

Path to a Career in Cyber – Part II

By [Gary Hayslip](#)

In my first article “Path to a Career in Cyber” I explained how I got into IT and found my passion which is Cyber Security. I discussed how I built my lab in my garage and how I used it to learn about new technologies and to study for my professional IT certifications.

A large part of that process, of laying out my Cyber Certification Map and keeping track of what experience, certifications or education I needed for my chosen career field was done using certain web sites and professional organizations.

In continuing this discussion I am going to talk about websites I use to this day to track changes in my field of employment, such as what new skills Senior Cyber Security Engineers are expected to possess.

I also am going to discuss professional organizations I recommend membership in to build your peer network. The final part of our discussion will be a third article where I will discuss additional websites and software tools I would recommend you add to your skillsets and knowledge of IT and Cyber Security.

By now you should realize I am very big on the fact that if you work in the field of Cyber Security you need to always be educating yourself because if you don't this dynamic field will leave you behind in the blink of an eye.

So as a refresher the Cyber Career Map (see below) from the first article consists of a step-by-step certification tree, a tree that I used to map out what certifications and experience I would need to work at a specific skill level.

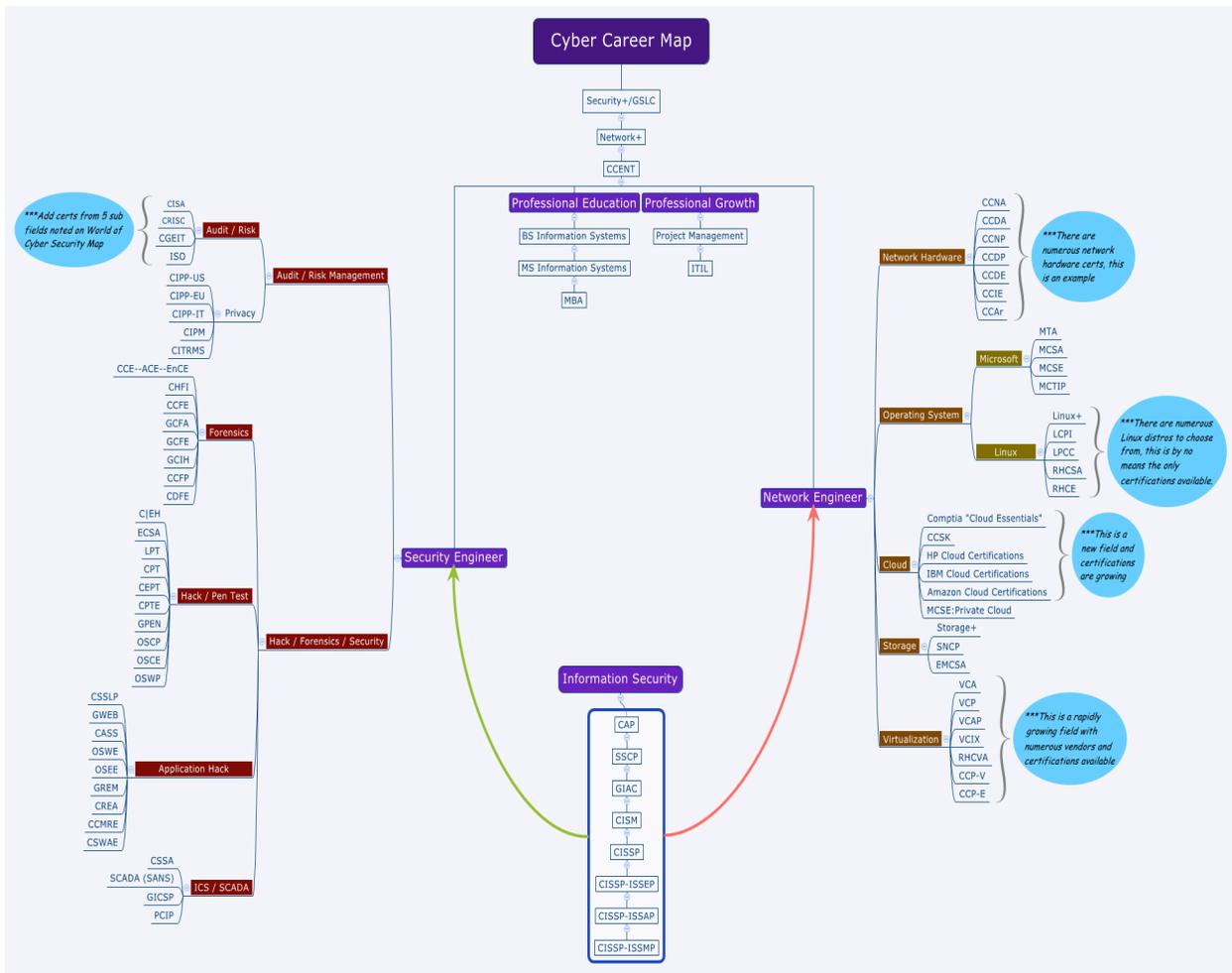
One last note before we get started, this article is written with the IT/Cyber Security scene of San Diego, California in mind. San Diego has a vibrant IT and Cyber Security industry. I use it as an example to share with you the types of websites and organizations I recommend you look at in your area to help you you're your starting point for your path into IT and possibly, if you want, a career in the field of Cyber Security. The first article “My Path to Cyber” I discussed:

