



## Cyber Ops Certification

### Case Study Subject

Amanda Bramlett, Nashville, TN

### Cisco Certifications

CCNA Cyber Ops

# Making the Zoo Less of a “Zoo” with Cybersecurity Training

Engage One might not typically think that a public zoo has a great need for cybersecurity, but that would be a wrong assumption. Just ask Amanda Bramlett, systems administrator for the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere in Tennessee. Nobody is trying to break in and steal intellectual property. But, the organization does process credit card purchases, and there are all those personnel records for a staff of 200. Like many other users, the zoo was targeted by the recent Google Docs spam bot, which created a bit of a mess to clean up. To address similar social engineering issues, Amanda created an entire campaign of cybersecurity training to help the staff recognize potential attacks and prevent vulnerabilities in the first place. “It’s all a case of when you see something weird, you have to say something,” she says. “This is how I’m trying to share my Cisco training.”

The zoo covers 200 acres with multiple facilities, so there is a widespread network to protect and maintain. Amanda is responsible for general IT as well as the point-of-sale systems. In a typical week, she inputs sales items to the system, tests all systems and programs, manages user accounts and payment card industry (PCI) compliance, and maintains “everything in between.”

But, management had nobody on staff who was conversant in cybersecurity. So, the prospect of Amanda taking CCNA Cyber Ops training through the Cisco Global Cybersecurity Scholarship Program was well received. In fact, she was one of the first at the zoo who wanted to dig deep into the topic.

“I’d never heard of a security operations center,” she says. “My curiosity made me want to be part of it. It was exciting to learn about zero-day attacks, to research various hacks, and to learn how to keep a business secure and running. I wanted to get ahead of vulnerabilities.”

Anyone working in cybersecurity is always a little behind the “hacker curve,” she admits, but she wanted to learn how to anticipate what could happen and how to control it.

During her training, she relied heavily on the scholarship program’s learning management system (LMS) to help her learn and review the topics. Amanda also found the classes to be quite thorough, with plenty of student participation and interaction. Since earning her certification, she’s applied her lessons to several important areas of her job. “I’ve upped my network knowledge game,” she says, “and I’ve created new processes and procedures so we can follow the best cybersecurity practices and remain compliant with regulations.”

Her certification has helped Amanda prove her seriousness about her career, and it has improved her chances for advancement. Overall, the scholarship process was “pretty smooth,” and she looks forward to taking additional classes whenever possible.

Amanda encourages others to obtain the CCNA Cyber Ops certification. “I consider networking to be like magic,” she says. “This training taught me about different layers and why security is important for each of them. I learned more about security as it relates to all the system parts, and I learned a lot about networking in general, even if it didn’t relate specifically to security. It just gave me a better understanding of how security fits in.”

The hands-on learning environment also impressed her. She appreciated that she could make mistakes in the testing environment rather than making them at the zoo. “I got experience that I never could have had in my job,” she says. “This scholarship was so valuable to me because my employer—and many other employers—can’t always afford to sponsor their IT staff. I even looked into other opportunities, but they weren’t available. So, the Cisco scholarship has been incredibly valuable to me.”

### For More Information

To begin your exploration of Cyber Ops certification, visit <https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/community/certifications/ccna-cyber-ops>.