Preparing for the CISSP Exam (3)

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In my last two columns, I began responding to a former student recently wrote to me with a request for suggestions on what to read in preparing for the CISSP exam. In this third article, I am recommending a Web site run by an old friend and colleague whom I have never met in person: the CCCure.Org site run by Clément & Nathalie Dupuis. <http://www.cccure.org> The site is so rich in resources I decided to devote an entire column to it alone.

The Web site started in 2001 when Clément was working in Montréal, Canada after a 20-year career in military communications and security in the Canadian Army. He was certified as a CISSP in 1999 (and mentions taking courses from some other old friends of mine, Hal Tipton and Sandy Sherizen, who is now a much-appreciated Adjunct Professor in the MSIA program at Norwich). Clément and his friend Chris Hare decided to create study guides for several of the domains from the Common Body of Knowledge (CBK) <https://www.isc2.org/cgi/content.cgi?category=8> and then put them on the Web for anyone to use. That was the birth of what became CCCURE.ORG. It became so popular that it was kicked off several hosting sites because it generated too much traffic for a free service. Clément and his wife Nathalie, a mechanical engineer who became an expert in programming and networking, had to convert it into a commercial venture. However, in addition to monetary contributions by a few carefully-selected advertisers, it is supported by the work and enthusiasm of thousands of volunteers, including me! For more about the history and philosophy of CCCure.Org, see <http://www.cccure.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=397>.

The CCCure home page is huge. There’s plenty of material there for anyone to soak up lots of interesting knowledge and ideas and to contribute their insights. However, there are some special links that will be particularly valuable for CISSP candidates.

The Flash Tutorial explains exactly how to use the narrated slide-shows used in the tutorials on the site. Then there’s a narrated CISSP Exam Preparation and Overview with 57 slides and the following major sections:

- Visit the ISC2 web site
- Certification Benefits
- The dreaded exam
- Build your study plan
- The 10 Domains
- Study Books
- Study what you need to study
- The Final Stretch
- Post Exam Syndrome
- Help!! Where do I go?
- Pass or Fail (no in between)
- Maintaining your certification
- If you have any questions.
The Quizzes section has a wonderful review tool that generates questions for several certifications including the CISSP; you can choose the domain(s), topics, difficulty level, whether to include related questions, and the number of questions. The quiz generator creates a unique, randomized quiz on every iteration. It’s a wonderful tool because it forces active recall and application of the knowledge you are trying to consolidate. Indeed, a recent article in _ScienceNow_ from the American Association for the Advancement of Science indicates that testing improves retention not only of the material tested but of other information being learned at the time of the test (full article <http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2006/1113/2> requires subscription; portion of article available at <http://3quarksdailyblogs.com/3quarksdaily/2006/11/testing_boosts_.html>).

The site features a list of suggested readings and a forum where participants can engage in spirited discussion of technical issues relating to their exam preparation.

This is a real treasure. Merci bien, Clément et Nathalie!

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