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AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE INTERNSHIPS AND VIDEO CONFERENCING SECURITY

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AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE INTERNSHIPS AND
VIDEO CONFERENCING SECURITY

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Information Systems and Technology

by
Joshua A. Trapp
May 2021

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ABSTRACT

This culminating experience project explored online internships and video conferencing security. The research questions asked focus on the effectiveness of online versus in-person internships, internship curriculum, third-party internships, video-conferencing applications and their security, advantages of micro-internships, and benefits of internships to all stakeholders. To answer these research questions, data was collected on the security and encryption of video conferencing, and a literature review was conducted using the following terms: Employment, Internship, Video, Video conferencing, Virtual, Online, Electronic, Technology, and Security. Key findings include: (1) Online internships can provide employers with a global pool of employable candidates with increased diversity. (2) Video conferencing was vulnerable to many different types of attacks, including zoom bombing and escalation of privilege. (3) Online internships seem to be only effective if the internship coordinators have clear outcomes and planned activities. Coordinators should also schedule recreational meetings to avoid burnout. (4) Micro-Internships are a preferred option for students who do not have time for a three to six-month internship. Still, there are concerns that outsourcing full-time positions to those shorter project-based could result in gig work. (4) The future of online internships based on observing companies returning to the office is that a mix of online and in-person is in our future. The conclusions are that online internships can succeed given the correct structure and video conferencing software to communicate and build

relationships effectively. Areas that need to be explored further are the third-party internship provider's success to evaluate whether their solution is benefiting students and the job market. Another area for future study is the impact of the standard of internet speed on online internships' success.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Internships are invaluable to students who gain skills and experience in the field in the profession they desire to work. Internships are a valuable part of the workforce experience; it allows students to get their feet wet while still not being committed to a full-time position (Silva, 2016). Internships also provide a way to network with potential mentors who may provide connections and insight into crucial parts of a person's career.

In March of 2020, Businesses and Colleges transitioned to online platforms to adhere to public health guidance and to avoid the spread of COVID-19. This transition online was easier for some fields than others; some job sectors interact with the public, so they cannot be done online. According to Marissa G. Baker, her results state that “Approximately 25% (35.6 million) of US workers are employed in occupations (such as technology, administrative, financial, and engineering) that could be done from home; the remaining 75% work in occupations (including health care, manufacturing, retail, and food services) that are challenging to do from home.” (Baker, 2018)

During the pandemic, many students had to adapt to the online environment for school and internships. Since businesses also migrated online, many of them had to cancel or refactor internships. According to statistics by NACE’s COVID-19 Quick Poll Survey, “Employers that were planning to revoke offers to their interns for summer 2020 reported that they would revoke about

two-thirds of their internship offers (based on 122 employer responses).”

(National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2020). According to the same survey, the transportation industry respondents revoked 100% of their interns and 97.8% of their full-time recruits. Internships can provide a door into valuable careers and experience to students trying to bridge the gap between their academics and work.

In this culminating experience project, I analyze online internships and attempt to answer the following questions:

- How can online internships be as effective as in-person internships?
- What curriculum is most effective to build intern’s experience and soft skills?
- Are online internships good for businesses?
- Will online internships replace in-person internships?
- Can Micro-Internships resolve concerns about the online internship experience?
- How do third-party internship providers work?
- What video conferencing applications are currently used to do online internships?

- Are those apps secure?

The project is organized as follows:

Chapter two will provide a literature review and address the following questions:

- How can online internships be as effective as in-person internships?

- What curriculum is most effective to build intern's experience and soft skills?
- Are online internships good for businesses?
- Can Micro-Internships resolve concerns about the online internship experience?
- How do third-party internship providers work?
- Will online internships replace in-person internships?

Chapter three will analyze video conferencing and address:

- What video conferencing applications are currently used to do online internships?
 - Are those apps secure?

Chapter four will conclude this paper and suggest future research.

CHAPTER TWO

ONLINE INTERNSHIP ANALYSIS

Online internships can have many technical issues from a bad internet connection, compatibility issues stemming from operating system choice, lag between conversations, and many others that can occur on a video call or any connection between the intern and employer.

