Abstract

My project mainly consists of gaining real life I.T experience in a working environment. I am an IT intern here at Westrock, which is a paper mill company located near downtown Tacoma. I currently work in the IT department which consists of about 5 members. My tasks include helping around the mill with computer/technical related problems such as upgrading and reimaging computers, installing and configuring applications, setting up computers on a network, troubleshooting computer problems, maintaining network cameras, and helping out clients with any technical issue they may be having. I have gained a lot of knowledge on working with computers and using certain applications to assist clients. I learned more about how a company configures their networks with multiple vlans. I also got to see what how a server room operates.

I believe the biggest highlight I learned was setting up a network for contractors during out R&M. I had to set up 12 computers on 3 different networks. The 3 networks needed to be connected to another switch close by that had a GI1/O port available and set to trunk mode. This allows the switches to communicate and connect on the network. I also needed to configure the ports to vlan 2 which allows the computers to automatically be assigned an available ip address on the network us DHCP. To connect the switches, we needed to terminate a cat5 cable, which consists of cutting open the cable and arranging the wiring to a T568-B standard. The work I did for this task was very important as we needed to have these computers up and running so that the contractors can log in swiftly and do their job accordingly.

My purpose in working in this internship was to gain some experience in the I.T field and to improve my communication skills in a professional setting. I would always be engaged with my supervisor when he would train me on computer tasks, and he would always try to teach me new things every day. My experience working here has been very positive as I learn more about troubleshooting problems and coming up with new ideas to improve the processes. I also learned about how a company operates and how there everything is managed by corporate. I do not have access in configuring permissions to someone’s computer access or setting up network switches. I need to submit a ticket on Service Now and someone will assist me. It honestly is amazing how much information and knowledge an IT manager needs to know to keep the paper mill running smoothly. There are multiple programs each department utilizes, and we need to understand and be familiar with all of them to be able to troubleshoot errors.

At the conclusion of my internship, I came in thinking I knew a lot about computers and networks. I was very wrong as there was way more to understanding I.T in a real life setting. It’s important that a company has a functional IT department, because if a computer or a network goes down, then people can’t do their job. They rely on us to make sure that everything is operational and we take preventative measures like upgrading computers and using computer software to ping end devices to make sure they are online. I was able to work part time before the Summer internship and was offered to work part time after my internship ended if I wanted to continue gaining more experience in the paper industry and the I.T world. This internship not only opened doors to my career, but it also helped a lot during these hard
times as I.T became extremely important in allowing members to work from home. I am thankful to have gotten an internship this Summer and a lot of people canceled their internships due to the pandemic.