- Certification Maps
 - World of Cyber
 - Cyber Career Map
 - Cyber Career Map - My Career as an example

In this article we will discuss:

- Employment Research & Networking Ideas

As I have stated before, I am by no means an expert. This article is based on my experiences over the last 25+ years in the fields of IT and Cyber Security. So with that said, let's have some fun!



• **Employment Research & Networking Ideas**

For this section we will cover websites I use to research positions, required skillsets & education for specific jobs or new career paths I find interesting. We will also look at professional organizations and why it's important you build a professional peer network and get involved in your local IT community.

The first set of websites are job websites that I like to use for research, several that I find useful are listed below:

1. www.glassdoor.com – this is one website I like to use. You can do research on companies you are looking to apply to and see what previous employees are saying about it, pay ranges of a specific job title, and even what the companies' interviews are like. I like to go to this site and put in a zip code "92101," then put in the search field "Information Security" and review the jobs that pop up. Even at my career level today I am still curious to see what companies in my area are hiring, what they are

paying for talent and what skillsets/certifications they expect a new hire to possess.

What I would recommend is you search in your area and look at the jobs that you can do currently and then look for something that you would like to do in the future. With the “future” job listed, look at the education/skills/certifications required for the position. Now go back to your career map and look at where you are at on the skill tree and what you still need to complete. This will give you an idea of what education and skills you need to work on so that you could be a viable candidate for that “future” job.

2. www.dice.com – this is similar to the previous website, it is specifically for IT jobs. It has the same job search capabilities and you can upload your resume to be seen by hiring managers. I also like to go here sometimes to just see what types of skills companies expect you to have for a specific job. Plus they have very good discussion groups and articles on IT careers.
3. www.linkedin.com – if you are looking at a career in the IT field and don’t have a profile here you are seriously hamstringing yourself. Just understand this is not Facebook. This is or is intended to be a professional site for career minded individuals. I would recommend you set up your profile with a good picture, get active in your selected forums and use it as a foundation to start building your professional network. Another tool you will like on this site is the “Jobs” tab.

You can use this tool together with Glassdoor.com to look up a job posted on LinkedIn and then use Glassdoors to research the company. One last thing I like about this website is if you read peoples profiles, you will see some very well worded descriptions of work, projects, and experience that will assist you when you get stuck writing your resume. I don’t advocate copying some else’s profile but it does help viewing how others describe a difficult project or job experience.

3. www.vistaprint.com – you don’t have to use this particular vendor, I just put them down to make a point. Part of finding that new position or building your peer network is networking. Part of networking is you need business cards; it is very awkward to ask for a potential employer’s card so you can contact them about an opportunity and when they ask for your card in return you have nothing to give them.

It also is very hard to talk to a peer that you want to follow up with and meet for lunch to get ideas for expanding your IT experience and you have nothing to give them. Be professional, have business cards, take notes on the back of them about what you discussed with that person and make sure you follow up. This will pay off over time and you will meet some great people in the process.

