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by Brett Thomas

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Trinity Saint David

Reflection on Academic and Employability Skills

04th December 2018

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Academic and Employability Skills
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Declaration

I declare that this report is the product of my own work. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

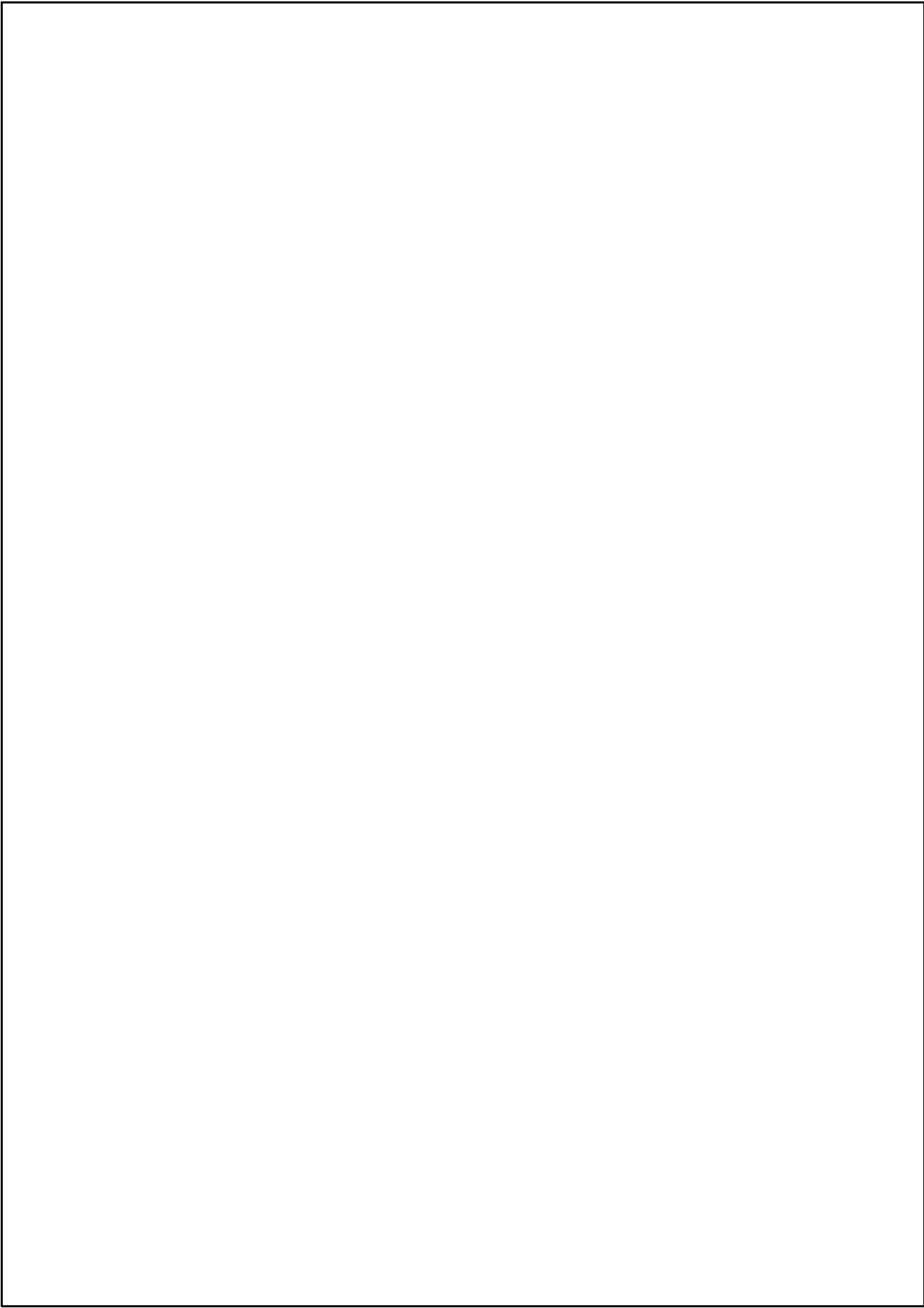
Abstract

This report has been created for the purpose of providing a summary and explanation of the professional and academic skills that have been covered during the AES module of the course. The author will provide detail on all the areas covered within the module and what they have learnt and implemented as part of their learning.