There are also many benefits to the online environment. The nature of a home office is you can tool your environment in ways people couldn't at the workplace. This has helped people to be more comfortable at the home desk, and "company productivity was actually the same (67%) or higher (27%) than it was before the pandemic."(Sahadi, 2020)

Since you create your home environment, there tend to be fewer interruptions, leading to better focus during work. However, most people have children, and other people living with them to navigate finding a secluded space is vital but challenging for most people. (Wilkie, 2017) There has also been the flexibility of time during online work; some companies have even started adopting a four-day workweek.

Some of the most reported issues are losing the opportunity to develop soft skills, missing out on professional workplace culture, inability to network at the watercooler, social cues, and body language does not translate well online.

Online internship effectiveness

Measuring effectiveness can be elusive, but growing an intern's soft skills is the best way for an intern to learn and pursue a promising career. Soft skills can include effective communication, complex problem-solving skills, critical thinking, teamwork, and organization and prioritization of work (Pearson, Moore, & Ray, 2017). These skills can be fundamental to job growth and overall career longevity. Building these on online classes is not as challenging as one might think. "The key to success is to have planned activities that answer specific learning outcomes and clearly defined student expectations." (Moore & Pearson, 2017) So in an online course, the development of soft skills can be based on how the assignments are structured for collaboration and critical thinking. In an internship, if the program is similarly structured to build time management, problem-solving, and other soft skills, interns and employers will find success. There are specific assignments that can correspond to building a particular soft skill like scenarios and case studies stimulate analysis and problem-based learning (Moore & Pearson, 2017)

The internship coordinator should also be aware of the different types of learners and present the information in four different ways: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic. All the learners can adapt well to online, except kinesthetic learners can find some challenge to learning online.

Online internships can have varying success depending on how the organization chooses to run the internship. Interns communicate with employers

in typical ways like email and phone calls but to create a more office environment; video conferencing should comprise the central portion of an online internship. Many things can be the same as an in-person internship, like interviewing, orientation, and onboarding.

Online internships should have professional development and team-building exercises that build the intern's teamwork skills and network, as previously mentioned. Even though they are virtual activities, you can still be engaging, giving groups a list of survival supplies and picking five to survive. Internship coordinators should encourage interns to communicate with other interns and even set up virtual coffee chats or game time. For professional development, you can have coworkers present to the interns or have the interns shadow them for a day virtually. (Downey & Naddaf, 2021)

Employers benefit significantly due to internships and especially online internships. When recruiters are searching for possible candidates, they can look at recent interns that had good feedback. The close team of people also know what to expect in terms of behavior but also work ethic and team cohesion. Online internships also have been shown to have a positive impact on the diversity of an organization. (Kraft, Jeske, & Bayerlein, 2019).

There is a newer concept called Micro Internships that company Parker Dewey originated. Micro internships are built to be short 5-40 hour projects that companies offer on the Parker Dewey marketplace. I talk about Parker Dewey later in the paper, where I will address third-party internship providers. Micro

internships offer short-paid work for students that don't have the time or money for a longer 3-6 month internship. One Forbes article even analyzed micro internships based on HR payroll “One full-time, \$12-per-hour intern for 10 weeks equates to \$4,800 in payroll — along with the need for a workspace, housing or transportation stipend, and personnel to hire and manage them. Compare that to a micro-intern, who would likely cost \$200 to \$600” (Wingard, 2019). This type of short work can also be categorized as gig work. Gig work can be great because it makes for a flexible work environment, and the employer only pays for the available work. There are opponents to gig work because if companies start to outsource full-time positions to multiple gig workers, this is ethically ambiguous.

As the public health crisis becomes more manageable, many businesses will develop hybrid programs with a mix of online and in-person work weeks. (Janjuha-Jivraj, 2020) Since internships are closely tied to these businesses, interns can expect a similar schedule. Given my research, online internships will not replace in-person internships but can be used to enhance in-person internships. Using video conferencing and other forms of communication used in online internships can improve in-person internship communication.

