

Contact

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(LinkedIn)

Top Skills

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative Neural Networks

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

Certifications

Proofpoint Certified Administrator

Palo Alto Networks Accredited
Configuration Engineer

Certified Information Systems
Security Professional (CISSP)

Cisco Fire Jumper

AI for Cybersecurity Program

Mazhar Islam

vCISO | Cybersecurity & AI Security Architect | Helping
Organizations Mitigate Risk & Build Resilient Security Programs
Frisco, Texas, United States

Summary

I am a cybersecurity and AI security architect committed to helping organizations reduce risk, ensure compliance, and build modern, future-ready security programs.

Early in my IT career, a single misconfigured firewall cost my client \$500K in downtime. That incident taught me cybersecurity isn't about perfect technology—it's about resilience, recovery, and business survival. The experience shaped my mission: helping organizations build security programs that don't just prevent attacks, but ensure business continuity when they inevitably occur.

Today, I serve as a vCISO, Cybersecurity Architect, and AI Security Advisor, helping clients across regulated industries reduce risk, enhance compliance, and modernize their security posture.

What I've learned working with 100+ organizations:

Most breaches stem from poor visibility and misconfigured systems
—not advanced threats

AI is both an accelerant and vulnerability in modern environments
Executives care about risk reduction and ROI, not tools and tech
jargon

Recent Wins:

Designed security architectures across hybrid and multi-cloud
environments

Delivered risk assessments aligned to NIST, HIPAA, CJIS, and PCI-
DSS

Launched Security Audit & Risk Assessment offerings for mid-market
clients

Trained 100+ sales professionals on solutions from Palo Alto,
CrowdStrike, Proofpoint

Expertise:

- # Zero Trust & Cybersecurity Mesh Architecture (CSMA)
- # vCISO leadership and security program development
- # AI-enhanced threat detection and defense planning
- # Multi-cloud security for AWS, Azure, and hybrid environments
- # Executive reporting and security roadmap planning

Why leaders trust me:

I've worked across vendor, partner, and enterprise roles—I understand the entire ecosystem

My advice is vendor-agnostic, framework-aligned, and business-driven

I bridge the gap between security architecture and business value

I design programs that scale with growth, not against it

Certifications:

CISSP | AWS SAA, CLF, AI Practitioner | CCIE Security | Palo Alto ACE | Proofpoint PCA

Johns Hopkins – AI for Cybersecurity

I share weekly insights on:

Real-world security architecture lessons

AI security and responsible innovation

Communicating cybersecurity ROI to executives

Threat trends and modern defense strategies

Let's connect if you're:

- Exploring vCISO, AI security, or risk advisory services

- Hiring for cybersecurity leadership roles

- Looking to modernize security architecture or prepare for compliance

DM me "SECURITY STRATEGY" to start the conversation.

Experience

ConvergeOne

Senior Security Solutions Architect - National Cybersecurity Practice

July 2019 - April 2025 (5 years 10 months)

Plano, Texas, United States

Accomplished cybersecurity architect within a national cybersecurity practice, delivering infrastructure and cloud-based security solutions for hybrid network environments. Led vCISO engagements focused on aligning security strategy with business goals, identifying gaps, and defining KPIs to measure program maturity and risk reduction. Provided architectural leadership to design and deploy high-availability, resilient infrastructure and security solutions. Developed remediation strategies informed by executive priorities, technical constraints, and compliance requirements—ensuring measurable outcomes and return on investment across complex client environments.

- Designed Zero Trust and multi-cloud security strategies aligned with NIST, GDPR, PCI-DSS, and HIPAA
- Delivered executive briefings, security workshops, solution demos, and proofs of concept
- Conducted security workshops to assess clients' on-premise, data center, public cloud, and AI environments, evaluating posture against Cybersecurity Mesh Architecture (CSMA) principles and modern threat models.
- Delivered virtual vCISO services aligned with the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF), including identification of security gaps, risk prioritization, and development of actionable roadmaps.
- Actively engaged customers with technical design sessions, proof of concept, pilot, and sizing exercises.
- Prepared services scope of work and bill of materials, health checks, client briefings, and open case reviews.
- Presented at webinars, podcasts, and events for national cybersecurity practice and vendor sponsored events.
- Designed RFP/RFI/RFQ solutions from inception to project win detailing use cases and technical specifications.
- Served as subject cybersecurity matter expert for solutions from vendors including Cisco, Palo Alto Networks, FortiNet, Aruba, HP, OKTA, Arctic Wolf, Dark Trace, Rapid7, Proofpoint, CrowdStrike, Juniper, and many others.

Dimension Data

Senior Security Solutions Architect

March 2018 - July 2019 (1 year 5 months)

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

Served as a cybersecurity solutions lead for a top-tier Global Systems Integrator (GSI), delivering enterprise-scale security architectures to Fortune 500 and regulated organizations. Focused on large-scale digital

transformation, compliance alignment, and pre-sales technical strategy across the southern U.S. region.