Now let’s look at professional IT organizations and some not so professional. I am sure there are many to choose from in your area, but with that said we will discuss some in the San Diego area as an example of ones that I would recommend you check out and get involved. I joined many of these organizations to speak with IT professionals about what companies were hiring in San Diego, what types of jobs were in short demand and where they did their training, education or earned their experience. Some good examples of organizations are:

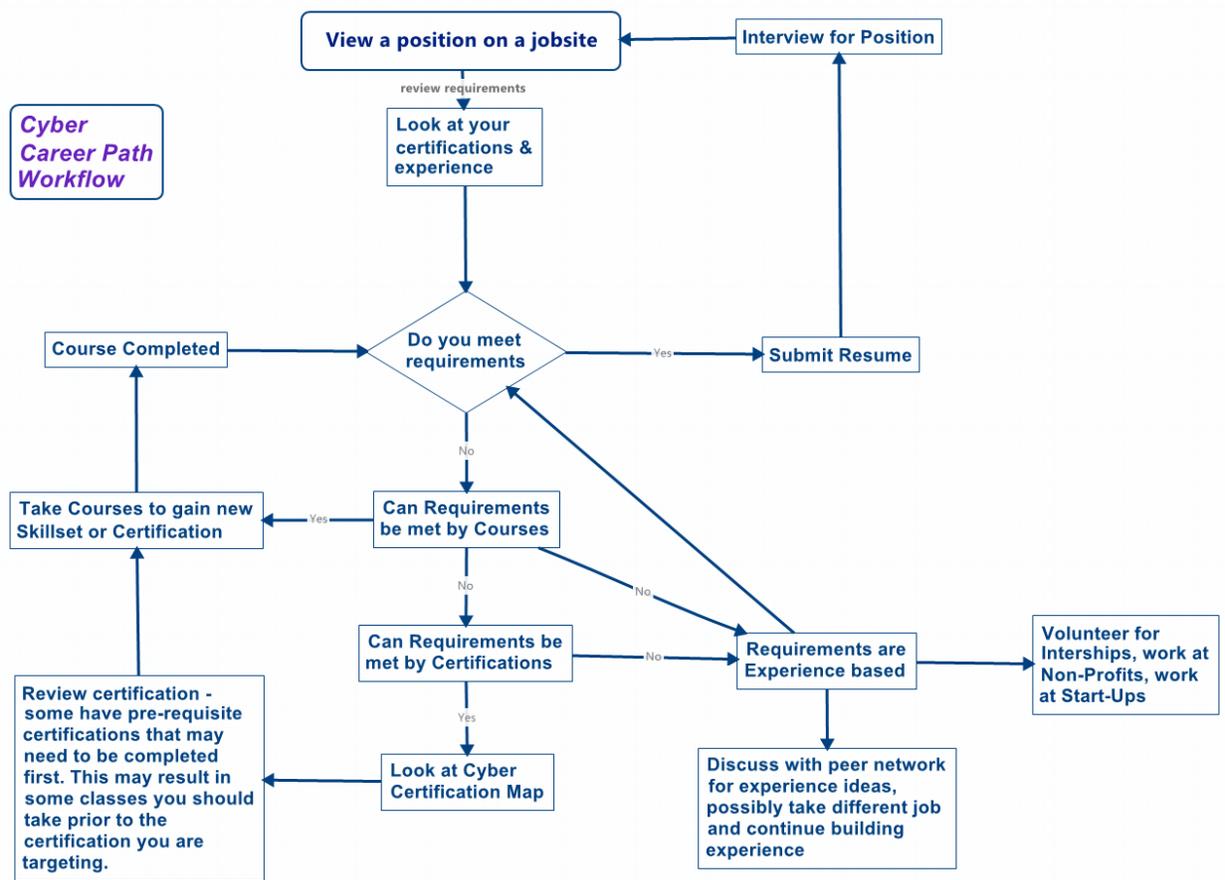
1. <http://sdtechscene.org/> - this is an event calendar of many local tech oriented groups; it lists things happening daily in the San Diego area. Note this site is managed by the San Diego Tech Scene, which is a local Tech entrepreneurial organization so there is tons of stuff going on for tech startups. I go to many of the events to network and see new types of technologies. Another site linked to them that is tied into the tech scene is <http://startupsandiego.co/> The reason I go to startup events is I want to stay

fresh with what is going on in technology. You may think this is not related to Cyber Security but you would be wrong. Many a new technology turns into tomorrow's zero-day. Educate yourself, enjoy a beer and see some really cool tech.