The report will cover the author, skills evaluation, action plans, application of learnt skills and will provide a conclusion and evaluation.

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1. Introduction

Academic and Employability Skills are key components to Higher Education Learning as well as current and future employment. The AES module aims to provide the necessary skills for the author to continue with their education and further their employment prospects in their future endeavours.

This report will cover what the author has learnt in the AES module and provide a reader an understanding of the key components.

2. The Author

This section will cover the author and the presentation they undertook on themselves to their classmates.

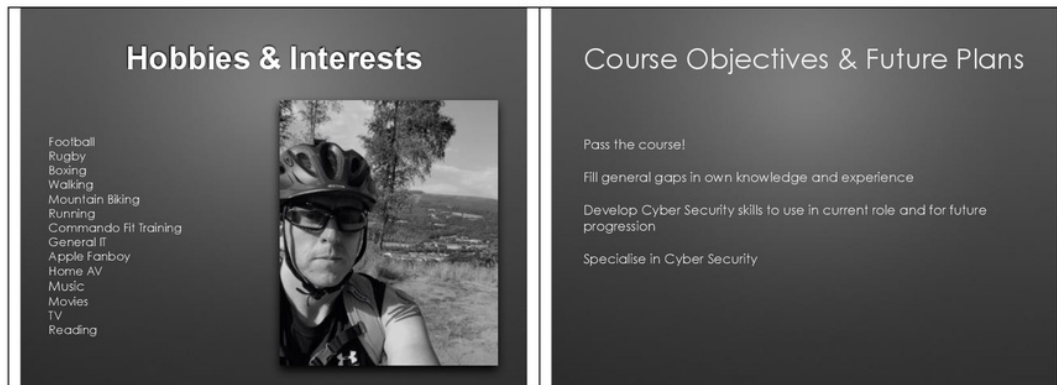
2.1 Overview of The Author

The author is a 38-year-old family man with over 20 years' experience within several areas of the IT sector. The author has varied interests including sport, physical training, home entertainment and technology. The author is ambitious and is always eager to learn new skills and further improve themselves as a person.

2.2 Presentation Samples

As part of the module, the class were tasked with individually creating and conducting a presentation based on themselves. Here are some samples from the presentation that the author gave to introduce themselves within their class.

Sample 1 – Basic Introduction  A presentation slide titled 'Introduction'. It features a family photo on the left and a photo of a guinea pig on the right. Text on the left lists: '38 Years Old', 'Married 13 years', '2 Children', '2 Guinea Pigs', 'Growing Up', and 'Life Until Now'.	Sample 2 – Work History and Experience/Qualifications  A presentation slide titled 'Employers' and 'Experience/Qualifications'. It lists employers: 'Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (2000-2017)' and 'Cwm Taf UHB (2017-Present)'. It also lists qualifications: 'HNC Computing', 'CCA / CCAA', 'MCITP - Windows Server 2012', 'Desktop Support', 'Applications', 'End User Computing', and 'Server Management'. Logos for various companies and organizations are displayed on the right.
Sample 3 – Hobbies and Interests	Sample 4 – Course Objectives and Future Plans



2.3 Lessons learnt for presentations

For this presentation, the author decided to try and use a professional looking slide deck using the application “Keynote”. Other programs were of course available such as Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Sway but due to the author being an Apple Mac user and the ability to use their Apple iPhone smartphone as a “clicker” it was decided that Keynote was the best one to go with due to the platform on which it was being created. Information on this and alternative presentation applications can be found in the appendices.

When researching on how best to conduct a presentation, several key points were discovered on how to create and perform one which the author used to complete the task. Some examples of these points are below

2.3.1 Slide Design

Using ineffective visuals [1] can have a negative effect on your presentation and cause the target audience to get confused or lost in information. It is recommended that you keep your slides concise and to the point with minimal animations/flashy visuals. Recommendations state that contrasting background to text colours work best depending on how the room is lit.