- Served as cybersecurity SME enabling sales teams to position solutions in automobile industry clients including Toyota and Hertz
- Designed and deployed security solutions for cloud migration and network segmentation for national rental car company.
- Conducted strategic workshops, design sessions, and client stakeholder presentations
- Enabled secure divestiture of Fortune 500 client infrastructure into two global entities
- Worked with large global automobile manufacturer on securing connected services and devising in vehicle cybersecurity solution to prevent hacking

Proofpoint

Senior Sales Engineer - Enterprise and Strategic Accounts

July 2017 - February 2018 (8 months)

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

Operated as subject matter expert evangelizing industry-leading cloud-based Email Security Gateway (ESG), Targeted Attack Protection, Threat Response, Email Fraud Defense, and Domain Discover (Digital Rights Protection) solutions to major accounts in Texas.

- Delivered technical workshops and PoCs for Fortune 100 accounts including ExxonMobil, Chevron, CBRE
- Implemented advanced ESG, DLP, and SOAR solutions for global real estate and energy clients
- Supported sales lifecycle from discovery to close, including POC, training, and solution design
- Large scale deployment of email security, email backup retention, threat response, and brand protection resulting in 30% increase of blocked malicious messages and 40% reduction of service tickets
- Email backup service enabled client to maintain email service during network and active directory outages

CDW

Senior Security Solutions Architect

May 2011 - July 2017 (6 years 3 months)

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

Initiated and developed the regional cybersecurity practice across Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas—delivering advanced security and mobility solutions to large enterprise clients. Led the design and deployment of next-generation security architectures using technologies from Cisco, Palo Alto Networks, Fortinet, McAfee, Symantec, Carbon Black, and CrowdStrike.

- Developed security engineering practice across TX, OK, LA, and AR
- Deployed Cisco ISE-based 802.1x network segmentation for national insurance and airline clients
- Executed multi-year security engagements, including data center migration and Zero Trust redesign
- Delivered live national presentations, webinars, and security workshops (SpiceWorks, etc.)

Flair Data Systems

Principal Security Solutions Architect

June 2006 - May 2011 (5 years)

Dallas/Fort Worth Area

Developed and led the company's cybersecurity services practice, overseeing technical strategy, solution design, and high-impact service delivery across enterprise clients. Partnered with engineering and account teams to build a robust cybersecurity portfolio spanning network, endpoint, and infrastructure protection.

Spearheaded the deployment of security architectures including Cisco security solutions, Tipping Point Intrusion Prevention Systems, and Critical Watch Vulnerability Detection systems. Led implementations of Network Access Control (NAC), security event monitoring, and Microsoft-based infrastructure hardening initiatives.

- Acted as the single point of contact for pre-sales and consulting engineering support for the company's largest enterprise client driving \$5M in annual sales
- Delivered product demos, solution positioning, and deployment for Critical Watch, Splunk, Juniper, and TippingPoint across telecom networks resulting in 40% reduction of security events.
- Led large-scale, complex security and risk assessments for enterprise and SCADA network environments

MetroPCS

Principle Cyber Security Consultant

2007 - 2011 (4 years)

Richardson, TX

Served as Principal Security Consultant within the IP Engineering group, leading security design and deployment across telecom infrastructure.

- Designed and deployed firewalls, intrusion prevention systems, and security event monitoring across national data centers
- Secured VoLTE and IMS Core networks, protecting over 8 million mobile endpoints
- Integrated endpoint security solutions with telecom vendors including Ericsson and Samsung
- Played a key role in scaling mobile network security during rapid subscriber growth and infrastructure expansion

Covetrix

CO-FOUNDER / DIRECTOR CYBERSECURITY SERVICES & SALES
ENGINEERING

August 2001 - May 2006 (4 years 10 months)

Dallas

Founded and led cybersecurity services division with full ownership of technical strategy, service delivery, and client success. Spearheaded security architecture design, engineering leadership, and pre-sales strategy for high-impact cybersecurity engagements across financial institutions and critical infrastructure clients.

- Developed clear, scalable cybersecurity framework aligned with NIST, and client-specific regulatory requirements.
- Championed a mission-driven culture grounded in kindness, pragmatic execution, and rapid value delivery—fostering a high-performance, collaborative engineering environment.
- Mentored and scaled cross-functional teams of penetration testers, security engineers, and pre-sales engineers.
- Established a culture of continuous improvement in testing, documentation, and stakeholder communications.
- Designed and implemented a modular security testing toolkit and methodology for risk assessments, penetration testing, and compliance audits.
- Led the end-to-end lifecycle of security engagements—from initial client strategy discussions to technical delivery and executive-level board reporting.
- Collaborated with developers to build and enhance security assessment reporting system to streamline deliverables.

- Drove pre-sales engineering efforts by aligning technical capabilities with client needs and building long-term relationships based on trust and expertise. Crafted compelling multi-vendor cybersecurity solutions.

Cornerstone Securities

Network Administrator

1997 - 2001 (4 years)

Served as network administrator for financial systems network connected to major financial exchanges.
