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Reflection Paper 3

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RiverTrail Technology

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Internship Reflections

Third 50 Hours

The completion of my final fifty internship hours at RiverTrail marks another milestone in what has been an incredible journey through ODU's Cybersecurity program. Looking back over these last few weeks, I realize that the technical knowledge I gained is only part of what made this experience meaningful. While I certainly learned more about cybersecurity, I also discovered what it feels like to become part of a professional team that genuinely cares about its clients and each other. As my internship comes to an end, I leave with a deeper appreciation for the work being done behind the scenes to keep organizations secure and operating smoothly, along with gratitude for the people who took the time to invest in my growth.

During my final fifty hours, much of my work centered around housekeeping tasks within RiverTrail's internal systems. While these projects may not always be the most visible aspects of cybersecurity, they are among the most important. I focused heavily on backup and recovery validation and identifying potential gaps. One concept that particularly stood out to me was the 3-2-1-1-0 backup methodology: maintaining three

copies of data, using two different storage media, keeping one copy offsite, maintaining one air-gapped or immutable backup, and ensuring zero unverified backups through regular testing and validation. Learning about and applying this framework reinforced how critical proper backup planning is in protecting organizations from unexpected disasters.

Another project involved verifying that BitLocker encryption was enabled across all applicable Windows devices. Something as simple as enabling full-disk encryption can significantly reduce the risk associated with a lost or stolen laptop, yet it is often overlooked until an incident occurs. I also had the opportunity to provide RiverTrail with my own observations and recommendations regarding areas where cybersecurity practices could be strengthened for both the company and its clients. As a student, it was rewarding to realize that my opinions were welcomed and genuinely considered. It reinforced the confidence that my education at ODU has prepared me to contribute meaningful ideas in a professional environment. Knowing that my recommendations might help improve processes, even in small ways, made me feel like I was contributing rather than simply observing.

The week leading up to the Fourth of July was especially busy for RiverTrail. It seemed as though the phones never stopped ringing with client requests and support issues. While it certainly kept everyone busy, it also provided me with one of the best learning opportunities of my internship. Instead of working solely on internal projects, I had the chance to participate in several client service calls and apply the troubleshooting and technical skills I have spent years developing. Those experiences reminded me why I chose

cybersecurity as a career path. Helping solve real problems for real people was both challenging and rewarding, and before I knew it, my final fifty hours had passed.

Even after completing my internship, I recognize just how much there is still to learn. One project I would have enjoyed exploring further would have been reviewing RiverTrail's various vendor accounts to verify administrator access and ensure that only current personnel retained privileged permissions. Identity and access management is such an important component of cybersecurity, and I believe periodic reviews of administrative accounts can significantly reduce unnecessary risk.

Although I have gained valuable technical experience during this internship, what I will remember most are the people. From my very first day, everyone at RiverTrail welcomed me, answered my questions, and treated me as though I was an important part of the team rather than just an intern completing required hours. Their patience, encouragement, and willingness to share their knowledge created an environment where I felt comfortable asking questions and making mistakes. It is clear that RiverTrail has built a team of knowledgeable and friendly professionals who genuinely care about one another and about providing exceptional service to their clients. That type of workplace culture is something I deeply admire, and I consider myself fortunate to have experienced it firsthand. The company even took me to dinner as a going away gift.

As this chapter comes to a close, there is certainly a bittersweet feeling. While I am excited about whatever opportunities lie ahead, it is difficult to say goodbye to people who have made such a lasting impression on me in such a short amount of time. I sincerely

hope this is not the last time our paths cross. Whether professionally or personally, I intend to keep in touch with the people I have met at RiverTrail because they have become an important part of my journey. In fact, RiverTrail has decided to include me in a project they have been working on which will help millions of people, and I even developed a working prototype for the project. I was able to use my soldering skills, more on that in my final paper!