



## THERE IS A GLOBAL SHORTAGE OF PEOPLE TO FILL CYBER SECURITY JOBS AND OUR APPROACH TO HIRING DOES NOT HELP THE PROBLEM

### THIS IS DANIEL BROWNE'S STORY, SHOWING A DOGGED DETERMINATION TO CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL HIRING PRACTICES

In Summer of 2018, I was attending the Information Security Europe Conference in London and came across a stand with leaflets for a group named 'NeuroCyber UK'. I emailed the group and had a quick response which led to a phone call during which I learned of the collaboration between NeuroCyber UK and a growing, radical new startup company named 'Immersive Labs'. This company had been created and founded by former GCHQ employees, who had recognized that gamification methods were a useful means of assessing new or existing talent/skill within IT/Cyber Security. This collaboration was called The Neurodivergent Digital Cyber Academy (NDCA).

As someone who was diagnosed at the age of 16 with Asperger's Syndrome or Higher Functioning Autism, I can attest that the traditional route for seeking employment purely on interview reliance and qualifications wasn't working. I would regularly attend interviews with unsuccessful outcomes despite having self-funded and successfully achieved the SSCP & CEH certifications. I found that the traditional interview methods intrinsically disadvantaged me as an AS candidate, due to the major focus on the social interaction during the interview, rather than proof of achievement, motivation and potential.

**Often, I was told that I lacked the relevant experience. I wondered how I was ever going to break this demotivating cycle.** However, through my contact with the NDCA I gained access to an online simulation platform of cyber security tasks. Within a short time, I worked my way through different types of exercises. The more I had completed, the greater my motivation became to develop my skills to the next level. I compiled a record of all my successfully completed exercises, which gave me a global rank within the Cyber Academy. This record provided me with an invaluable objective testament for any prospective employer.

NDCA also had a job forum to facilitate direct application for cyber security positions with some open-minded/equal opportunity companies. Immersive Labs as a resource was truly a godsend, I believe that it finally helped me to secure a role in IT/Cyber Security, after so many years of trying in vain through the traditional methods of job seeking. I valued and felt motivated by the ethos of recognizing that an AS person had a lot to offer in the workplace.

It is apparent to me that many more companies who consider themselves to be equal opportunity employers, would benefit from linking into the NDCA and the Immersive Labs approach, in order to improve the recruitment and development of suitable candidates to fill the now estimated 4 million places needed by 2021 to cope with growing security demands within IT. I'm very grateful for my experience of using Immersive Labs to have encouraged and facilitated me to travel outside of my comfort zone, which has resulted in me gaining full time employment."

**Daniel Browne**

'I have been searching to find the right words to express the significant impact that 'Immersive Labs' has had on my professional life since being introduced to it, fortunately by chance. This is my personal story.

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I was often told that I lacked the relevant experience. I wondered how I was ever going to break this demotivating cycle. Then I found the answer with: The Neurodivergent Digital Cyber Academy (NDCA) at Immersive Labs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IMMERSIVE LABS CYBER ACADEMY CONTACT CJHNETWORK

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