2.3.2 Confidence

Having a lack in confidence when conducting a presentation can cause several adverse effects. You can speak incoherently, and you can lose engagement with the target audience by not making eye contact, either way the presentation will lose its effectiveness. Recommendations are that you stand tall, smile, take your time and make sure you talk to the audience and not your notes or the screen. [2]

2.3.3 Focus and Organisation

By sticking to a logical structure, the presentation will flow dynamically. If you jump around too much then this can confuse the target audience. [3]

Recommendations are that you design the structure to the presentation so that the information flows from one subject area to the next and not revert to previous slides/information unnecessarily.

Other skills that are key such as preparation of the environment, understanding the equipment you are using, having a backup plan should technology go wrong and not knowing the subject matter.

2.4 Improvements

As part of undertaking the presentation, the lecturer of the class conducted a mock assessment of the authors technique and the design and use of their slides. Feedback received was that the author used a “go-to” word of “umm”. The author agreed with the feedback and understands that the next time a presentation is performed then they will keep this in mind and try to pause between sentences with pauses to focus so that this does not occur.

The lecturer also identified that the colour scheme of the slide deck may not be suitable for all viewers due to the dark background and light text. The author felt that this would not be an issue due to the contrasting colour scheme and recommendations from research but concedes that this may be an issue for some viewers and will use this as a factor when creating future presentations.

A third improvement that was identified as part of the presentation was around time management. The author ran over the 5-minute time limit by 2 minutes so to improve on this for future presentations will undertake more “dry runs” and time them so that the risk of this occurring will minimise.

3. Research into Skills Evaluation

Section 2 of the Academic and Employability Skills module was focused on the evaluation of skills required in learning and employment. These skills were broken down into Higher Education, skills employers are looking for generally and self-evaluation.

3.1 Learning in Higher Education

The author has not been in Higher Education for some time and as a result there are key skills required to be successful whilst undertaking the course. The following are some of these skills and what they mean.

- Research / Data Gathering – The action of the author to find out information which may not have been attained in course lectures from scholarly material. The research will be on a specific topic matter.
- Time Management / Organisation – The ability to allocate sufficient time to required assignments, work or other commitments. This will need to cover other aspects of the authors life which may have an effect, e.g. Family, professional work or other extra-curricular activities. A second part of this is to organise workloads if they would benefit being completed in a specific order so that nothing required is missed.
- Understanding Tasks and Questions – To understand what is required of the author through assignment work and other tasks. The ability to read, digest and understand allocated work before creating and submitting said work is imperative as there would otherwise be a risk of not doing what is required and therefore reducing the marks that would be attained.
- Presenting / Report Writing– As part of the course, the author will be required to undertake multiple presentations and write many reports on multiple subject areas. The ability to write a clearly written report in an appropriately structured

format is imperative Further detail on the presenting area can be found in the earlier section of this report.

- Citing and Referencing – When the author has work to undertake which requires reports, presentations or both, there is a strict requirement to cite and reference sources of information which the author has used. For the purpose of the course, the author must use the IEEE referencing style. Referencing is required for legal reasons so that acknowledgement is given for another person's ideas or work. If appropriate referencing is not undertaken, then the author could fall foul of plagiarism and be penalised.

3.2 Employer Skills Search

Employers will look for skills that crossover from those that are required in Higher Education such as honesty and organisation but there are many skills that they will specifically look for and no matter what industry the employer is based in, the core skills will be the same [4] Some examples of these types of skills are as follows.

- Literate – The ability to read and write clearly is a critical component through your employment.
- Oral and written skills – When communicating with peers, managers, customers and clients, you will need the ability to speak to these individually and as a group clearly and confidently.
- Ability to work as part of a team – Many situations may arise where you either need to work under your own steam or as part of a wider team. Teamwork is a key component of working with others.
- Able to work with initiative – The ability to take (authorised) charge of a situation without the need for consistent guidance from management or peers.
- Disciplined – To behave appropriately in the workplace.
- Adaptability and flexibility. – To be adaptable to the employee requirements and adjust schedules and priorities as required.

