

Reflection Journal 1

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There is nothing that could have prepared me for my first 50 hours in the new world of enterprise. This doesn't mean I was drowned in paperwork or projects but rather transitioning from working warehouse jobs for nearly 5 years, to sitting 8 hours a day in front of a computer. This has been a very odd transition, and I am still pinching myself to make sure this isn't some sort of dream. My position is a full-time, remote position where I have been sent my own equipment to have the ability to work directly from the comfort of my own home. The first day of the internship was pretty standard where I had a meeting with my two supervisors, got my laptop set up, and had the bare minimum of what I needed. As the internship had moved forward, I had been given proper access to the tools and software I need to complete my tasks. After this meeting was over, I was given the task to continue working on a presentation regarding the ways threat actors are utilizing AI to leverage attacks on retailers and ways that our own IT team could implement AI for more efficient monitoring and threat detection. Being that I had previously taken many research-related classes at ODU, I had a plethora of experience performing research projects almost exactly like the one I was given. Using the techniques I was taught at ODU, I was able to find reliable resources to complete my PowerPoint. A big surprise came from my supervisor telling me to limit the presentation to only five individual slides. I had previously made research PowerPoints for classes, however, none of them were as short as 5 slides and having to compress the research I found into the absolute most-interesting facts I could find was quite tedious. From the second day I realized how big AI was to this organization and their belief towards AI being an excellent source of productivity. I have very similar opinions as this is a very rapidly emerging technology. Because of their attitude towards AI, I was given an enterprise CoPilot license for work use and has been extremely helpful in learning the new concepts brought forward from this position. My supervisors were excited to learn I know that C++

programming language but wanted me to learn python for future manageability of the code.

While starting to learn the basics I was given permission to learn Python in a more hands-on way by rewriting an old C++ code I wrote into Python with the same, if not more, capabilities. This only took about a day to learn as Python is a very user-friendly language, however, it was a little bit to get used to at first. I was given two tasks regarding my newfound knowledge of Python to create an automation program to help facilitate more efficient retrieval of logs and another automation program to input devices into firewall segments allowing for faster entry. This kind of program required knowledge of API use and, being I only have a minor in Computer Science, I have never been introduced to this kind of programming technique. In about two days, I was able to leverage our AI CoPilot license, documentation, and descriptive YouTube videos to learn an extensive amount of API knowledge and learn more Python techniques to utilize the “requests” module and make API calls within a Python program. After gaining enough knowledge on the general knowledge of APIs, I spent another day trudging through API documentation to figure out what I needed to make the appropriate calls. Unfortunately, I have not been able to get an extensive amount of face-to-face time with the team as there is fast-paced, ongoing prevention for a ransomware group known as Scattered Spider. This group is extremely knowledgeable in phishing and ransomware attacks on big retailers. Due to this group’s successful hit on retailer Victoria’s Secret, my company has been extra vigilant to prevent an attack from this group. There have not been many issues in the internship and most stem from waiting on access to specific software to complete my tasks. I have been actively encouraged by my supervisors to take any downtime to learn any topic I feel benefits my career, so I have been using my downtime to refine my Python skills, refine my AI prompt engineering, and study for a Network+ Certification. An actual work-related issue I was able to solve on my own stemmed

from a lack of authorization for a specific tool that had not been added to the list of available services to users. I notified my supervisor of this and was immediately resolved. I was even told I have been the first intern they have had to possess excellent “Google-fu” or knowing how to use Google swiftly and efficiently to solve a problem I came across instead of waiting for someone to help me fix it. I like to believe I have high determination and when I have come across a problem with a task I am working on, I don’t like to stare it in the face until someone can tell me how to fix it. Going to Google and attempting to find the answer has not only helped refine the way I search but also helped expand my knowledge on the task I was working on by providing deeper insight to potential problems and their resolution.

Overall, the first 50 hours of the internship have been a little boring from sitting down all day (a transition I am still getting used to) and mentally engaging as I attempt to find solutions to the problems. I have been in communication of issues and learning all the different teams we have in the IT department. My tasks have been in line with the primary learning objectives for the internship and, so far, seems like a solid foundation for building knowledge related to my field. I have also proven to myself just how capable I am in the field and the amount of info retained from my classes at ODU. My first impression assumed I would not be using much computer science within the field, however, my experience has been mostly utilizing the techniques from computer science while keeping in mind the concepts best-practices in cyber security to mitigate vulnerabilities.