Online work and internships can be stressful as work-life balance can be challenging to manage. One report says that setting office hours and making internal thinking shifts to get out of the rut of online work. (Mazurowski, 2020) To ensure that interns don't fall prey to the same burnout, internship coordinators should schedule off-hours to establish a better work-life balance.

Third-party Online Internship Providers

Employers may struggle to build an Internship due to many issues that can occur during the planning process. Luckily, a couple of businesses have built their resources around connecting employers to students to offer work experience. I analyze four third-party internship providers: Virtual Internships, Parker Dewey, Symba, and Riipen.

Virtual internships are an organizer for online internships that can range from one to four months. To apply to virtual internships, you fill out your preferences about the internship, you then record a short 10-15 minute video application. After your video is reviewed, you will receive a rejection or an offer. If you receive an offer, there is an Acceptance Fee of \$750. Then they offer students the ability to take courses in professional development and the like. You then match with the internship and speak to the host company to confirm the internship. There is another Final Payment of \$750 before you can start your internship with the host company.

Parker Dewey wants to bridge the gap between education and employment. They offer micro internships in finance and accounting, Human Resources, marketing, and operations and support. All paid experiences many people have claimed that this will give the student and employer an advantage. Employers have a much-improved talent pool to select from because they have already done work with the company. Students get paid to do projects in their field and get to network while exploring the opportunity at the company.

Symba has multiple products that interns can utilize. Prospective interns can use Symba Slate which is a free job board that promotes paid online internships. You can interact with the posting to see the job posting on the companies website and apply there or through Symba. Symba offers companies that already have an established intern pool a way to track their project and performance. They found that most companies can find the right interns but can fall short managing them online using many different tools that can get confusing quickly. Since Symba only deals with the companies, they do not charge interns at all, only charging the company based on the number of interns they need to manage. The main page can be tooled to whatever organization is providing the internship sections include welcome videos, a resource library, a discussion board, and tracking project tasks. They also make sure to request feedback in the form of midpoint and ending surveys to ensure that interns are getting the most out of their time.

As a part of my research, I reached out to Riipen and was given the following approved statement.

“Riipen, is an experiential education platform for universities and colleges, helps students graduate with the employable skills and industry connections that will get them relevant employment upon graduation. They connect faculty and students, inside and out of the classroom, to companies that want an effective and engaging way to create brand awareness and recruit on campuses across the globe.”

CHAPTER THREE

VIDEO CONFERENCING ANALYSIS

Video conferencing is necessary to facilitate a proper online internship. Video conferencing consists of the users, and a central server packets are transmitted using the Internet Protocol to and from the prospective users. (Hasan & Hasan, 2021) As with all technology, there are security concerns; a large one that was exploited during the beginning of the 2020 school year was “Zoom-Bombing.” Zoom-Bombing or unauthorized users in a video conference gain access to the session to make threats and disrupt the meeting in progress. Most video conference platforms quickly added the feature for waiting rooms so that if unwanted people tried to join a meeting, they could screen them before entering. This change decreased Zoom-Bombing incidents, but some still occurred, like at a California State University San Bernardino event celebrating Black History Month in February 2021. There are also more severe security concerns like someone using the video conference to escalate privilege to obtain credentials so that the attack could not be contained in the video conference. A solution to this is that people need to make sure that passcodes and meeting IDs are given so that only the authenticated user will be given trusted information or abilities.

Many different programs are used to participate in online meetings and exchange ideas via video conferencing. Listed below are some:

- Zoom
- Teams
- GoToMeeting
- Cisco Webex
- Discord
- BlueJeans
- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- FaceTime
- WhatsApp

Zoom is one of the most used programs that offers a free account that can host up to 100 participants for up to 40 minutes. Its larger meeting sizes are priced at up to 1,000 participants for \$600 per year. One feature that zoom touts is the “ease and reliability of the cloud platform is Zoom’s connection process.”

