

The Life and Times of CYBERSECURITY PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME FIVE 2021



In early 2021, the Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) and the Information Systems Security Association (ISSA) conducted the fifth annual research project focused on the lives and experiences of cybersecurity professionals. The study finds that against the backdrop of a chaotic career path, the cybersecurity skills shortage seems to be getting worse, forcing overwhelmed cybersecurity professionals into constant firefighting. While the skills shortage will continue with no end in sight, this year's research suggests that organizations could and should be doing more to address it.

Cybersecurity Careers Depend upon Hands-on Experience and Some Certifications

Cybersecurity is highlighted by a plethora of esoteric technical certifications, and only some of them may be important.



52%

say hands-on experience is most important.

TOP ADVICE

FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO WANT TO GET INTO CYBERSECURITY



Get a basic cybersecurity certification

49%



Join a professional industry organization

42%



Find a mentor who is willing to help you develop skills and career plans

36%

TOP FIVE CYBERSECURITY CERTIFICATIONS ACHIEVED

Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)

51%

Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)

25%

CompTIA Security+

24%

Certified Information Security Auditor (CISA)

19%

Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH)

17%

TOP FIVE MOST IMPORTANT CERTIFICATIONS TO GET A JOB

Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)

51%

Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)

13%

CompTIA Security+

10%

Certified Information Security Auditor (CISA)

6%

Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC)

4%

Factors that Distinguish a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory Cybersecurity Job

CISOs and HR executives take note, as this data represents what it will take to hire and retain cybersecurity professionals.

TOP FIVE

FACTORS DETERMINING JOB SATISFACTION



43%

Business management's commitment to strong cybersecurity



39%

Competitive or industry-leading financial compensation



33%

The ability to work with a highly skilled and talented cybersecurity staff



32%

Organization provides support and financial incentives to advance careers



28%

Organization provides opportunities for career advancements and promotions

TOP FIVE

MOST STRESSFUL ASPECTS OF CYBERSECURITY



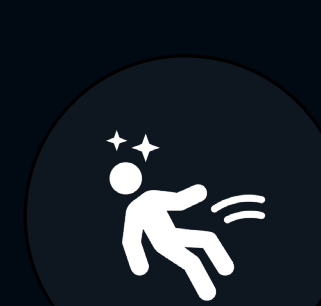
32%

Finding out about IT initiatives/projects that were started with no security oversight



31%

Working with disinterested business managers



31%

The overwhelming workload



30%

Constant emergencies and disruptions that take away from primary tasks



24%

Keeping up with the security needs of new IT initiatives

Cybersecurity as a "Team Sport"

A cybersecurity program's success goes beyond the information security team alone and depends upon commitment and cooperation across the entire business.

