HOW TO PIVOT TO A
CAREER IN CYBERSECURITY

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

CAREER PIVOTERS
TO CYBERSECURITY

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According to **Mohamed Atef**, an Information Security Consultant and Certified Instructor with more than 20 years of experience in ISMS, Compliance, Penetration Testing, and IT Security, and a professional who holds a PhD, CEH, CISSP, CEI, and PMP, there is no perfect age to become an Ethical Hacker. According to Atef and all his experience in the field of cybersecurity, you can start at any time. All you need is the right training, a lot of practice in a lab, and to understand how cybersecurity and penetration testing are provided as professional services.

According to Shaun J, a cybersecurity instructor and **Professional Penetration Tester**, it's never too late to enter the field of cybersecurity and start a new career. He has students as young as 17 and as old as 68.

Before the Internet changed our way of life, accountants, doctors, lawyers, and school teachers were some of the most coveted jobs. At some level, because they were respectable professions; but mostly, because they were considered safe and reliable positions that you could hold your whole life well into retirement age. This model, obviously, does not apply to the 21st-century professional landscape. People switch jobs and careers now more than ever.

he fact is that many people in their 40s and 50s who have worked in the same job function their entire lives find themselves bored with the careers they built. They crave more meaning and growth in their professional lives but do not know where to start. That's where cybersecurity steps in.

The cybersecurity field is currently growing exponentially. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for skilled IT security professionals **is projected to grow 31% from 2019 to 2029**, much faster than the average for all occupations. In fact, the already critical talent shortage in cybersecurity has been further aggravated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exposed the **dire staffing shortage in cybersecurity**. This comes as no surprise given that the global cybersecurity market, which was worth $173B in 2020, **is projected to grow to $270B by 2026**.
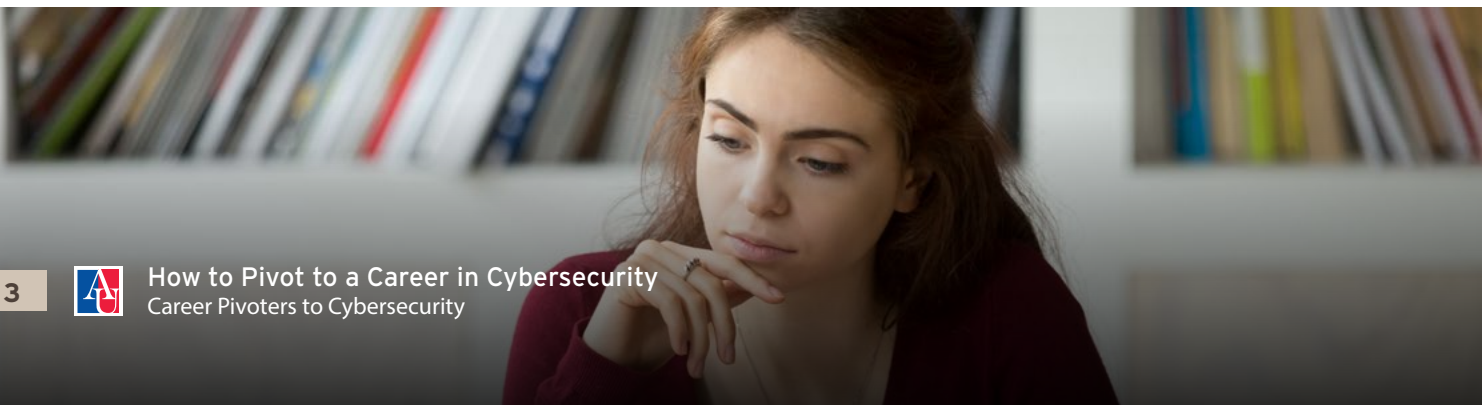
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
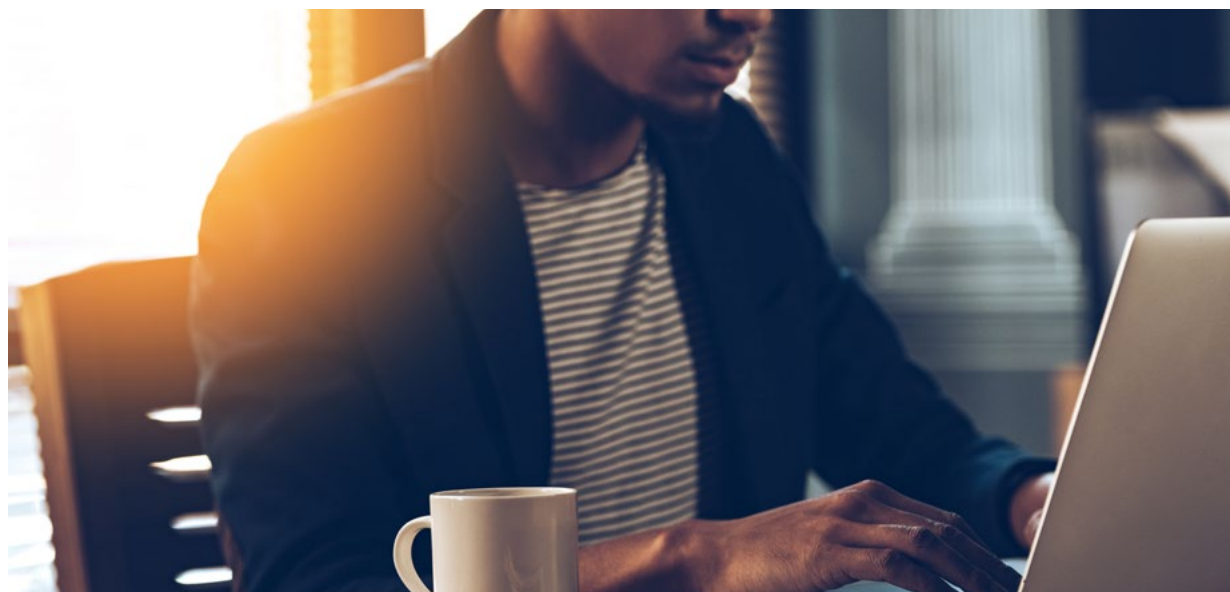## ABOUT CYBERSECURITY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CYBERSECURITY