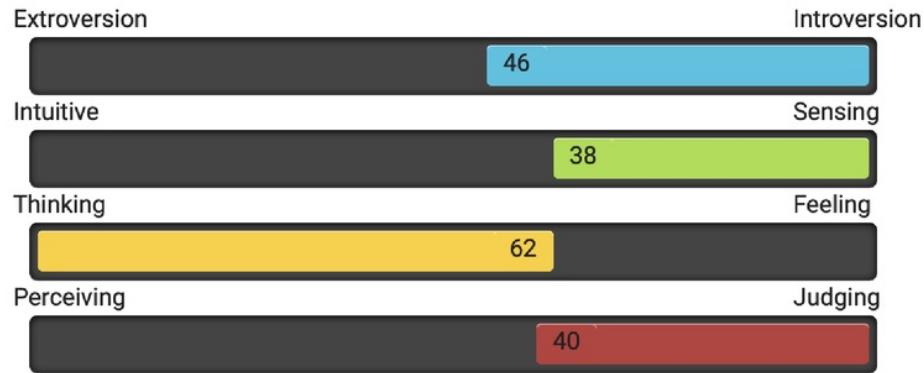
3.3 Self Evaluation

3.3.1 Personality

The author conducted a personality test on <http://www3.psychcentral.com> and had the following results:

You are I-S-T-J

Introverted - Sensing - Thinking - Judging (ISTJ)



The test offers the following description of the author's personality type –
“*Serious and quiet, interested in security and peaceful living. Extremely thorough, responsible, and dependable. Well-developed powers of concentration. Usually interested in supporting and promoting traditions and establishments. Well-organized and hard working, they work steadily towards identified goals. They can usually accomplish any task once they have set their mind to it*”. [5]

3.3.2 Suitable Career Suggestions

In a work environment, individuals who have the traits of ISTJ have many strengths. The trait usually makes the individual meticulous and dependable who take deadlines and specifications of their requirements very seriously. The individual prefer a stable environment with clear expectations [6] ISTJ individuals value working independently and also as part of a team which the author does agree with. Using the online resource www.truity.com and keeping the above detail in mind, suitable career suggestions within the ICT sector are as follows [6]:

- Computer and IS Manager
- Computer Network Architect
- Computer Programmer
- Computer Support Specialist
- Computer Systems Analyst
- Database Administrator
- Information Security Analyst
- Network or Computer Systems Administrator
- Software Developer
- Web Developer

There are many jobs outside of the ICT sector which are also suitable but for the purpose of the report being based on the author, the focus is on the chosen sector only.

3.3.3 Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths of the ISTJ type are hardworking, dependable and honest. Weaknesses of this type can be rigid, insensitive and judgemental.

Overall, the author agrees with the details of the explanation offered on this personality type. As part of their presentation, the author specifically mentions that they are traditional in their attitude towards life and work and their current focussed areas within their employment also suits this personality type, specifically around security and their way of working. The author struggles to argue against any of the detail offered for their personality type.

The author has also compared the results with opinions of their peers and overall the personality test seems to fit the personality of the author. The author understands their personality type now and just how much of the population also fits this type (more information on percentages are in the appendices).

4.0 Action Plans

4.1 Short and Long Term Goals

4.1.1 Professional Goals

- Promotion to technical leadership role/decision maker with employer

4.1.2 Personal Goals

- Run a 10k race
- Purchase a large, detached property

4.1.3 Academic Goals

- Achieve BSc

4.2 Dedicated Action Plans for Goals

4.2.1 Professional Goals

Goal	Steps	Duration	Description	Complete By
Promotion	Prince Qualification	3 months	PRINCE qualification required for higher level roles	12/2019
	Leadership Training	6 months	Leadership qualification required for higher roles	12/2020
	Involvement in larger projects	ongoing	Ongoing involvement in larger scale projects to improve experience	12/2020

4.2.2 Personal Goals

Goal	Steps	Duration	Description	Complete By
Run a 10k Race	Run 5K Race	2 months	Run a comfortable 5K race	12/2018
	Run 7.5K	4 months	Run 7.5K comfortably	02/2019
	Run 10k	6 months	Run 10k comfortably	04/2019

