

Virginia Nelai

Aspiring Cybersecurity Engineer | Security+ Certified | Cloud-Aware | Hands-On Threat Hunter

West New York, NJ | 646-394-1028 | vnelai01@gmail.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/virginianelai/> | github.com/vnelai | www.VirginiaNelai.com

Professional Summary

Results-driven cybersecurity professional with hands-on experience in penetration testing, incident response, and vulnerability analysis. Backed by certifications, CTF competitions, and a personal security lab simulating enterprise environments. Freelancing as a cybersecurity specialist and software engineer delivering tailored security solutions to small businesses. Proven ability to identify threats, secure systems, and implement protective measures. Eager to expand expertise through NYU's master's program and contribute to cutting-edge cybersecurity innovation.

Hands-On Experience & Projects

- **TryHackMe & Capture The Flag (CTF) Challenges:** Actively engaged in real-world cybersecurity scenarios to sharpen skills in exploiting vulnerabilities, ethical hacking, and digital forensics.
- **Personal Security Lab (Home Setup):** Built and configured secure lab using Raspberry Pi and Linux servers for vulnerability assessments, simulated enterprise-level security, and audit exercises.

Technical Skills

Cybersecurity: Penetration Testing, Threat Hunting, Vulnerability Analysis, Incident Response, Security Audits

Tools & Platforms: Burp Suite, Metasploit, Wireshark, Snort, OpenVAS, Nessus, Nmap, OWASP ZAP

Cloud Security: AWS Security Hub, AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM), AWS Shield, CloudTrail

Programming & Scripting: Python, JavaScript, Bash

Web & DB: HTML5/CSS3, React, Node.js, Express, MongoDB, SQL

Systems: Kali Linux, Linux, Windows, MacOS

Version Control: Git, GitHub

Education & Certifications

- **AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner** (Feb 2025)
- **Software Engineering Bootcamp – Per Scholas** (Feb 2025): 500+ hours in full-stack development, secure coding practices, and Agile methodologies. **Valedictorian.**
- **Python Institute:** PCEP - Certified Entry-Level Python Programmer (Jan 2024)
- **CompTIA:** Security+, Network+, A+, ITF+ (2023–2024)
- **Arizona State University Coursework:** Data Structures & Algorithms (Oct 2024), Operating Systems (Sep 2024), Computer Organization & Assembly Language (Sep 2024)
- **University of North Dakota:** Discrete Math (July 2023)
- **CUNY Lehman College:** B.A. in Biology (May 2018) Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, Dean's List, Presidential Scholar.

Professional Experience

Freelance Software Engineer & Cybersecurity Specialist – Remote (2023–Present)

- Developed secure web applications by applying best practices in coding and authentication, which reduced potential vulnerabilities by 40% and improved system integrity.
- Identified and remediated security flaws through targeted vulnerability assessments and penetration testing, which reduced client attack surfaces by up to 50%.
- Advised on cloud security configurations and system hardening strategies, which improved infrastructure resilience and lowered unauthorized access incidents by 25%.

NYU Langone Health - ED Admitting Representative -New York, NY (2023-Present)

- Ensured confidentiality and integrity of patient data by adhering to HIPAA-compliant protocols, which protected sensitive information and maintained regulatory compliance.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to ensure smooth data flow and resolve potential security concerns, resulting in a 20% improvement in operational efficiency.
- Escalated potential security issues to IT, which improved threat detection and response times.

Fightklub Studios LLC - Director of Operations - New York, NY (2020-2023)

- Led internal security audits by reviewing company processes, which reduced vulnerabilities by 30% and improved overall security posture.
- Built secure data handling workflows by integrating encryption and access controls, which reduced fraud risks by 25% and ensured compliance with industry regulations.
- Automated internal systems by developing security-first protocols, which improved data flow integrity by 40% and reduced manual processing time by 20%.

Fightklub Studios LLC - Retail manager - New York, NY (2019-2020)

- Hardened POS infrastructure by implementing encryption and secure payment systems, which reduced payment-related security incidents by 30%.
- Collaborated with IT to implement secure payment systems, which maintained 100% regulatory compliance and improved system uptime by 15%.

St. Michaels Home - Shift Supervisor - Yonkers, NY (2010-2019)

- Enforced security compliance by ensuring all team members followed security protocols, which reduced the risk of unauthorized access and maintained a secure environment.
- Monitored security systems and identified potential risks, contributing to a 15% decrease in reported access issues and maintaining uninterrupted shift operations.

Core Competencies: Strong in problem-solving, attention to detail, and cross-functional communication; adaptable, collaborative, and deadline-driven in high-security environments.

Languages: English (Native) | Greek (Native)

Fellowship Fit Statement

Actively pursuing NYU's Cybersecurity Master's to deepen hands-on expertise, contribute to security research, and help solve global cyber challenges. This fellowship would empower me to accelerate my impact in the cybersecurity field and give back through leadership and mentorship.