What Is the Average Pay for Cybersecurity*?

Cybersecurity jobs in the United States pay an average of **$112,974** per year. That's more than twice the average national income for full-time wage and salary workers, according to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**.

*Amounts subject to change according to the market.

Is Cybersecurity a Good Career?

As stated before, experts project the demand for cybersecurity professionals in the workforce to grow much faster than all other occupations - certainly a good sign of future employment and career stability. As we all rely more and more on digitized information and integrate technology like computers, tablets, and mobile apps into our work and home lives, the risk to our security grows larger. Considering the rate at which technology is advancing and integrating with our lives on almost every level - from mobile technology to IoT devices - it's no surprise that experts expect the demand for cybersecurity specialists to continue to grow steadily. And with that steady demand comes a stable career for those who establish themselves as specialists in cybersecurity.

What Will I Be Doing in This Career?

There are many paths you can choose to master in the cybersecurity field. **The work you will be doing will be very important and crucial to keeping our information and systems safe**. As a cybersecurity specialist, you can expect to:

Improve Information Security and business continuity management.

Make sure that there are faster recovery times in case of a breach.

Improve stakeholder confidence in your Information Security arrangements.

Protect networks and data from unauthorized access.

Improve company credentials with the correct controls in place.

What Are the Career Benefits of Cybersecurity?

There are always job openings in this field and positions are notorious for their high salaries. Plus, there are amazing opportunities for career growth, travel, and international work as there are cybersecurity jobs on almost every continent.

There are also many companies always looking for skilled cybersecurity professionals in the US like Lockheed Martin in Orlando, Risk Management Solutions and Microsoft in New York, and Symantec in Los Angeles, alongside a plethora of positions all over the country. All one needs to do is simply click on Glassdoor and Indeed to find tons of cybersecurity positions available across a variety of industries. Using LinkedIn Jobs is also a great way of searching for cybersecurity jobs.

How to Pivot to a Career in Cybersecurity
What You Need To Know About Cybersecurity

WHY CHANGING CAREERS IN YOUR 40s AND 50s IS A GREAT IDEA

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Taking Control

It's really important to **have control over your career**. Ideally, everyone would like to be able to write their own paycheck at the end of the month. This option isn't available to most of us, but we can at least be in control of a career where we can grow, move upwards and apply all our work experience. You may be in a position at work where they are recruiting more and more young people and phasing out older staff members. Try your best to never be in a position where you may find yourself unemployed.

Cybersecurity professionals are rare and sought after by employers no matter their age or prior professional background. Getting trained and certified in the field can give you the power to take control of your career and move forward professionally without worrying about being phased out.

All growth starts at the end of your comfort zone." Tony Robbins

How Good Are the Benefits of Your Current Career?

Are you in your career simply because it is comfortable? You know all your co-workers, the work that will be expected of you for the day, and what your salary will be at the end of the month. You may even get a bonus at the end of the year and get regularly promoted every 2-4 years. Everything is just… so comfortable. But is comfort always a good thing? According to self-growth expert Tony Robbins, "All growth starts at the end of your comfort zone."

Listen To Your Intuition & Don't Ignore The Signals

Do you feel that your once exciting career has slowed down? Do you feel you are underappreciated by your managers? Are salary increases less common or less generous? Are you not finding a spark in your every-day work life? Do you find your work has become more of a chore or finding it hard to get out of bed every morning? It may be time for a major change.

