Reflection Essay

Miles Anderson

Old Dominion University

IDS 493: Electronic Portfolio Project

Professor Carin Andrews

December 5, 2025

Introduction

My studies in Cybersecurity, combined with my internship as an IT Consultant in the Computer Science Department, have equipped me with a broad range of skills essential for my career development. Although my original plan for my ePortfolio was to display my top three skills learned from my IT internship, those being foundations in Networking, Microsoft components, and Linux components, I had a hard time finding an efficient way to display artifacts for these skills. Many of the artifacts I could have showcased for these skills, such as compiling sources from scratch in SSH terminals, aren't well suited for an ePortfolio intended for employers. This experience taught me the importance of not only highlighting skills that are relevant to potential employers but also selecting those that can be clearly and effectively demonstrated through visual or interactive coursework. It emphasized that an ePortfolio should balance technical depth with accessibility, ensuring that viewers can easily understand and appreciate the work being presented. In the end, the three skills I chose to showcase were Networking, Windows Management, and Graphic Design and Promotion, which were supported by artifacts that best represented my abilities in a clear and professional format. Drawn from diverse fields such as Cybersecurity, Information Technology, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Art, and Business, these skills highlight my solid technical foundation and my multidisciplinary experience. Most importantly, they demonstrate my versatility and my capacity to adapt when faced with tasks outside my comfort zone or typical job responsibilities, underscoring my ability to learn quickly and succeed in varied environments.

Skill 1: Networking

As a Cybersecurity major, Networking is one of the most foundational and important skills I can have. I developed a strong foundation in Networking through my Cybersecurity coursework and independent research, gaining an understanding of core concepts and industry standards. I further strengthened this knowledge by applying those standards in practical scenarios during my Information Technology classes, where I compared theoretical models to the practices used by real world institutions. This combination of academic learning and hands-on application deepened my understanding and prepared me to implement networking solutions in professional environments. Moreover, I was able to gain hands-on experience with Networking in production environments through my internship work as an IT Consultant in the discipline of Computer Science. The three supporting artifacts for my Networking skill all stemmed from personal work products assigned to me during this internship. Using the Graphical Network Simulator 3 application, I created slideshows embedded as PDF files that contained screenshots of my networking terminals. This created a balance where I was able to both briefly explain and visually demonstrate my work with link aggregation and redundant links, managing Virtual Trunking Protocol domains, and implementing Spanning Tree Protocol. My work in Networking will support my professional development by strengthening my understanding of core concepts and industry standards that are widely used across major institutions. Through both coursework and hands-on projects, I gained experience applying these principles in realistic environments, which deepened my ability to analyze and implement network solutions. This foundation prepares me for technical roles and equips me with the knowledge to adapt to evolving networking technologies and practices in large scale organizations.

Skill 2: Microsoft Windows Management

Cybersecurity has given me more information on Microsoft Windows than I could have anticipated. Through my experiences in working with Cybersecurity, Computer science, and Information technology, I can confidently say that Microsoft Windows machines are my favorite operating systems to work on. I also gained insight into Microsoft Windows technology through my coursework as a Criminal Justice minor, recognizing that Windows is the most widely used operating system and therefore a common target for cyberattacks and criminal breaches. Using my supporting artifacts, I demonstrated concepts learned both through my projects as an IT Consultant in the Computer Science Department and through my CYSE 280 Windows course. Similar to my Networking artifacts, I was able to both briefly explain the significance of the skills I learned while using embedded PDF files to visually show the configurations of my Microsoft Windows servers as screenshots. Through my displayed work configuring Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol servers, Domain Name System servers, and Microsoft Endpoint Configuration Manager servers, I gained practical, hands-on experience with enterprise-level Windows infrastructure. These projects demonstrate my technical skills and provide me with experience that is highly valued in professional IT environments. As a result, my work with Microsoft Windows systems gives me a competitive edge and strengthens my ability to contribute effectively in roles that require managing and securing complex networked environments.

Skill 3: Graphic Design and Promotion

Finally, my skills in Graphic Design and Promotion differ from the technical areas of Networking and Windows Management, but they highlight my versatility by demonstrating

creativity, attention to detail, and an ability to engage and capture the audience's attention. Although I'm majoring in a tech related field, art has always been a core interest of mine. I felt it was appropriate to showcase how I used the skills gained from the discipline of Art to promote labs during my internship and attract attendees to events hosted by my campus organization, King In You. Additionally, my promotion skills also stemmed from Business focused disciplines, such as my ENTR201S course on entrepreneurship. One of the key concepts I learned in that class was how to advertise effectively and capture a potential customer's attention. I directly applied these principles to the promotional materials featured as artifacts in my ePortfolio. This included using bold, colorful visuals on my tri-fold poster board, a sleek and modern design for my CS Makerspace flyer, and a mix of striking graphics and professional photos in my King In You flyers. I believe showcasing this skill will support my professional development by presenting me as a versatile individual capable of adapting to a wide range of situations. It highlights my ability to contribute beyond a single specialty and offer insights across multiple areas within a workplace, not just my assigned department. This adaptability positions me as a valuable asset in collaborative environments where diverse skills and perspectives are essential.

Conclusion

Cybersecurity is an interdisciplinary practice at its core, and I've seen the beneficial results of interdisciplinary studies first hand. My work in Cybersecurity, Information Technology, Computer Science, and Criminal Justice both contributed to my understanding, learning, and proficiency of Networking and Microsoft Windows Management concepts. Additionally, my skills in Graphic Design and Promotion were fostered by the disciplines of Art and Business. Furthermore, my curriculum as a Cybersecurity major was strengthened by my experience as an IT Consultant in the Computer Science Department. This role allowed me to

build technical knowledge in my coursework and then apply those concepts in a real-world setting, solidifying my understanding while gaining valuable professional experience. Courses such as IDS 300W encouraged me to keep an open mindset and draw insight from a wide range of disciplines, reinforcing the idea that knowledge is never a liability. Even when subjects appear unrelated, they can offer unique perspectives that help refine and expand expertise in other areas. I would argue that having an interdisciplinary mindset is becoming increasingly essential in the field of Cybersecurity. As technology continues to evolve at an accelerated pace, Cybersecurity professionals must draw knowledge from a wide range of disciplines to stay informed about emerging threats, new concepts, and developing tools. Understanding perspectives from fields such as Computer Science, Criminology, Psychology, and even Art or Business helps build a more holistic approach to security challenges. These diverse insights enable professionals to anticipate risks more effectively and adapt to a constantly shifting technological landscape.