Goal	Steps	Duration	Description	Complete By
Purchase large detached property	Renovate current property	12 months	Renovation of current home to maximise sale value.	12/2019
	Sell current property	24 months	Sell current home to fund deposit	12/2020
	Find suitable property	24 months	Look for suitable property in suitable area	12/2020

4.2.3 Academic Goals

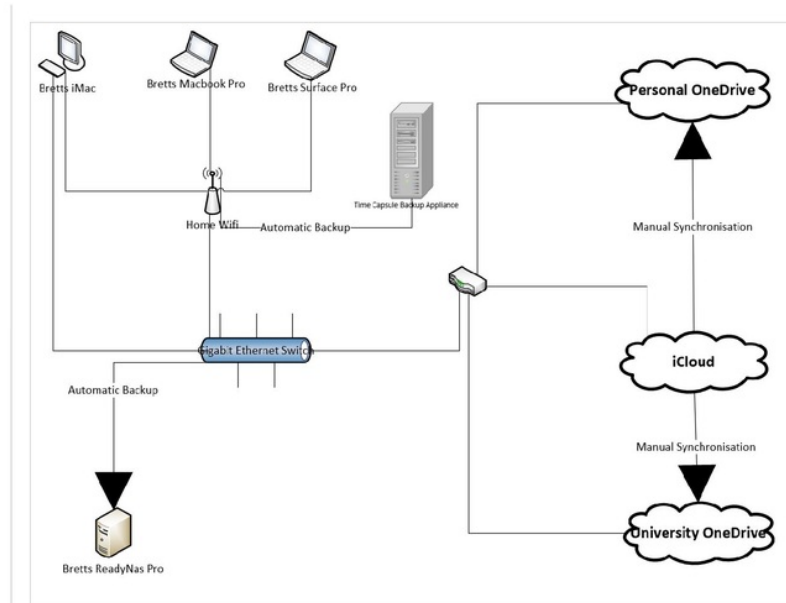
Goal	Steps	Duration	Description	Complete By
BSc Qualification	Pass Year 1	8 Months	Pass year 1 of Cyber BSc Course	07/2019
	Pass Year 2	20 months	Pass year 2 of Cyber BSc Course	07/2020
	Pass Year 3	32 months	Pass year 3 of Cyber BSc Course	07/2021
	Pass Year 4	44 months	Pass year 4 of Cyber BSc Course	07/2022

5.0 Application

5.1 Looking After Your Data

5.1.1 Backup Strategy

The backup strategy the author uses for personal data is detailed in the below diagram and following description:



The “live” working storage area for the authors data is the Apple iCloud drive. This drive is synchronised automatically across the 3 computers owned by said author. When a change is made on any one of the 3 computers, this data is then replicated to the iCloud drive and then replicated to the other computers in the network as long as they have an internet connection.

Backup location 1 for the authors data is the personal Microsoft OneDrive storage which they synchronise the data weekly using an application called “Sync Folders Pro” – more information can be found on this application in the Appendices.

Backup location 2 for the authors data is the Microsoft OneDrive storage provided by University of Wales Trinity St David. The author synchronises their data weekly using an application called “Sync Folders Pro”

Backup Location 3 is a device called an Apple Time Capsule. The 2 Apple Mac devices owned by the author automatically backup to this appliance over the Wi-Fi regularly as data changes. This device also does a full system state backup of the computers mentioned and recovery is available immediately. The Time Capsule as a result of the backup strategy can recover the synchronised files from iCloud on each Mac

computer so in effect has 2 separate backups of the authors data. More information on Apple Time Capsule and Apple Time Machine backup software can be found in the Appendices. Due to Apple Time Capsule being a discontinued product, up to date information is scarce.

The final locations where the author stores their data is a NAS device. This device is setup in a RAID 5 configuration. The author has a scheduled job which copies the data from the Apple iMac iCloud Drive connection to the NAS network drive over ethernet. This scheduled job is run every month or so.

Each computer within the authors network has appropriate Anti-Virus installed also.

With the above strategy in place, at any one time there is a version of the authors data copied to 8 locations. These versions differ as to when in the calendar they are compared. There are copies of the data within 3 separate hosted cloud solutions as well as 5 physical locations at the authors home. The computers in the authors network are in separate rooms across 2 floors so not all locations are together at any one time.