How to Pivot to a Career in Cybersecurity
Why Changing Careers In Your 40s And 50s Is A Great Idea

Find Your Value in the Bigger Picture

The problem with working at one place or in one career your whole life may leave you thinking that you have no other options. You may feel that you only have one set of skills pertinent to one kind of job. The company may be so familiar to you that you are scared to venture out into the big world and see what is out there.

Venturing out allows you to reassess your value in the professional world and boost your confidence by exploring the fact that your professional talents and skills can be applied in many areas, and your contribution and service appreciated by others. Cybersecurity is a field that thrives most on a workforce built of people from a variety of professional backgrounds who can bring a plethora of different skill sets to the industry.

The Freshness of Something New

This is the fun part. You can leave your old career behind and take on an entirely new professional life when you get certified as a cybersecurity professional. Each day will present you with new problems to tackle, new challenges, and new people. As time moves on you will be surprised and elated by how much you will be able to take on and succeed, and how much of an asset to your organization you will be!

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THE STEPS YOU NEED TO MAKE
THE MOVE INTO CYBERSECURITY

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01

Study with a Good Cybersecurity Program

This first step is pretty obvious. If you are going to do a 180 and completely change your career, you need to be "jacked" for the job. A prestigious cybersecurity qualification and certification training program will get you there. The first step is finding the best cybersecurity program for you. To give yourself the most opportunity in the field, it's a great idea to find a program that offers everything you need to get into the field of cybersecurity. If you work during the day, enroll in a program that offers flexible times that can work around your schedule.

Cybersecurity programs like the [Cybersecurity Professional Program at American University](#) provide all the education and hands-on training you need to "hack" your way into the field of cybersecurity. To learn more about the American University Cybersecurity Professional Program, visit our [website](#).

02

Pivot When You Are at Your Professional Peak

The best time to pivot careers is when you're at your peak. Why? When you're at the top of your game, you have the confidence and energy you need in order to take the next step in your professional career and make something new of it. You will be in good spirits and ready to take on new challenges.

03

Move for Positive Reasons

Leaving and pivoting careers is a huge milestone in your life. Make it a rule to carefully plan and go for the cybersecurity career you want, rather than to jump at anything to get away from your current position.

04 Follow Social Media

Know how to operate your social media tools and make them work to your advantage. Twitter gives you the latest updates of the news around you. Follow people involved in cybersecurity. Keep up to date with them. The same goes with Facebook, Instagram, and especially LinkedIn. Follow cybersecurity trends. Know what is happening in the market and the world around you. Make as many connections on LinkedIn as you can with people in the cybersecurity industry. You never know when a job opportunity may pop up through this channel and you may be contacted by a connection looking for someone just like you with your specific skill set.

05 When It's Time, It's Time

The day you realize you have nothing left to learn from your career is the day you know you must move on. Whether you're in your mid-20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, or 60s, it's never too late to make the decision to pivot to a new career – especially into cybersecurity. Plan carefully, follow the steps above and strategically make your exit, ready to start your new cybersecurity position.

> **Whether you're in your mid-20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, or 60s, it's never too late to make the decision to pivot to a career in cybersecurity.**

How to Pivot to a Career in Cybersecurity
The Steps You Need To Make The Move into Cybersecurity

06

Just Do It!

It's never too late to stop learning or challenging yourself professionally.

The cybersecurity field is one of the fastest growing in the world. Stay on top of your game by taking extra courses and studying towards certificates so that your knowledge stays relevant. American Univerity offers a Cybersecurity Professional Program that helps you prepare for all the major cybersecurity certificates out there:

- Linux LPI Essentials

- AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner

- CompTIA Network+

- Ec-Council C|ND - Certified Network Defender

- CompTIA Security+

- Ec-Council C|SA – Certified Soc Analyst

- Ec-Council C|EH – Certified Ethical Hacker

- (ISC)² SSCP – Systems Security Certified Practitioner

When asked if a 42-year-old can get into Cybersecurity without an IT background, **Marc Krisjanous**, who has a CISSP, PCI QSA and has been in the IT sector for over 15 years, enthusiastically stated:

> "Of course you can! You will have life-skills and other business skills that will be desirable in the IT security sector. IT security is not just technical - there are many facets. For example, social engineering requires both a level of maturity and knowledge of business processes required to convince the target. Your age also presents a certain instant trust for the target hence legal skills are also needed, as well as policy, governance, risk and sales skills etc."

TIME FOR CHANGE

Make that move. The time is right.
The demand for skilled IT security professionals is projected to grow

31%

from 2019 to 2029.
Take advantage of that growth and become a cybersecurity professional!

For more information on the American University Cybersecurity Professional Program, contact us to schedule a call with one of our cybersecurity admissions advisors.

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WASHINGTON, DC

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