings as effectively as I possibly could. Within my essay, “A short article from a wargame exercise,” I found myself tasked with quickly and effectively communicating the most important parts of a piece of cybersecurity legislation to a hypothetical audience in the form of a sitting politician. In the course of the project, I researched a prior bill, and quickly summarized it in a manner that the audience, assuming they held the same competency within the offered field as an average layman, could understand.

Within my next essay, “Cryptocurrency; Its mechanics, functions, and how it impacts us,” I was tasked with summarizing a number of things regarding the function and mechanics of cryptocurrency. In the process of researching the topic, I soon found myself needing to summarize a complex set of mathematical functions for the purpose of my paper. After some consideration, I decided that, instead of attempting to explain the mathematical functions, I would instead explain their purpose and outputs in a manner that the layman could understand. Upon completion of the project, I found that my summary was both highly comprehensive and

extremely easy for the uninitiated to understand. The final project that I used to demonstrate my communication skills was “Wikileaks, Private Manning, and moral imperative.” Within this essay, similarly to “Equifax 2017; a complete ethical failure,” I was tasked with reviewing a security incident, as well as multiple perspectives upon the ethical status of the nature of the incident. Within the process of analyzing the incident, however, I soon found myself having to consider numerous, highly complex points of the code of ethics. However, by the time I completed the project, I eventually found my summary to be highly cohesive, and coherent enough to be understood by the average layperson. By the end of this project, I found myself to be significantly more educated within the field of the offered ethical code.

Now that I am near my final days as an undergraduate student at Old Dominion University, I see now that a significant amount of my skill as a professional was significantly honed by my reflective focus upon the interdisciplinary aspects of my projects. My understanding of the fields that I’ve been educated within and exposed to have been significantly affected for the better through my interdisciplinary theses and reflections. Along the way, I learned that the outside perspectives of external fields I have some understanding or otherwise skill within could almost always offer solutions when in-field solutions wouldn’t suffice. Courses like IDS 300W significantly helped me prepare for more complex research projects requiring interdisciplinary understanding and citations. I feel now that if there is anything to be learned from my coursework, it is that being an interdisciplinary thinker is highly important to generate significant understanding of processes that could be used or otherwise applied to immediate problems.