**NICE Framework in Focus – Anju Chopra**

**Mr. Petersen**: Welcome to the NICE Framework in Focus, a quarterly component of the NICE eNewsletter that shines a spotlight on real people who are performing cybersecurity work as described in the NICE Cybersecurity Workforce Framework. I’m Rodney Petersen, the Director NICE, and in an effort to bring the NICE Framework into focus for employers, workers, or learners of all stages and education and training providers, we provide these interviews to both better understand the applications and uses of the NICE Framework in the real world and the multiple pathways to a career in cybersecurity. Today we are joined by Anju Chopra who is the Senior Vice President of Cyber Technologies for Kroll. Anju, thanks for joining us today.

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Likewise, thank you for having me.

**Mr. Petersen**: Explain to us a little bit about your role as Senior Vice President for Cyber Technologies.

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: My role at Kroll is both Strategic and Operational, I focus on innovation, new product development, and implementation of all business-critical technology products and platforms. It seems like, from start to finish, taking an idea from conception and making it a reality to provide better cybersecurity for our clients and for our members, is a key component of how I come into the picture for Kroll.

**Mr. Petersen:** Kroll is primarily a cybersecurity service provider? Is that fair?

**Ms. Anju Chopra:** Yes, and we are also adding new products. We do a lot of incident responses and we have new products that are coming out to protect our clients and our members from all the incidents that are happening on the deep and dark web. We also help take care of all the breach notifications as well and provide identity theft and monitoring products.

**Mr. Petersen**: That’s terrific. Tell me more about the size of your team and what types of roles do they fill?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: My team is basically around 50 members including all the software engineers, dev ops engineers and QA Engineers. I also have many data scientists and to cover it all up I have good IT infrastructure administrators and network administrators and system administrators; data base administrators are all part of my team.

**Mr. Petersen**: Do those software engineers, data scientists, IT infrastructure –typically think of themselves as cybersecurity workers or what’s the culture like in your organization with respect to how you position themselves to support cybersecurity work?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: It’s a very, very good question. We consider security by design. Irrespective of the work you are doing we focus on making security as our prime focus. And that, enhancing with doing development for cybersecurity products makes them start thinking about that this has to be engrained within. The compliance, the security, how to make sure not only the product is protected but the data is protected. That’s the key facet of our team to make sure that they keep security, in terms of cybersecurity first, because the products are actually protecting our members and our clients in the cybersecurity arena.

**Mr. Petersen**: Your commitment to security by design explains why you identify your work role as related to securely provision of the NICE Cybersecurity Workforce Framework.

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Absolutely

**Mr. Petersen:** Can you describe your career path to becoming a Senior Vice President at Kroll?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: That was one thing that I never thought that I would be here. I count my blessings every day. My career path was very, very conventional in the sense that I started as a software engineer, although my parents wanted me to be a doctor, but I just opted to be in the engineering realm. However, I worked for some smaller organizations and had to perform many different roles. In the realm of startups, you know, you wear many different hats. I had to be thinking about architectural design, infrastructure, network set-up, system security and to top it all that, hiring and building my technology team. Basically, a cert, from start to finish. This experience in deep technical expertise, allowed me to now, effectively and strategically, implement technical solutions to solve business problems at Kroll.

**Mr. Petersen**: How could you envision using the NICE Cybersecurity Workforce Framework to both guide your own career and, in your role, as a hiring manager for your organization?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: You know to be very honest, I have been using the NICE Framework and it has been helping me a lot. I really think the Framework is very helpful because it functions as a guide to me and to our organization for understanding what technical roles need to be filled to make the organization successful. It absolutely helps us to identify gaps in our cybersecurity staffing. And, needless to say, as I had mentioned to you that I have been using the Framework, I have used the Framework to finetune and improve our job description postings. This Framework helps and allows me to focus more on the valuable assets that our hire brings to the organization and that is a technical competence and passion. From my aspect, this Framework is a guiding light for most of the organizations to see how they staff and make their organizations more secure and successful.

**Mr. Petersen**: You mentioned identifying gaps, can you talk about the type of cybersecurity jobs that are the most difficult for you to fill in your organization?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Hands down, a cyber forensic analyst. Because, it’s a very unique position. They not only have to have an understanding of the cybersecurity landscape but also have to be willing to get into the weeds and cross correlate data to make sense of it. They have to work from their past experiences which inform their ability to investigate and protect against the potential cyber-attacks. The role is technical, analytical and even a little bit intuitive. All of that likely comes from experience in problem solving capabilities but that is one position that is very, very hard to fill. You can train but at the same time a lot of extra effort goes in.