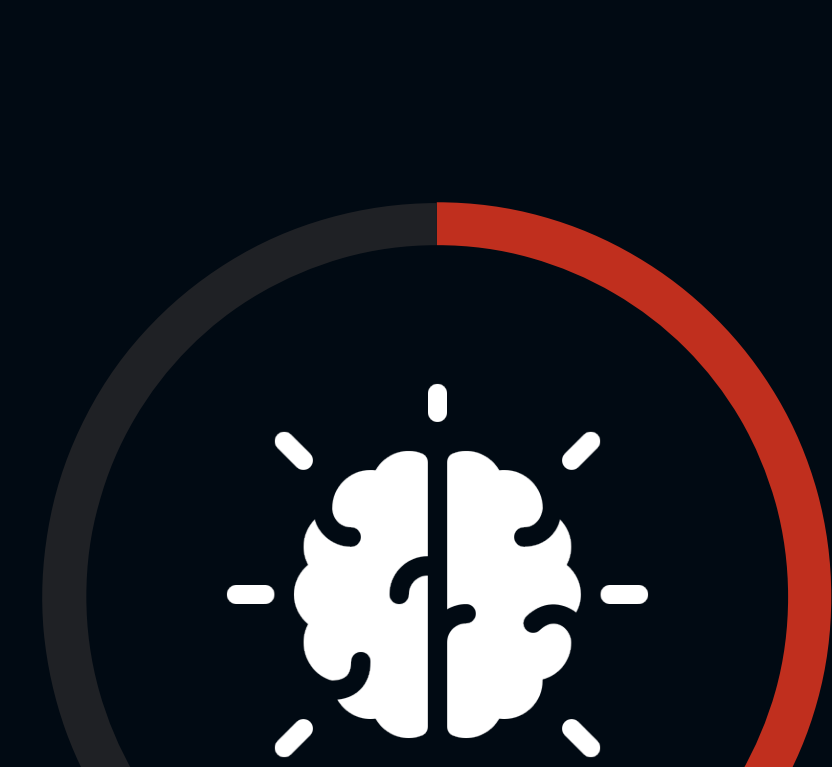
RELATIONSHIP STATUS

BETWEEN CYBERSECURITY AND OTHER FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



The Cybersecurity Skills Shortage Persists, and in Many Cases, Continues to Worsen

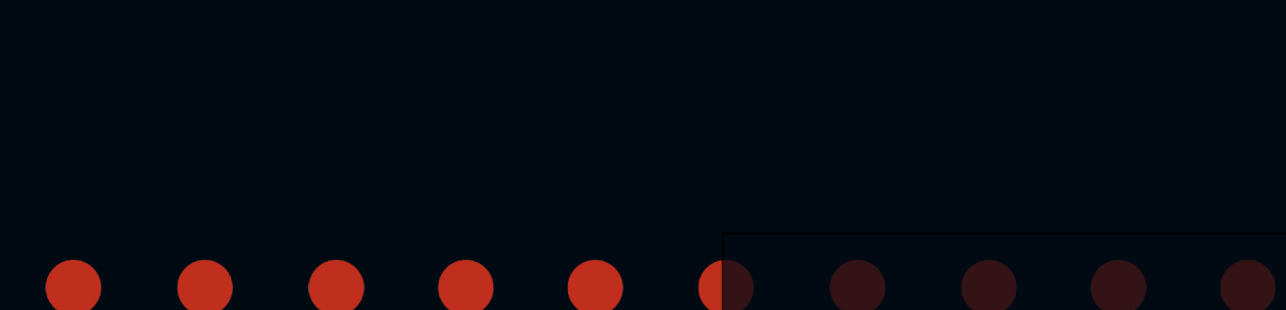
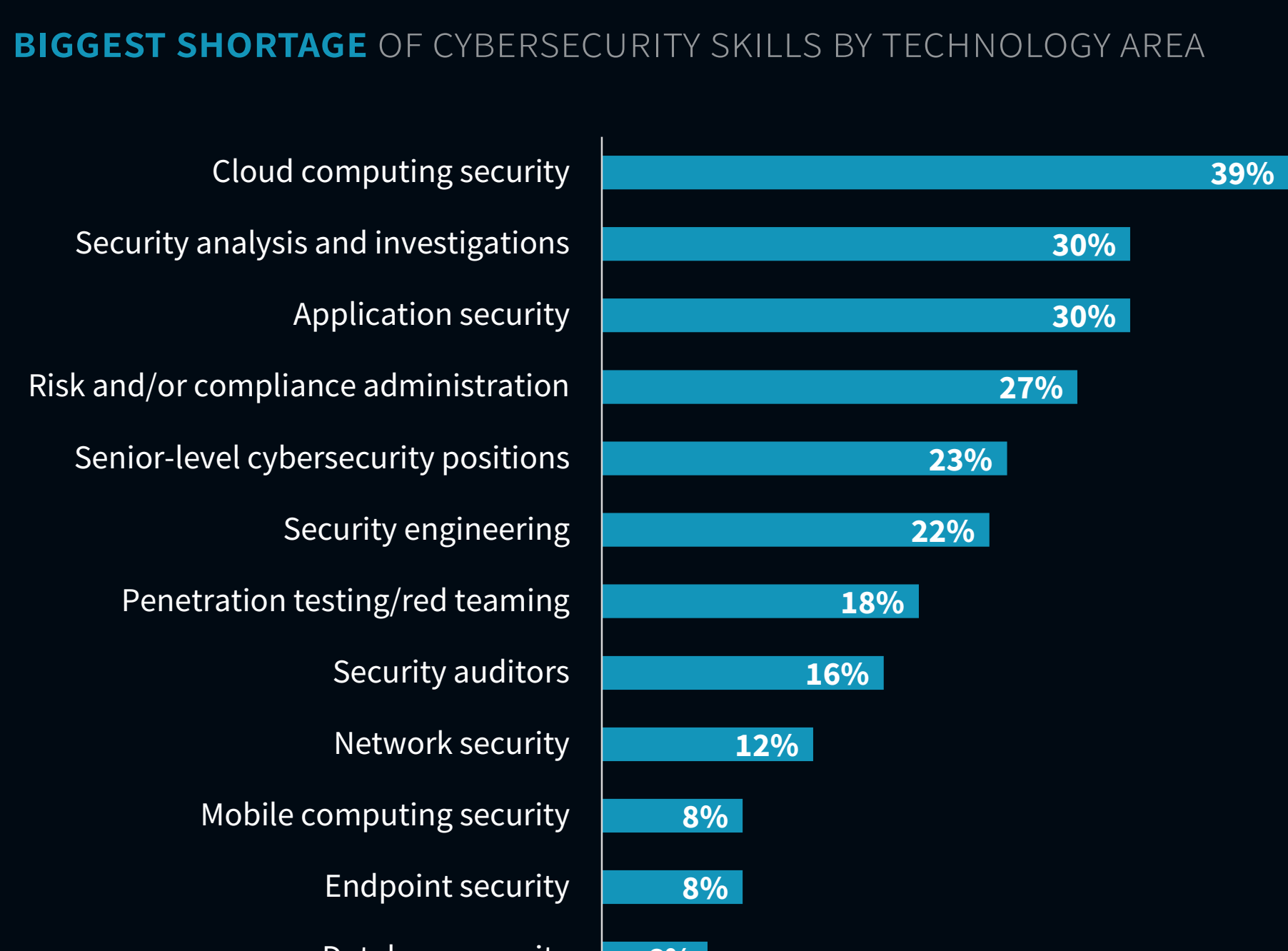
After researching the cybersecurity skills shortage for five years, ESG and ISSA are convinced that it is real and impactful.