2. <http://evonexus.org/evonexus/> - this website is linked to the EvoNexus, which is an incubator for some incredible technology companies located in the downtown "Gaslamp" quarter of San Diego. Again, just like the SD Tech Scene, I go to the EvoNexus events to see how people are using technology. I am fascinated to see what entrepreneurs create and the hard work they and their teams go through to bring a technology to market. As you are creating your career path I would suggest you go to events like these in your area to see how quickly technology is evolving. This is why I state you need to be constantly educating yourself or you will get left behind, especially in the field of Cyber Security.
3. <http://sandiego.networkafterwork.com/city/san-diego> - this is the "Network after Work" site for San Diego. These events are held in many cities around the world and typically have monthly networking gatherings at some of the best hot spots in your area. People typically go to them to practice their networking skills and meet new people and yep you guessed it "Look for a new job"! I would recommend you at least check one out, sit back and watch people network. It can be quite educational and along the way you will learn a lot about human nature and how to approach a stranger and strike up a conversation. Have fun and don't forget your business cards.
4. <http://www.meetup.com/> - this is an awesome site. Right now there are thousands of meetups here in San Diego going on all the time and all you need to do is set up an account and start searching for groups that are meeting on things that you find interesting. It can be groups for professional networking, IT/Tech events, specific subject like hacking, big data, drones, bitcoin etc. Once you start looking at this site you will see there are tons of things you can do. Make sure when you go to these events you have fun, educate yourself, and don't forget to bring your business cards with you.
5. <http://www.sdissa.org/> - This is the San Diego chapter of ISSA (Information Systems Security Association) and a good place to network and get involved in your local Cyber Community. They typically will have monthly luncheons with speakers who cross the field of IT and Cyber Security. I have been a member for over 10 years and actively go to these luncheons when my schedule permits. I even present at the San Diego chapter on occasion. The main thing to remember here is if you are starting out in the field of IT or Cyber Security you will meet many people in both fields at these gatherings. It is here that you can collect information to fine tune your cyber career map.
6. <http://www.isaca-sd.org/> - This is the San Diego chapter of ISACA (Information Systems Audit and Control Association). If you are into Network Audit and Risk Management this organization is for you. I have found they have great presentations at the monthly meetings. Many of these presentations are given by very knowledgeable people within the field of IT and Cyber Security. This is a very good organization to get involved with if it is available in your area and I would highly recommend it.
7. <http://aitpsd.org/> - this is San Diego's chapter of AITP (Association of IT Professionals). This is an organization that focuses on IT education for professionals. They are active and have members that range across the IT and Cyber career fields. Here in San Diego their meetings tend to be in the evening, typically a dinner format, with great speakers. Locally they are known for their annual "Cloud Security Conference." What I like about attending AITP events is you have people from all over the IT spectrum. While networking at these events the conversations you get into with people are fascinating and again you learn about other IT fields. Going to these events is all about broadening your view of IT and Cyber Security and giving you context of how technology fits into the career path you are building.

8. <https://www.owasp.org/index.php/SanDiego> - this is the San Diego chapter of OWASP (Open Web Application Security Project). This is a worldwide organization dedicated to improving the security of software. I have gone to several of their chapter meetings and even presented at one. There is an incredible amount of information and training that is available through an OWASP chapter and if your career path involves software development I would definitely recommend joining this organization. The main organization website is https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Main_Page I have used it to educate myself on software security and provide training to my developers.

As we finish this discussion I think it is important to use all of the tools available to you, with that said the workflow below I believe demonstrates why these sites are important. They are tools that can be used by you as you start your career path into the world of Information Technology and Cyber Security.



So as always I hope this article and the information I have provided is of value to you. I bring this to you not as an expert but as a practitioner who has been in the field for years with a true wish to share some of the experiences I have learned. With that good luck as you walk your path and don't forget, "always be curious."