**Mr. Petersen**: How do you decide if an academic degree or a cybersecurity certification is required for a job announcement in your organization?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Degrees and certifications are important because they give me an immediate understanding of the person’s background. For instance, I know, if you have gone through the CISSP certification, you have a deep knowledge and understanding of security and compliance requirements. But, although certain degrees and certifications are important, that’s not always how I make hiring decisions. There are always exceptions. In some cases, aptitude is not only conveyed by degrees and background of a person. I feel that if they have aptitude and a desire to learn then expertise can be developed, or certifications can be gained. This is something that I always have to be aware of when evaluating new hires.

**Mr. Petersen**: Speaking of developing expertise or certifications or maybe even further education, how do you keep your skills and those of your team sharp and current given an ever-changing environment of both technology as well as cybersecurity threats and risk?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Very interesting. In addition to more conventional avenues including classes and webinars I’m also adjunct faculty at a university. Where I teach a class in information and cybersecurity, which can be as much of a learning experience for me as it is for the students. It’s also nice to be able to understand what’s going on in the world of academics and new research. I must confess, that I have used your NICE Framework in developing my cybersecurity course curriculum to prepare students to excel in cybersecurity jobs – it was extremely helpful. In addition to that I have memberships and affiliations with several technology and entrepreneurial groups where I can glean current information

**Mr. Petersen**: It great to hear how you are using the NICE Cybersecurity Framework even with students or the next generation of cybersecurity workers. As you work with that next generation, I’m curious about how your organization is attempting to make your workforce more diverse and inclusive.

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: My philosophy is there should be no artificial impediment for those who truly have the aptitude and skill. Kroll is always looking at several ways to support diversity in the workforce and has implemented hiring policies that support diversity and non-discrimination. Our organization supports Women in Cyber Alliance and has a women’s network internally to provide a forum for women’s voices. Then the biggest challenge is to bring a more diverse workforce into leadership roles within the organization, which is of course a challenge in most any organization.

**Mr. Petersen**: Anju, what is it that you enjoy most about the work that you do for Kroll and as its Senior Vice President?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Rodney, I am very passionate about problem solving, which is one thing that this job affords on a daily basis. It can be very challenging, and requires a lot of innovation, both in thought and technology development. I find joy in things that might not seem evident to most people – providing a secure environment, reducing operational inefficiencies, even helping law enforcement to find criminal activities on the dark web, which relates to one of our products, CyberDetectER, which scans the dark web for information. We’ve helped schools identify potential threats that they previously were not aware of. Having this kind of information can have a big impact on communities and can help them with not just cybersecurity, but the security of the community overall. That is a very satisfying part of my job. Giving back to community, not just always “what’s in it for me?” I want to go ahead and develop the product and bring the technologies that would make our societies, our environment, much more secure and safe for all of us.

**Mr. Petersen**: In speaking of giving back, what can of advice would you give to a young person considering a career in cybersecurity, what would you tell them?

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: This is a personal passion of mine, and that’s why I give back to the community, teaching young students cybersecurity courses as I had mentioned before. At the same time, I encourage young women to enter the field of STEM. I have two daughters and I want them to be comfortable in the technology space.

I am very focused about taking this message to young women who would like to enter this field, to tell them not to be scared because they are just as capable and needed in this industry as anyone. As a speaker at the Women in Technology Forum, it was very satisfying to have delivered this message to the young women in attendance. I wish I had someone, a mentor, who would have told me 20 years ago what challenges I would face, what to expect in the field of technology, it would have made things a lot easier for me.

**Mr. Rodney Petersen:** That’s terrific.Thank you, Anju, so much for sharing with us today the role that you play as part of the cybersecurity workforce. As you just said a moment ago you find joy in things that might not seem evident to most people, providing a secure environment. That’s why you are such an excellent representative of the Securely Provision category that is part of the NICE Cybersecurity Workforce Framework. You are working to help architect, shape, and design better cybersecurity products and solutions on behalf of organizations. Thanks for the work that you do and thanks for joining us today on our NICE Framework in Focus interview.

**Ms. Anju Chopra**: Thank you so much. Thank you for having me.