Another popular application that is used for online internships is Microsoft Teams. Teams offer up to 100 participants (during COVID, it is extended to 300) and for a meeting duration of 60 minutes (during COVID, it is extended to 24 hrs.). All features like screen sharing, scheduled meetings, and customized backgrounds are offered for free, but there are no meeting recordings. On 3/2/2021, Microsoft announced that Teams would have end-to-end encryption on its Teams Desktop application later supporting more devices.

Cisco Webex is the video conferencing software used for my summer internship. Webex offers up to 100 participants for a maximum meeting length of up to 50 minutes, regular screen sharing, virtual backgrounds, and chat features included for free.

BlueJeans Meetings is a conferencing platform that offers no free tier for casual customers. Their pricing structure is as follows: Standard \$12.49 a month with meeting up to 100 participants, no meeting length, and five hours of recording. Next is the pro plan for \$17.49 per month; you can host up to 125 participants and get 25 hours of recording and many different integrations to Slack, Teams, Splunk, and Canvas. The enterprise tier requires consultation with BlueJeans for pricing information, but it offers up to 200 participants, unlimited recordings, dedicated support, and more. One interesting feature is the smart meeting features that allow for meeting highlights, recaps, and something they call action item tagging where you can organize tasks to do.

Using Wireshark, I captured the packets of a regular zoom meeting with standard security controls. In line number 103, you can see a key exchange and an encrypted handshake message between the server and a client. This ensures that the server and the client (also the second client you are in the meeting with) have a secure connection to begin the meeting. This type of encryption would prevent an attacker from seeing any audio or video, but Zoom can still access that data if they wanted to. In March of 2020, there was some concern that Zoom misused the term end-to-end encryption and should have used the term transport

encryption instead. (Lee & Grauer, 2020) Other forms of vulnerabilities like two white-hat security specialists discovered a Remote Code Execution flaw in zoom that allowed them to execute code on a remote machine. (Arntz, 2021) Video conferencing software can have many problems, but having competitions like those that discovered the RCE flaw is integral in the security process.

No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol	Length	Info
103	3.774068	192.168.1.245	134.224.190.31	TLSv1.2	180	Client Key Exchange, Change Cipher Spec, Encrypted Handshake Message
104	3.790653	193.123.209.23	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	128	Application Data
105	3.790872	192.168.1.245	193.123.209.23	TLSv1.2	966	Application Data
106	3.806283	193.123.208.189	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	128	Application Data
107	3.806494	192.168.1.245	193.123.208.189	TLSv1.2	967	Application Data
108	3.817517	193.123.209.23	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	510	Application Data
109	3.818229	192.168.1.245	134.224.190.30	TCP	54	52894 → 443 [FIN, ACK] Seq=644 Ack=4268 Win=131328 Len=0
110	3.818328	192.168.1.245	134.224.190.31	TCP	54	52895 → 443 [FIN, ACK] Seq=644 Ack=4268 Win=131328 Len=0
111	3.818377	192.168.1.245	193.123.208.189	TLSv1.2	95	Application Data
112	3.818403	192.168.1.245	193.123.208.189	TLSv1.2	85	Encrypted Alert
113	3.818451	192.168.1.245	193.123.208.189	TCP	54	52892 → 443 [FIN, ACK] Seq=1783 Ack=4393 Win=131872 Len=0
114	3.818489	192.168.1.245	193.123.209.23	TLSv1.2	95	Application Data
115	3.818512	192.168.1.245	193.123.209.23	TLSv1.2	85	Encrypted Alert
116	3.818556	192.168.1.245	193.123.209.23	TCP	54	52893 → 443 [FIN, ACK] Seq=1782 Ack=4849 Win=130816 Len=0
117	3.844430	193.123.209.23	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	85	Encrypted Alert
118	3.844430	193.123.209.23	192.168.1.245	TCP	54	443 → 52893 [RST, ACK] Seq=4880 Ack=1782 Win=49152 Len=0
119	3.844463	192.168.1.245	193.123.209.23	TCP	54	52893 → 443 [RST, ACK] Seq=1783 Ack=4880 Win=0 Len=0
120	3.846374	193.123.208.189	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	510	Application Data
121	3.846390	192.168.1.245	193.123.208.189	TCP	54	52892 → 443 [RST, ACK] Seq=1784 Ack=4849 Win=0 Len=0
122	3.848429	193.123.209.23	192.168.1.245	TCP	54	443 → 52893 [RST] Seq=4849 Win=0 Len=0
123	3.852369	193.123.208.189	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	85	Encrypted Alert
124	3.854587	193.123.208.189	192.168.1.245	TCP	54	443 → 52892 [RST, ACK] Seq=4880 Ack=1783 Win=49152 Len=0
125	3.858524	193.123.208.189	192.168.1.245	TCP	54	443 → 52892 [RST] Seq=4393 Win=0 Len=0
126	3.864861	134.224.190.30	192.168.1.245	TLSv1.2	105	Change Cipher Spec, Encrypted Handshake Message

