

Cyber Smart Career Spotlight

BY ACTUA

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SHE/HER

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I am a Senior Research Analyst at the Sensitive and Specialized Investigative Services Branch of the RCMP, where I assist law enforcement in doing their job more effectively and efficiently. As a research analyst who works on understanding the impacts and risks of online victimization of children (including possible forms of violence experienced by a child online), I need to learn about new trends, threats and technologies and share that information with law enforcement to inform and advance their understanding on various topics, inform strategic decisions and encourage and support engagement across different sectors. My role would definitely be considered a non-traditional role in cybersecurity, yet it is incredibly interconnected within the sphere of cybersecurity and cyber safety more specifically.

CYBER SECURITY

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Describe your career path:

I have a colourful undergraduate degree where I focused on finding the areas of study I was most interested in. I enrolled as a criminology student, but throughout the four years of my undergraduate degree, I picked different courses that I was curious about. At the end of the four years, I earned a degree where I majored in Criminology and Sociology and minored in Political Science and Modern Languages (Spanish). As someone who was always interested in learning about crimes against persons, I decided to apply to graduate school because a professor strongly encouraged me to continue pursuing this interest at a higher educational level, which eventually led me to the career I have today. I learned about my job through an internship opportunity as part of my graduate studies, where I immersed myself in the environment and discovered that it was something I truly enjoyed.

What challenges have you faced and overcome in your career?

Working in law enforcement is pretty dynamic. I needed to adapt to a fast-paced environment where priorities and needs change frequently. I needed to further develop my technical skills and specialized knowledge to be able to perform specific tasks and use specific tools. I believe that challenges are the gateway to opportunity to explore alternative ways to both do and achieve something. Throughout my education and career, I've been faced with different challenges that I believe were just opportunities to get creative and remain curious about how I can get one step closer to my goals.

What advice would you give youth ?

My best advice to youth is to think outside the box about what interests them and to find creative ways to explore that. I encourage youth to look for opportunities such as volunteering, participating in clubs, workshops and camps as a way to gain practical skills and to explore their creativity and curiosity. I had a lot of different hobbies in school, such as acting, being part of the debate club and the language club. I believe that pursuing different hobbies allowed me to see what I liked and didn't like, while teaching me transferable skills which led me to my career today.

Why does diversity in cybersecurity matter?

Technology is everywhere, from the ways in which we communicate, to various software and technologies that we utilize in order to do our jobs more effectively and efficiently. In my job, I observe how technology can be both part of the problem and part of the solution. The biggest benefit to diversifying this space is the potential it has to fill important knowledge gaps and lead us to successful strategies and collaboration across various sectors. I believe there is a real benefit that comes from thinking outside the box and blending skills and perspectives, which allows us to leverage our strengths as we build and create smart solutions to complex issues we are faced with as a society.