

CISSP TEST PREPARATION

Ernie Hayden, CISSP
CISO – Port of Seattle
December 12, 2004

KEY REFERENCES

1. [CISSP All In One](#), by Shon Harris – (**Recommendation**: Buy It)
 - a. Get the latest edition to ensure the info is up to date
2. [CISSP for Dummies](#), Lawrence Miller and Peter Gregory. (**Recommendation**: Buy It)
 - a. **Read and Outline before you start studying**
 - b. **Read and Outline the week before the test**
 - c. Take the CD Test
 - d. The tables and drawings are pretty helpful as study sheets
3. [CISSP Prep Guide: Mastering the Ten Domains of Computer Security](#), by Ronald Krutz and Russell Dean Vines, Published by Wiley (**Recommendation**: Buy It)
 - a. Although a bit pricey, I can honestly say that this book ***significantly*** contributed to me passing the CISSP test.
 - b. The text is more detailed than Shon Harris' book and added the extra details that I needed – especially in those areas that I had less experience in.
 - c. The appendices were especially helpful on HIPAA, The Rainbow Series,
4. [Information Security Management](#), 4th Edition, by Harold Tipton and Micki Krause (**Recommendation**: Borrow a copy from the library or buy a used copy)
 - a. I would skim/read each chapter associated with each domain as I studied it.
 - b. Chapter 14, an Introduction to IPSec was especially helpful.
5. [Network Security: Complete Reference](#), by Roberta Bragg, Mark Rhodes-Ousley and Keith Strassberg (**Recommendation**: Take a look at a copy and decide if it will be helpful for your work)
 - a. This document was not available when I took the test.
 - b. My impression is that it would be very helpful for any security professional and would help with added details for test preparation.
6. [Network+ - Exam Cram](#), by Mike Harwood (**Recommendation**: Buy or at least outline and copy all the diagrams and charts)

7. Key Websites

- a. www.cccure.org
 - i. Great source for practice tests, Power Point presentations for each domain, etc.
- b. www.isc2.org
 - i. There are some new things on this site since I certified – take a look at all the opportunities for self-examination, testing, etc.
- c. www.issa-ps.org
 - i. ISSA chapter, Puget Sound Region
 - ii. Some info on meetings, etc.

8. **MAGAZINES (keep you up to date on contemporary issues that may be in the test)**

- a. Information Security Magazine (www.infosecmag.com)
- b. CSO Magazine (www.csoonline.com)
- c. Security, Technology Design (www.st-and-d.com)
- d. SC Magazine, (www.scmagazine.com)

9. **OTHER REFERENCES (and opinions...)**

- a. CISSP Exam Cram, published by Coriolis Press – Take the test but don't buy the book – I don't think it is worth it.
- b. RFC1087, Ethics and the Internet, (www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc1087.html) – Read it at least once.
- c. Code of Ethics, ISC2, you want to **KNOW** this!
(<https://www.isc2.org/cgi/content.cgi?category=12>)
- d. RFC2196, Site Security Handbook,
(<http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc2196.html>) -- Read through once.
- e. RFC1855, Netiquette Guidelines (<http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc1855.html>)
Read through once.

APPROACHES

1. **Actively participate** and attend the Weekly Study Sessions facilitated by Kate Wakefield.
2. Read and Outline **CISSP for Dummies**, by Larry Miller and Peter Gregory as follows:
 - a) **Before** starting the Wakefield Course
 - b) The week **before** the CISSP Exam.

3. Prepare a Notebook or Filebox with a file / folder / tab for each Domain of the CISSP. Keep your notes, handouts, etc. sorted and stored in each domain folder so you can quickly reference each domain and even set up a study plan for each domain for the test.
4. Each day spend a few minutes taking the sample tests in www.cccure.org. Keep track of your scores and the domains/areas you don't do well in and study those areas harder.
5. Prepare Flashcards for the different definitions and concepts.
 - a) I used 3 x 5 inch cards and boxes with alpha tabs to keep each set of definitions sorted.
 - b) I usually spent about an hour or so a week going through the flash cards.
 - c) The week before the test, I went through the entire deck each day.
6. Don't try to cram – I don't think it will work – especially for those areas that are not even covered in the texts.
7. Focus on your weak areas...but don't ignore the areas you think you are strong.