NICE Community Coordinating Council

Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2024 | 3:30-4:30 p.m. ET

I. **Introduction and Ground Rules** – NICE Program Manager Susana Barraza

a. The NICE Community Coordinating Council was established to provide a mechanism in which public and private sector participants can develop concepts, design strategies, and pursue actions that advance cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development.

b. Members are encouraged to participate in the meeting via the platform chat space. We will also be introducing polls throughout the meeting.

c. Reminder: The meeting is not intended for marketing or other commercial purposes.

II. Opening Remarks

a. Academic Co-Chair – Zarina Blankenbaker, Ph.D., President, Tarrant County College – Northwest

- A critical aspect that is influencing the higher education landscape in a positive way is "performance outcomes funding". "Performance funding" directly looks at measurable outcomes and achievements rather than traditional input measures such as seat time and enrollment. This shifts the focus from just numbers to tangible outcomes.
- The shift to performance funding is gaining traction nation-wide. About 36 states have embraced this model.
- This model ensures a greater commitment to accountability and also places a premium on curriculum innovation to ensure industry alignment. The shift also ensures that students are equipped with practical skills that will be needed in the workplace.

b. Government Co-Chair - Rodney Petersen, Director of NICE

- The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy regularly releases an updated Critical and Emerging Technologies List. A shorter list, similar list was shared from the CHIPS and Science Act, which included cybersecurity.
- In our community we need to consistently think about the impact of technologies on education and learning.
- There are also efforts to introduce legislation on workforce frameworks for critical and emerging technology areas. The NICE Framework is being looked at as a model.

III. **Featured Content**

a. Report Roundup – Learning from Good Ideas

National Educational Technology Plan
Presented by Zac Chase, Digital Equity Impact Fellow, U.S. Department of Education
URL: https://tech.ed.gov/netp/

- The National Educational Technology Plan (NETP) was first published in 1996 and has been updated every 4-6 years.
- The Department of Education conducted workshops, focus groups, and interviews across the country and hear consistent feedback that there was a need for practical advice and logical recommendations about how learning can be improved through use of technology.
- There are three sections of NETP that align to key pieces of the digital divide:
    - Digital use divide – the divide between students who are asked to do active activities (such as producing, analyzing, or content creation) or passive activities. Research shows that students in marginalized communities tend to get asked to do more passive activities, which either does not affect their learning or harms their learning. The goal is to close the divide so that all students have access to active opportunities.
    - Digital design divide – the divide between teacher capacity to use digital tools. Research shows that within a school, not all teachers are on the same level of capability and capacity to use tools. The goal is to make sure all teachers have time and support to be equally proficient in using technology to help with teaching. This approach is supportive of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework – necessary for some, but can be beneficial for all.
    - Digital access divide – the divide between those with and without access to connectivity, devices, and digital content. The NETP adds goals to close gaps on accessibility (for example, text to speech tools), and health, safety, and digital citizenship.
    - Within the NETP, there are examples of how states have successfully worked toward closing these divides.
    - On a related note, last week's NICE Webinar focused on Expanding Cybersecurity Learning and Workforce Opportunities for Rural America.
- Q: What observations do you have on the changes in the digital divide over the last four years?

- A: The COVID pandemic accelerated the speed at which digital devices and opportunities were able to get to students. However, this also exacerbated the need to close the gap.

- Q: Is there still a great deal of resistance from teachers when it comes to integrating technology into instruction?

  - A: Yes and no. Resistance certainly still exists in pockets, but the examples provided in the NETP points to the importance of leadership and culture in creating pathways to acceptance and implementation. Leadership plays an important role in ensuring teachers have time to learn and implement new tools.

- Q: How can the NETP be applied to the work being done in cybersecurity education and workforce development?

  - A: A key piece is creating as many pathways as possible. The UDL Framework supports a wide range of ways of learning and application of learning to real-world scenarios. The Department of Education is also thinking about how emerging technologies will impact education - see publication on role the role of AI in education: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning.

b. Framework Feature – Applications and Uses of Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity

N2K Diagnostic Tool
Presented by Simone Petrella, CEO and President, and Jeff Welgan, Chief Learning Officer CyberVista | N2K
URL: https://www.cybervista.net/ and https://www.n2k.com/

- N2K Diagnostic Tool aligns with the NICE Framework and is used for talent development in organizations, especially in cybersecurity.
- Talent development decisions often revolve around training budgets and manual processes, leading to plans that don't align with job role needs. Additionally, many businesses want to use the NICE Framework, but find it challenging to adapt it to their business structure.
- The Diagnostic Tool starts with a role competency exercise, followed by assessing and diagnosing team members' skill gaps.
- Data from the Diagnostic Tool helps tailor learning pathways, identify career trajectories, and inform strategic decisions.
- Organizations historically struggle with addressing experience gaps, especially in cybersecurity, where entry-level talent development is vital.
- The N2K Diagnostic Tool aids in assessing individuals' competencies against job role expectations, allowing for smarter workforce investments.
- The tool maps competencies defined by the NICE Framework and plots them on a proficiency scale, enabling a unique understanding of job role expectations.