5.1.2 Disaster Scenarios

The following are some examples of scenarios of disaster where the data could be at risk and how the authors backup strategy could deal with each scenario. If this strategy was not in place and depending on the scenario then the author could have lost some or all of their data as well as possibly the hardware so would need to purchase a new device as well as having to start fresh with no access to historical information and loss of all academic, personal and professional data.

Scenario 1 – Loss of Computer

If any one of the authors computers or components of hardware/storage should either be stolen or unusable through hardware failure, then the data is still accessible. The author will be able to access the cached data on the other computers, live data on the cloud services or the backup data on the Time Capsule or NAS appliance. If the strategy was not in place, then the author would be without their device as well as their data.

Scenario 2 – House Fire/Flood at home property

If the author was to be in a situation where their home was damaged/lost due to some kind of environmental disaster such as a flood or fire, the author will still be able to access the live data and backup data in either one of the 3 cloud services from any other computer. If the strategy was not in place, then the author would be without their devices and their data.

Scenario 3 – Accidental Deletion of Data

If the author was to accidentally delete any of the live data then this can be recovered through the Time Capsule backups which will be a

very recent backup, the OneDrive services which will be a weekly or from the NAS appliance which is a monthly. Without the strategy in place, the author would have to start again on what information was overwritten and some of this information could be irreplaceable.

Scenario 4 – Cloud Service Failure

If the Apple iCloud service was to fail then the data will still be accessible through the cached copies on any one of the 3 computers that the author has or the backup copies held on the OneDrive services, Time Capsule or NAS appliance. In this scenario, if the strategy was not in place then the author would not have access to their data until the cloud service has returned and if there was time sensitive information that the author needed access to then this could have an effect on their academic and professional life.

Scenario 5 – Network Failure

If the author was to lose their network connection or internet presence at home, the author can use their mobile device as a hotspot or travel to their parent's property to get internet connectivity and all data will be accessible and useable through any one of the 3 cloud services that they use. If this scenario were to happen without the strategy, then the author would have to wait until service had resume or hardware had been replaced depending on what the source of the failure was.

Scenario 6 – Virus Infection

If the authors live data or equipment was compromised through a Virus infection, then 2 out of the 3 home computers can be recovered immediately through the Time Machine backups on the Time Capsule. Data can then be recovered through either the Time Capsule, one of the OneDrive services or from the NAS appliance. The restore option undertaken will depend on the date of the infection and whether the infection has spread to their network services or not. If this was to happen without the strategy in place, then the author would need to recover their devices and will have to lose all their current data.

5.1.3 Ransomware

Ransomware or any other type of malware infection is also a relevant DR scenario. The author undertook a class-based exercise on this subject specifically and wrote a report for this. The report can be found in the appendices.

As for how the authors network setup would handle this type of scenario, the author has the data backed up on multiple cloud-based systems which do not automatically update. The data is recoverable from the cloud but if that data should somehow get compromised then there are cached copies on other computers within the network as well as the AFP share on the NAS appliance which hosts backups of the data. If the strategy was not in place, then the author would

either have to pay the ransom and risk still not being able to access the data or have to rebuild their device and start again with no access to their data. This is a financial, academic and professional risk.

5.2 Time Management and Self Organisation

5.2.1 Productivity

To enhance the authors productivity, the author plans to continue with the method that they already undertake for their professional and personal life.

All schedules for personal and professional undertakings are implemented into the authors iCloud calendar. By extending the user of the calendar to their academic life also, the author then can allocate time to personal study and development work as well as assignment work so they can make sure enough time is allocated to complete the work as required without impacting on other areas of their personal or professional life. The author's family also has access to the calendar so that they can be aware of the schedule and not arrange activities that conflict with the authors workload. The author has access to their calendars across all of their devices and has appropriate reminders set to prompt them should their commitment to that time allocation be missed.

The author has also engaged with their current employer to make sure that some time can be allocated as necessary during normal "professional" hours especially around assignment submission time. This will also assist with their workload and to make sure they have a greater chance of being able to undertake the necessary work as required for the course.