Figure 3.1 Packet capture of a Zoom meeting

The Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency released recommendations to secure video conferencing, including connecting securely, controlling access, managing file and screen sharing/recordings, and keeping applications up to date. CISA recommends changing default passwords on routers and wifi networks and making sure a home router is configured using WPA2 or WPA3. To control access, they suggest that you require a password that is not guessable, enabling the waiting room feature and making sure you can manually admit and remove attendees. To manage files and screen sharing, you can make sure that .exe files are not shareable and ensure that participants are aware of any

recording during meetings. They also recommend saving files locally and not in the cloud. Finally, make sure that the applications used are continually updated so that any security risks can be patched. (The Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency, 2020)

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FUTURE WORK

This culminating experience project posed the following questions:

- How can online internships be as effective as in-person internships?
- What curriculum is most effective to build intern's experience and soft skills?
- Are online internships good for businesses?
- Will online internships replace in-person internships?
- Can Micro-Internships resolve concerns about the online internship experience?
- How do third-party internship providers work?
- What video conferencing applications are currently used to do online internships?
 - Are those apps secure?

Questions:

- How can online internships be as effective as in-person internships?
- What curriculum is most effective to build intern's experience and soft skills?

Result 1: Structure is key to online internships

Internship providers or supervisors should have a clear outcome and activities to engage interns and build skills effectively. This will help the intern grow their skills. (Moore & Pearson, 2017) Internships should also have many opportunities to resource and network with people within the business so that the intern's professional networks grow. (Downey & Naddaf, 2021)

Question:

- Are online internships good for businesses?

Result 2: Many employer benefits to online internships

Online internships provide an employer with many eligible candidates to fill full-time positions. The employer also benefits because they know the intern's personality and if they fit within their organization's structure. Finally, employers have increased diversity due to online internships. (Kraft, Jeske, & Bayerlein, 2019)

Question:

- Can Micro-Internships resolve concerns about the online internship experience?

Result 3: Concerns with Micro-Internships

Micro-internships can help many students who cannot spend 3-6 months in an internship. The short-term projects could still be exploited by companies looking to downgrade full-time positions into project-based internships. (Wingard, 2019)

Question:

- What video conferencing applications are currently used to do online internships?
 - Are those apps secure?

Result 4: Recommendations for Video Conferencing Security

After analyzing the packet capture and researching video conferencing security vulnerabilities, I recommend that every user only gives passcodes and meeting IDs to trusted people. Most applications have also made waiting rooms default so that unwanted entry is less successful. (The Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency, 2020)

Question:

- Will online internships replace in-person internships?

Result 5: Online Internships Post Covid

As the workforce transitions into a hybrid schedule with workweeks divided into online days and in-office days, internships will also follow suit. (Janjuha-Jivraj, 2020) This hybrid schedule will take the good things from work at home, just like internships will take the techniques and ways of communicating during online internships and apply those to in-person internships.

Finally, based on the information shared in this project, some areas could be researched to help online internships become even more successful. The impact of the standard of internet speed on online internship success should be studied. This research could inspire future governmental success in infrastructure and standards that would lead to better internet speeds for everyone. Lastly, third-party internship providers should be observed to see if they succeed or not so that more ways of interning and entering the workforce emerge to benefit students seeking employment.

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