

ACE Advice



Practical Experience | Expert Insight

A Virtual Chat with Drew Wade



MA Biological Anthropology
PhD Biological Anthropology
Ontario College Advanced
Diploma (Network Engineering
and Security Analysis)



MA Western University
PhD Western University
Diploma Mohawk College



Specialty/Research Focus:
PhD work focused on
mummification mortuary
rituals.

Drew Wade, PhD, is a biological anthropologist/bioarchaeologist, whose work focuses on mummification mortuary rituals in various cultures, and how these express change in cultural identity and socio-politics. He works with the IMPACT Radiological Mummy Database Project, founded the Mummipedia Project*, and has several years of sessional teaching experience.

Finding a secure, stable position after graduation, however, proved challenging for Drew, so he began to broaden his horizons. He first looked into adding to his project management experience (outside of the mummy/ academic project management) by studying for the Project Management Professional (PMP) designation. This required additional technical skills to complement the project management, and that's when Drew turned to cybersecurity.

Having always been interested in computer-based work and incorporating this interest into his PhD by building a database plus a website, cybersecurity work resonated with Drew. He returned to school for a three-year cybersecurity diploma at Mohawk College, where he also co-founded and was co-president of the Mohawk College Cybersecurity Club; here his understanding of human behaviour, culture change, and inter-cultural exchange was helpful when trying to get technically minded IT students to understand the business-minded students and vice versa. After college, Drew became a full-time technical consultant for a cybersecurity firm.

Drew's anthropological background has enhanced his understanding of cybersecurity in terms of identifying the weaknesses in managing networked systems. Indeed, anthropology has reinforced for him that people and culture are either the weak links or the saving grace when it comes to managing networked systems in cybersecurity. When people are communicating properly, keeping systems up to date, using strong passwords, and are vigilant about the information they disclose to others, the systems work. But when these elements fail, all the technical measures in the world will not matter. Drew's training as an anthropologist allows him to maximize a company's cybersecurity strength and minimize their weak points by focusing on the people who support the company's cybersecurity efforts, analyzing company cultures and fostering workable cultures that improve the management of the networked systems and support cybersecurity efforts.

Recently, Drew has also worked on building credential management and phishing mitigation training; here, too, anthropology has been valuable in understanding the ways in which people interpret symbols (individual letters, logos, graphics, etc.) and text communications (urgency, scarcity, authority, etc.) that lead them to be deceived by phishing attempts. Anthropology has also helped in understanding how interrelationships of variables like experience, role, autonomy, etc., affect people's interest in or resistance to learning cybersecurity practices and overcoming the friction they may impose.

*Visit the Mummipedia Project at:
https://mummipedia.fandom.com/wiki/Mummipedia_Wiki

Online
Office Hrs



See our list of
events to register
for Drew's
upcoming office
hours.