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Workshop on the
Economics of
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Communicating Security – The Role of Media: A Journalistic Perspective

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Over the past year, the steady drumbeat of reported breaches has escalated into a hail storm of media attention. From mainstream mass publications to the trade press, the number of stories and the depth of coverage on security have ballooned as the media seeks to shed light on the shadowy, evolving threat landscape. While stories about "hackers" and "breaches" have captured the public's imagination, trying to move to a more nuanced discussion has been challenging. In this panel, journalists from a variety of national publications and websites will discuss the role of the media in communicating cyber threats. We will examine important questions including:

- How has the cyber security story evolved over the past years?
- What are the challenges of communicating problems that involve both technical and behavioral elements?
- Can or should the media move beyond the shock factor of large failures, like the Jerome Kerviel story (January 2008 Société Générale trading loss), to the underlying drivers of such failures?
- How to research and write credible stories on internal corporate failures or crimes like whaling (where the targets are corporate executives) when: a) organizations see no benefit in any coverage and often don't report losses; b) organized crime is thought to be the perpetrator; and c) many of the targets are loathe to discuss their gullibility with the press?
- Can cyber journalists really verify the truth behind international cyber espionage and warfare? What are journalists' responsibilities in the trade-off between informing the public vs. protecting national security? Who makes these decisions?
- How should editors address challenges of tracking and developing journalistic expertise in a rapidly evolving field, where nuances matter, technical jargon rules and the terminology and concepts can be difficult to master?