



Heather Williams

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CommScope
CWNE # 264

What is your level of industry experience?

Three decades of work with WAN and LAN technologies including development and delivery of global technical training and certification programs, working as national account SE, running the Solution Engineering team, and designing and deploying conference Wi-Fi for Interop and Black Hat. I'd say my level is "old AF".

Where did you receive your training/education?

Almost all of my "training" has been OJT and a variety of self-study methodologies. I track Wi-Fi and InfoSec experts through blogs and social media posts and use them as a jumping off point for further research and study. I am currently pursuing graduate work in cyber security with an emphasis on ICS (Industrial Control Systems).

When did you first become interested in wireless?

At Nortel, I drew the "short straw" in 1999 when we began OEM'ing Symbol access points. As the WAN person in a team of LAN guys, I found a natural affinity for Wi-Fi at my favorite OSI layer.

What certifications do you currently hold?

CWNE and CEH

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

You don't choose the CWNE path, the CWNE path chooses you. ;-) CWNE was what was "next" in terms of challenging myself and growing into my career.

How long have you been involved in the CWNP certification process?

I got my first CWNP certification in September 2012. I got my final advanced certification in September 2015. But I froze every time I tried to document my application projects. It didn't help that I knew many of the board members and understood the depth and breadth of their expertise. Imposter syndrome is a bitch. It took me more than another 2 years (and having to requalify on 2 of the advanced certs) before I pulled myself up by my bootstraps.

What was the hardest part of the whole process and how did you overcome it?

The easiest part was starting the CWNE journey--if only because I was ignorant of just how much work it would be. The hardest part was not giving up and believing in myself enough to actually post my submission.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Do it! If only for yourself.

What value will your CWNE provide to you, your clients, and/or your company?

In a world that has far-too few Wi-Fi experts, having a CWNE on a project ensures that some kind of best practices will be followed. If you don't have the time or money to do it right the first time, you really don't have the time and money it will cost to rectify a bad design or deployment.

To whom would you recommend the CWNE program?

I would recommend any SE working for a vendor or VAR or anyone working in the industry with even 50% of their time focused on Wi-Fi. Knowledge is power and the skills developed in pursuing a CWNE will save you (and your employer) time and money. It will make your life so much easier.