Incentives and Organizations in Information Security

Tuesday, April 20, 1pm EST
CIC, DEC, Room 1201

Abstract

As more resources are devoted to promoting information security, it is important to understand the interactions between the goals of security, the incentive structure and the organizational context. This talk explores the dangers of misaligning these three components, and presents research analyzing the effects of incentives and organizational structures on security at the levels of the individual, the firm and the federal government. Using experiments, I show that organizations face a trade-off in asking individuals to detect both high frequency and low-frequency risks, and that the framing of incentives may help balance this. At the firm level, I present econometric evidence that there may be a small financial incentive to protect private data. Finally, at the government level, I use policy analysis tools to explore the mismatch in Federal security policy and agency compliance incentives. This hierarchical approach illustrates the importance of integrating economics and organizational science research at every level of information security policy.

Bio

Allan Friedman’s research centers on information technology policy, particularly in the areas of cybersecurity and privacy. His work spans several disciplines in the social sciences, public policy, and computer science, and it explores issues ranging from cybersecurity regulation to behavioral models of privacy to how organizational behavior can be affected by communication networks.

Friedman has a degree in computer science from Swarthmore College and a PhD in Public Policy from Harvard University. He is also affiliated with the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Harvard Program on Networked Governance.

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