

Steven Paul Romero

Senior RF Systems Engineer
at Chevron

CASE STUDY

“I love teaching and sharing my knowledge with passionate people.”

When Steven Paul Romero wanted to know more about cyber security, the only school he could find that offered an online graduate programme at the time was the University of Fairfax.

It was one of the first schools that offered a degree in cyber security and, although it was a good programme, Steven was looking for a more technical approach. He therefore turned to the SANS Institute for skills training and, eventually, an engineering degree. “SANS is top notch in terms of information security training.”

Not only has Steven taken numerous courses at SANS, he has also become a Community SANS Instructor. “I am passionate about learning and information security, and sharing my knowledge with other people.” Not everyone that takes SANS courses gets a chance to become an instructor. “You have to pass your certification exam with 85% or more”, says Steven. He scored 92% on his first certification (Security Essentials Bootcamp or SEC401) and was asked to participate in the Instructor Development Programme.

Instructor Development Programme

Steven fell in love with technology and was fascinated by its detail and mysteries. “It bothered me not knowing how systems worked.” As he got to know more about technology, he inevitably stumbled across security issues, and it was then that he became determined to deepen his knowledge of information security. “The idea that you can continue to dig and learn and never really know enough is very frustrating, but at the same time very satisfying.” However, Steven wasn’t able to secure funding from his previous employer to pursue his interest. “Then I heard about the Work Study Program at SANS: in exchange for a discount you can work as a facilitator for certain courses. For me, that was the 401 Security Essentials Bootcamp. I met a really smart guy who was a teaching assistant and he told me about the Instructor Development Programme and how to get onto that path. From there, I never looked back. I was so impressed with the course and the teaching that I instantly knew this is what I wanted to do.”

“I was so impressed with the first course I took that I instantly knew I wanted to be a SANS teacher.”

SANS opens many doors

SANS has brought Steven the satisfaction of teaching people and sharing his knowledge, and in addition he is certain that his SANS training and the GIAC certifications helped him to get a job at Chevron. “My SANS training has opened many doors for me in my career, and not just the job at Chevron. It has also been beneficial to my networking and has given me several opportunities within SANS as well.” He is, for example, also a member of the GIAC advisory board and was asked to participate as a member of the SANS 2018 Oil & Gas Summit advisory board.

Always learning

Steven would like to see more colleagues taking SANS courses, as he would enjoy the opportunity to share knowledge with and learn more from his peers. To keep his own skills and knowledge up to date, he researches and reads a lot. “At Chevron I am always very busy, but whenever I see an opportunity I will dive into it. I am very curious so I love to dig into problems and challenges.” Steven grew up in a rural part of the United States and wasn’t often exposed to computers at a young age. “Even in larger cities, there weren’t many accessible computers in those days. Oh dear, I do sound like an old man now”, he laughs. He is therefore very much inspired by younger generations and especially the opportunities they have in the security world. “I admire the programmes those kids participate in at school, the educators and the generation reaping those benefits. That really gets me excited about the field and the future it holds for us.”

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Passionate, committed people

If Steven could master a new skill, it would be programming. “I would like to be able to write good code for testing applications and hardware, because I believe this is a vital skill in understanding systems and security. Not having that is a big gap in my skill set.” This may not be the case for long however, as Steven is enrolling in the Python course (SEC573) in the near future. Another course on his wish list is Reverse Engineering Malware (FOR610).

Today Steven teaches about five to six classes each year. “People sometimes think I am crazy and wonder how I manage my time, but I take a vacation from work to teach. It doesn’t feel like work to me; I really love teaching. The students are top notch. They are so eager to learn, very well prepared, interactive, intelligent and passionate. They resemble the people at the SANS Institute; hardworking, committed people. I love working with those people, as we share the same passion.” ●

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SANS COURSES THAT STEVEN HAS TAKEN:**SEC401: Security Essentials Bootcamp Style****ICS515: ICS Active Defense and Incident Response****ICS410: ICS/SCADA Security Essentials****SEC504: Hacker Tools, Techniques, Exploits, and Incident Handling****FOR572: Advanced Network Forensics: Threat Hunting, Analysis, and Incident Response****SEC301: Introduction to Cyber Security****MGT414: SANS Training Program for CISSP® Certification****SEC503: Intrusion Detection In-Depth****SEC617: Wireless Penetration Testing and Ethical Hacking****SANS COURSES THAT STEVEN TEACHES:****SEC301: Introduction to Cyber Security****MGT414: SANS Training Program for CISSP® Certification****GIAC CERTIFICATIONS THAT STEVEN HOLDS:****GSEC****GCIH****GCIA****GCFA****GRID****GICSP****GISF****GISP**

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