

Internship: Reflective Paper #1

by

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A Reflective Paper

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Reflection Paper 1

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Through my internship so far at the ITS Help Desk at Old Dominion University (ODU), I have worked in a customer-facing role, assisting users with various technical issues. This experience has enhanced my technical knowledge and provided valuable lessons in communication, patience, and adaptability. Patience and empathy have been crucial when dealing with customers with varying technical expertise, adding an intriguing human element to the traditionally impersonal world of IT. More importantly, learning about documentation and atypical services within the organization has been a long, never-ending process. Each day there is some new procedure or service that before I was completely unaware of. Throughout this process, I've been exposed to a variety of customers, experiences, and organizational procedures.

The idea of never judging a book by its cover, at least for me personally, has never been more prevalent than here. It has been a different change of pace in trying to present complex concepts in a simplified and accessible manner for those unfamiliar with more technical subjects. However, in my quest to strive for accessibility, some users who are more technically inclined have taken offense to assuming they are unfamiliar with the systems, it is difficult to get an initial judgment. When interacting with IT professionals from other departments who are more familiar with specific systems, I sometimes experience imposter syndrome as the point of contact for the ITS Help Desk. Each conversation is unique and the ability to triage and delegate your time appropriately is an essential skill which improves problem resolution efficiency.

ODU provides a variety of software and services, most of which are displayed with detailed, publicly-facing documentation. However, some have one reference buried deep within a specific department's documentation. Every time I consider myself familiar with most systems, there is a new one a user makes a ticket about. In IT, a ticket represents a user-reported issue related to hardware or software that needs resolution. During these times, particularly on the

phone, efficiently searching our internal knowledge base and external resources is vital to triage and resolve a ticket within an appropriate time frame. Building experience within a specific organization has also been pivotal in helping me identify similar issues and increase productivity. Notably, during this time, we have been merging our systems with Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS), now Virginia Health Sciences (VHS) at ODU, meaning an unusual spike in dealing with tickets that have little to no documentation. In addition to these new procedures and systems, existing ones are being modified as VHS applications and departments are retired and absorbed by ODU's IT department.

Throughout my time so far, I've had to create and manage tickets from users, creating them in person, online, and over the phone. I've dealt with an ever-growing list of systems, procedures, and users. The more extensive that list grows, the better I can diagnose, troubleshoot, and resolve a ticket. This experience has taught me not to worry about an issue I may be unfamiliar with but to embrace the unfamiliar and learn from experiences to apply those lessons learned. This internship has begun to solidify my ability to adapt to new challenges, learn from diverse experiences, and use those lessons as I continue to gain knowledge and achieve my learning objectives for this internship.