The author plans to make sure that as assignments and other learning requirements are released through the course then they would look to commence sooner rather than later therefore to reduce the risk of last minute and rushed work. This will reduce stress and leave sufficient time for the work to be checked before submission.

The author is an organised person already but will endeavour to enhance this further by committing extra focus to their schedule and requirements.

5.2.2 E-Portfolio / PDP Implementation

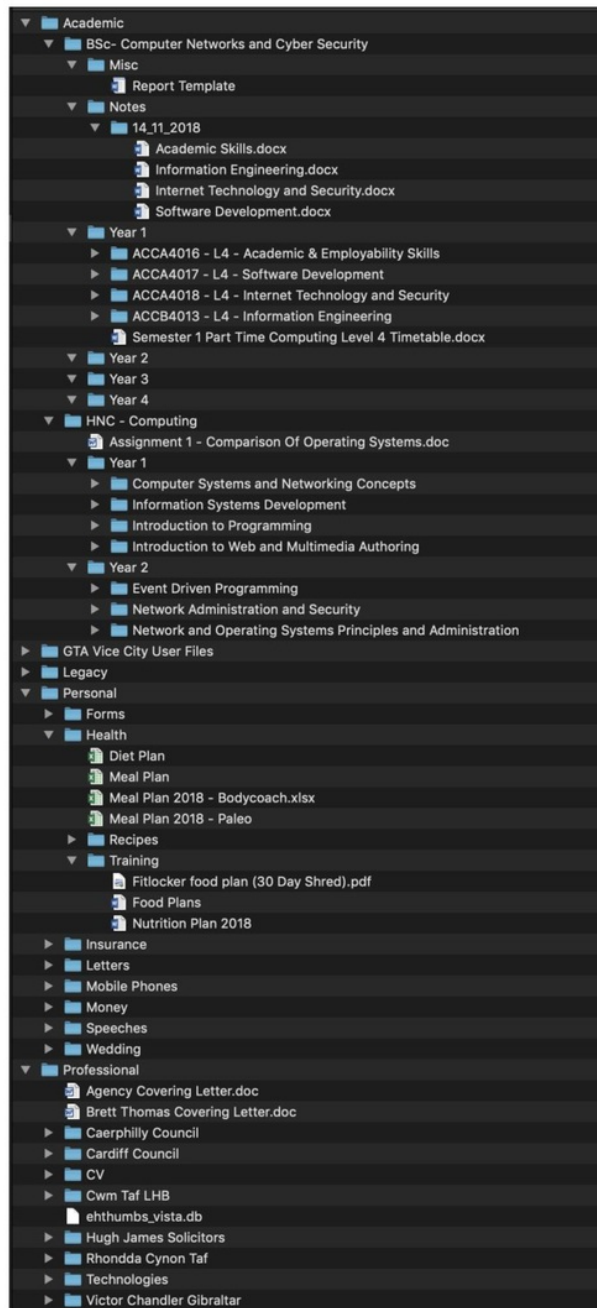
Below, there is a screenshot of the e-portfolio that the author has created to store their academic, personal and professional data in.

- The academic area is split into Higher Education courses attended then spilt into years, semesters and subjects.

- The professional area is split into current and historical employers as well as generic documents such as CVs and covering letters.
- The personal area is split into various subject areas such as health, financial and events.

Overall, the data in each area is segmented in to subject areas and dates; as a result, relevant information is easy to find and retrieve when required.

In the appendices you will also find a link to the authors personal LinkedIn profile.



LinkedIn profile in appendices

6.0 Conclusion and Evaluation

From undertaking the AES module as part of the BSc course, the author has learnt the key components to successful development within Further Education and Academic learning.

The author is aware of the key components to report writing, what to do and what not to do when presenting orally and written.

The author has a strategy in place so that their critical data is safe and secure so that there is no risk of a major catastrophe as a result of data loss or other breaches.

The author can prepare themselves through improved organisation skills using tools such as action plans and calendars.

Now that the author has a greater understanding of their personality type, they can now look to proactively address their limitations and negative traits in order for these not to negatively affect their person, professional or academic life.

For future improvements, the author plans to further their toolset knowledge by using dedicated systems for managing work such as Microsoft Project and GANTT charts.