- A diagnostic assesses individuals across various knowledge sets defined by the NICE Framework, providing unbiased insights.
- The diagnostic helps organizations understand whether employees are meeting, exceeding, or falling short of job role expectations, facilitating informed decision-making in talent development.
- Q: Are you incorporating employee engagement data into this?Do you need to send employees to one training or another training or are there big gaps in the workforce that we need to figure out how to, how to bring in house because they're making a strategic initiative to do, for example, cloud transformation?
    - A: We leave that to our customers, but we do track how many participants engage in completions of the diagnostic. N2k encourages diagnostics to be used for training investments, not performance reviews. The diagnostic can track engagement once someone is in a course, or once they are put in a training activity.
- Q: How do you ensure that you're putting employees in the right training activities?
    - A: Employers commonly address product gaps by investing in specific vendors or enrolling employees in training cohorts. They often monitor participants' engagement in these courses to ensure they are meeting the intended objectives, whether it involves completing the course or earning a certificate. However, the approach to tracking engagement may vary from one organization to another.
- Q: Is there a feedback loop that could help education and training providers understand what they need to emphasize to help close gaps?
    - A: There are certainly opportunities, but gaps aren't published or disclosed to the public. Based on data, N2K is being to understand, generally, what skills gap exists and could explore how they might share some of those findings.

IV. Community Progress Reports

a. Community of Interest Update

i. Cybersecurity Skills Competitions
Co-chair: Jake Mihevc, Mohawk Valley Community College

- For the first time the Cybersecurity Skills Competitions Community of Interest is co-led by Jessica Leung, who is a undergraduate student at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Jessica has heavily influenced the restructure of the community of interest moving forward.
- The co-chairs have decided to use the community of interest to focus on highlighting the student experience.
- Students and teams are gearing up for competitions, but there's a disconnect between their preparation methods and what competition organizers expect. Some teams aren't effectively utilizing available

training materials. Surprisingly, many schools are developing elaborate training environments, treating them as legacies passed down from previous club members. Collaborative meetings have been held with helpful contacts to address this issue, and further discussions are planned to involve cybersecurity clubs and students preparing for competitions.

- Website: https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/community/community-coordinating-council/cybersecurity-skills
- Next meeting: March 15, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. ET

b. Project Progress Reports

i. NICE Conference and Expo (Dallas, Texas) – June 3-5, 2024
Presented by Cesar Cebot, Florida International University
URL: https://niceconference.org/

- The call for proposals officially closed. The planning committee received a total of 163 proposals. Selections for breakout sessions and workshops will be notified the week of March 4, 2024.
- Early bird registration is now open. Learn more here.
- Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Learn more here.
- A limited block of discounted rooms is available at a prevailing government rate of $164 per night. Learn more here.

V. Featured Topic

Building a Cybersecurity and Privacy Learning Program: NIST SP 800-50
Presented by Marian Merritt, NICE Deputy Director
URL: https://csrc.nist.gov/pubs/sp/800/50/r1/ipd

- Co-authors including Susan Hansche, Brenda Ellis, Kevin Sanchez-Cherry, Julie Snyder, and Don Walden are credited for their collaborative contribution to updating NIST Special Publication 800-50.
- The update aims to refine the document previously titled "Building an Information Technology Security Awareness and Training Program," initially published in 2003, to reflect current cybersecurity and privacy learning needs. The document was originally meant for US federal government audiences, but because of demand and voluntary adoption from the public, the scope of the document is broadened for a wider audience.
- Over 300 individual comments were received from a public call for feedback, emphasizing the importance of a cyclical, adaptable approach to program development.
- The document was updated to incorporate and align to other NIST publications such as the Risk Management Framework and others. The revised document also consolidates the previous NIST SP 800-16 on Role-based training.

- The revised document integrates privacy considerations aligned with legislative directives, emphasizing employee engagement and program effectiveness measurement.
- Senior leadership involvement is recommended through the formation of an advisory board, clarifying roles and responsibilities within organizations.
- The learning program emphasizes fostering a culture of responsibility among employees and aligns with enterprise-wide risk management objectives.
- The document delineates the scope of the learning program, focusing on cybersecurity and privacy education rather than organizational structure.
- Finalization of the updated publication is forthcoming, pending internal editorial review before public release on the NIST website.

VI. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Reminder

The next NICE Council Coordinating Meeting will be **March 26** at 3:30 p.m. ET.

Upcoming Meetings:

- NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education COI: March 14, 2024, 3:30-4:30PM ET
- NICE Apprenticeships in Cybersecurity COI: March 9, 2024, 11:00-12:00PM ET
- NICE Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors COI: March 9, 2024, 1:00-2:00PM ET
- NICE Diversity and Inclusion COI: March 9, 2024, 2:00 – 3:00PM ET
- NICE Transform Learning Process WG: March 12, 2024, 2:00-3:00PM ET
- NICE Cybersecurity Competitions COI: March 15, 2024, 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET
- NICE Promote Career Discovery WG: March 20, 2024, 3:30-4:30PM ET
- NICE Modernize Talent Management WG: March 21, 2024, 1:00-2:00PM ET

Upcoming Events:

- NICE Webinar Series
  - Unlocking the Potential: Cybersecurity Careers for the Neurodiverse
    March 20, 2024, 2-3PM ET
- Youth Apprenticeship Week: May 5-11, 2024
- 34th Annual FISSEA Conference: May 14-15, 2024
- Cybersecurity Career Week: October 14-19, 2024
- National Apprenticeship Week: November 18-24, 2024
- NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference: December 9-10, 2024, San Antonio, Texas
- NICE Events Calendar