57%

of organizations claim they are impacted by the global cybersecurity skills shortage.

BIGGEST SHORTAGE OF CYBERSECURITY SKILLS BY TECHNOLOGY AREA

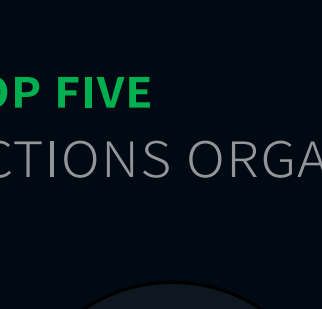


54%

of organizations say they could be doing more to address the impact of the cybersecurity skills shortage.

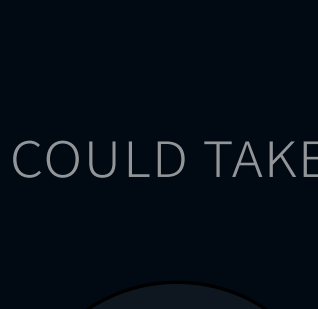
TOP FIVE

ACTIONS ORGANIZATION COULD TAKE TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF THE CYBERSECURITY SKILLS SHORTAGE



39%

Increase commitment to cybersecurity training



37%

Increase compensation levels to make them competitive



35%

Provide incentives like paying for certifications and participation in industry events



33%

Create/improve a cybersecurity internship program



30%

Look beyond IT and security professionals to find qualified candidates

For more data from this study, including prescriptive guidance for building a strong and happy cybersecurity team, download the free ESG and ISSA Research Report, *The Life and Times of Cybersecurity Professionals 2021*.

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