Overall, the author feels that they are now well prepared in order to progress with the course due to the extra tools and skills that the AES module has provided them with.

7.0 References

- [1] “10 Common Presentation Mistakes - Communication Skills From Mind Tools.” [Online]. Available: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/presentation-mistakes.htm>. [Accessed: 13-Dec-2018].
- [2] “How to give a dynamic scientific presentation.” [Online]. Available: <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/how-to-give-a-dynamic-scientific-presentation>. [Accessed: 13-Dec-2018].
- [3] “How to Give an Effective Presentation | Meeting Tomorrow.” [Online]. Available: <https://meetingtomorrow.com/content-library/how-to-give-an-effective-presentation>. [Accessed: 13-Dec-2018].
- [4] “What skills do graduate employers look for? | Graduate Jobs, Internships & Careers Advice - Inside Careers.” [Online]. Available: <https://www.insidecareers.co.uk/career-advice/what-skills-do-graduate-employers-look-for/>. [Accessed: 19-Dec-2018].
- [5] “Jungian 16-Type Personality Test - Psych Central.” [Online]. Available: <http://www3.psychcentral.com/quizzes/personality/index.php?sid=766d856ef1a6b02f93d894415e6bfa0e766d856ef1a6b02f93d894415e6bfa0e&fi0=JP-13-O&si0=3&fi1=IE-07-S&si1=1&fi2=SN-20-O&si2=5&fi3=JP-05-S&si3=1&fi4=IE-15-S&si4=1&fi5=FT-02-O&si5=5&fi6=SN-32-O&si6=3&p>. [Accessed: 13-Dec-2018].
- [6] “ISTJ Career Success: Choose the Right Job and Put Your ISTJ Strengths to Work | Truity.” [Online]. Available: <https://www.truity.com/personality-type/ISTJ/careers>. [Accessed: 19-Dec-2018].

8.0 Supplementary Information / Appendices

Keynote

<https://www.apple.com/uk/keynote/>

Microsoft Powerpoint

<https://products.office.com/en-gb/powerpoint>

Microsoft Sway

<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/getting-started-with-sway-2076c468-63f4-4a89-ac5f-424796714a8a>

ISTJ Personality Type

<https://psychologenic.com/general-overview-of-istj-personality-traits>

Sync Folders Pro

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/sync-folders-pro/id522706442?mt=12>

Apple Time Capsule

<https://www.officeworks.com.au/shop/officeworks/p/apple-airport-time-capsule-2tb-apairtime>

Apple Time Machine

<https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201250>

Ransomware Task (Double click cover page image to open document)



Ransomware – Cryptowall Trojan

21st November 2018

Brett Thomas

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Bachelor of Science Computer Networks and Cyber Security

LinkedIn Profile

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brett-thomas-769864149/>

ACCA4016_Sem1_assignment_October_2018_Submission

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

66/100

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GRADING FORM: GJ_2019

BRETT THOMAS**330****ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERATURE**

Some research sources used, but this needs to be even more extensive, comprise more independent sources (not ones provided to you during the course of the module), and show in more detail how your reading has influenced or backs up your own comments (and where possible, this needs to be done through ALL sections of the assignment)

60**KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

A good level of understanding demonstrated in most areas. However including more additional independent research material and showing how these are influencing your thoughts and decisions would have allowed you to obtain additional marks in this section.

65**COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL**



Good level of personal analysis applied to the gathered information, with all required areas covered and extending beyond simply presenting the data obtained. Could have done more in terms of analyzing the personality results and formulating plans to make good any weaknesses, (based on more extensive research into these identified areas)

67

PRACTICAL APPLICATION



Some content to show that all the various aspects have been attempted, however some areas lacking in evidence to describe what steps are going to be taken to improve/change in view of the findings or actually showing evidence to demonstrate things are actually being put into place (e.g. evidence of actually USING a calendar/diary system, rather than just mentioning it)

65

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



Generally well laid out and presented. Good use of formatting and breaking the report down into sensible nested numbered sections that follow the numbering convention detailed in class. Good writing style. Reads well with a good 'flow'.

73