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Full Disclosure: What Companies Should Tell Investors About Cyber Incidents



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Key Actors

Publicly traded companies

 A company whose ownership is dispersed among stockholders; obligated to disclose material information to its investors under 1934 Securities Exchange Act

Securities and Exchange Commission

 Independent federal agency responsible for protecting investors by enforcing securities laws, including requirements to disclose "material" risks and information to investors under 1934 Act

Shareholders and investors

Own shares of stock in a company



The Law of "Materiality"

- Public companies are required to disclose material information to their investors
- Material information is information important for a reasonable investor to know before making an investment decision
- In 2011, SEC staff applied the law of material disclosure to cybersecurity (Corp Fin Disclosure Guidance: Topic 2, Cybersecurity)



What is a Material Cyber Incident?

- Loss of intellectual property or trade secrets?
- Loss of financial information?
- Unauthorized access to or loss of health records or personally identifiable information?
- Network disruption?



Key Questions

- Do investors care about the cybersecurity of the companies they invest in?
- What information do companies typically disclose to investors today about cybersecurity? When/how?
- What is the role of government in overseeing the disclosure of cyber information?
- How do investors consume cybersecurity information? How do they value it?