

Internship Reflection Paper: First 50 Hours

Samantha Riggs

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Professor Teresa Duvall

TA Joshua Russell

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Reflection #2

The first fifty hours of working as a cybersecurity intern for the Monarch Internship & Co-Op Office at Old Dominion University began with the discussion and establishment of my learning objectives. I was very pleased with the learning objectives my supervisor and I agreed upon, as I felt that they mirrored the kinds of tasks that would be performed at a full-time job within the field. They consisted of consultant type responsibilities including assessing the current cybersecurity landscape and workflows present within the office, creating a cybersecurity best practices manual for the office and creating a cybersecurity awareness training presentation to be given towards the end of my internship. Having these tasks that were very similar to tasks I may be presented with in my future career also provided me with the opportunity to see if I would enjoy remote work over in-person work.

It became apparent to me very quickly that I would have to implement and further develop my time management, communication, and critical thinking skills in order to effectively complete the tasks assigned to me. While I have the freedom to complete my tasks on my own time as I see fit, it also meant I needed to set deadlines for when I would need to have certain tasks done and establish a schedule for myself that I could hold myself to and have accountability for when it came to completing my work. I still have guidance and mentorship with weekly check-in meetings and the ability to reach out for assistance at any time, but being able to have this freedom to work on my own has helped develop both my organizational and independent creative skills.

During my first fifty hours I was able to complete my first two tasks: assess the current cybersecurity landscape within higher education institutions and assess the workflows of the Monarch Internship & Co-Op Office. In order to complete the first task, I started by coming up with questions that I wanted to know about the current cybersecurity landscape. A couple

examples were “What kinds of data do higher education systems store?” and “What are the policies and regulations that higher education institutions required to follow concerning cybersecurity and data storage?”. Then, I researched the answers to my list of questions. Once my research was completed and my questions were answered, I wrote up a formal report which used these questions to create a thorough, detailed examination of cybersecurity concerning higher education systems.

With my first task completed, I moved on to assessing the workflows of the Monarch Internship & Co-Op Office. For this task I knew I needed not only technical, cybersecurity specific information, but also general information about how the office operated. To address the two needs, I created a document consisting of non-technical questions inquiring about workflows and the systems used by the office and also created a separate document consisting of technical-related questions that were intended for a member of the IT department or someone more well-versed in cybersecurity and technological matters. In coordination with my supervisor, I was able to receive the first document back from her with her answers and had the second document forwarded to someone who could thoroughly answer those questions. The two questionnaire-style documents both consisted of questions that could help me get an overall view of not only the current technical landscape of the office, but also how the office functioned in order to help address any concerns and evaluate what may need to be addressed when creating my manual and presentation.

Overall, these first fifty hours of my internship have been informative and have challenged me to set deadlines and goals for myself while completing tasks that feel useful to have experience with when it comes time for me to enter the workforce within my field and I also feel like my internship work is meaningful to the office and its cybersecurity landscape.

Going forward, I plan to work diligently to complete my last fifty hours and present my best work with my manual and presentation.