Longitudinal Breach Research

GOAL: Understand the systemic structures to drive success and failure in cyber risk management

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1. Success or failure of cyber risk management

Some organizations are more resourceful after a breach (e.g., Maersk, Equifax, Norsk Hydra), while others may not even survive (e.g., DigiNotar, Ranch Medical, Yapian). Seemingly there are routes to success and failure.

2. Strategic decisions have a major role

The dynamic approach to cyber risk management focusses on unintended long-term consequences. This approach suggests that the route to success or failure is determined by strategic choices prior to the breach or after the breach [1-4].

Critical areas for decision-making are:
- Cyber Risk Strategy Implementation:
  - Cyber Threat Perception.
  - Capability Performance.
- Stakeholder management:
  - Controlling the breach impact.

3. We apply a new perspective to the post-mortem: a longitudinal research approach

Traditional post-mortem research focusses on missing capabilities at the moment of the breach. Following the dynamic approach to cyber risk management, this research takes a longitudinal research approach and considers a longer period before and after the breach. Figure 1 shows our research framework with detailed research questions.

4. Work in progress allows early adaptor involvement

So far, our research data base contains:
- 8 well known breaches (Equifax, DigiNotar, Norsk Hydra, Maersk, Kesaya VSA, Maastricht University, Solar Winds, Colonial Pipeline).
- Examined 70 breach related documents
- 355 findings (245 are positioned in the framework (see Fig 1); 110 require further examination).

5. How do you monitor continuous performance of security capabilities?

Preliminary insights raise the following cyber risk governance questions:
- How do you monitor continuous performance of implemented security capabilities?
- How do you ensure securing the right business value (e.g., maintain right threat perception)?

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References:

We appreciate (1) receiving your breach insights, or (2) having an interview with you about this topic.