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## WikiLeaks:About

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### Introduction

“ ... could become as important a journalistic tool as the Freedom of Information Act.

— Time Magazine

WikiLeaks is a multi-jurisdictional public service designed to protect whistleblowers, journalists and activists who have sensitive materials to communicate to the public. Since July 2007, we have worked across the globe to obtain, publish and defend such materials, and, also, to fight in the legal and political spheres for the broader principles on which our work is based: the integrity of our common historical record and the rights of all peoples to create new history.

We believe that transparency in government activities leads to reduced corruption, better government and stronger democracies. All governments can benefit from increased scrutiny by the world community, as well as their own people. We believe this scrutiny requires information. Historically that information has been costly - in terms of human life and human rights. But with technological advances - the internet, and cryptography - the risks of conveying important information can be lowered.

In its landmark ruling on the [Pentagon Papers](#), the US Supreme Court ruled that "only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government." We agree.

We believe that it is not only the people of one country that keep their government honest, but also the people of other countries who are watching that

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government. That is why the time has come for an anonymous global avenue for disseminating documents the public should see.

## Why is WikiLeaks so important?

Consider the mosquito borne disease malaria. This year, malaria will kill over one million people, over 80% of which will be children. Great Britain used to have malaria. In North America, malaria was epidemic and there are still a handful of infections each year. In Africa malaria kills over 100 people per hour. In Russia, amidst the corruption of the 1990s, malaria re-established itself. What is the difference between these cases?

We know how to prevent malaria. The science is universal. The difference is good governance.

Put another way, unresponsive or corrupt government, through malaria alone, causes a children's "9/11" *every day*. <sup>[1]</sup>

It is only when the people know the true plans and behavior of their governments that they can meaningfully choose to support them. Historically, the most resilient forms of open government are those where publication and revelation are protected. Where that protection does not exist, it is our mission to provide it.

In Kenya, malaria was estimated to cause 20% of all deaths in children under five. Before the Dec 2007 national elections, WikiLeaks [exposed \\$3,000,000,000](#) of Kenyan corruption and swung the vote by 10%. This led to enormous changes in the constitution and the establishment of a more open government — one many hundreds of reforms catalyzed by WikiLeaks.

We believe WikiLeaks is the strongest way we have of generating the true democracy and good governance on which **all** mankind's dreams depend.

## What is WikiLeaks? How does WikiLeaks operate?

WikiLeaks combines the protection and anonymity of cutting-edge cryptographic technologies with the comfortable presentation style of Wikipedia, although the two are not otherwise related. Our network also collects materials in person and from postal drops. We also run a network of lawyers and others to defend our work and our sources.

WikiLeaks information is distributed across many jurisdictions, organizations and individuals. Once a document published it is essentially impossible to censor.

## Principled leaking

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Principled leaking has changed the course of history for the better; it can alter the course of history in the present; it can lead us to a better future.

Consider [Daniel Ellsberg](#), working within the US government during the Vietnam War. He comes into contact with the [Pentagon Papers](#), a meticulously kept record of military and strategic planning throughout the war. Those papers reveal the depths to which the US government has sunk in deceiving the population about the war. Yet the public and the media know nothing of this urgent and shocking information. Indeed, secrecy laws are being used to keep the public ignorant of gross dishonesty practiced by their government. In spite of those secrecy laws and at great personal risk, Ellsberg manages to disseminate the Pentagon papers to journalists and to the world. Despite criminal charges against Ellsberg, eventually dropped, the release of the Pentagon papers shocks the world, exposes the government, and helps to shorten the war and save thousands of lives.

The power of principled leaking to embarrass governments, corporations and institutions is amply

demonstrated through recent history. The public scrutiny of otherwise unaccountable and secretive institutions forces them to consider the ethical implications of their actions. Which official will chance a secret, corrupt transaction when the public is likely to find out? What repressive plan will be carried out when it is revealed to the citizenry, not just of its own country, but the world? When the risks of embarrassment and discovery increase, the tables are turned against conspiracy, corruption, exploitation and oppression. Open government answers injustice rather than causing it. Open government exposes and undoes corruption. Open governance is the most effective method of promoting good governance.

Today, with authoritarian governments in power around much of the world, increasing authoritarian tendencies in democratic governments, and increasing amounts of power vested in unaccountable corporations, the need for openness and transparency is greater than ever. In an important sense, WikiLeaks is the first intelligence agency of the people. Better principled and less parochial than any governmental intelligence agency, it is able to be more accurate and relevant. It has no commercial or national interests at heart; its only interest is the revelation of the truth. Unlike the covert activities of state intelligence agencies, WikiLeaks relies upon the power of overt fact to enable and empower citizens to bring feared and corrupt governments and corporations to justice.

WikiLeaks helps every government official, every bureaucrat, and every corporate worker, who becomes privy to embarrassing information that the institution wants to hide but the public needs to know. What conscience cannot contain, and institutional secrecy unjustly conceals, WikiLeaks can broadcast to the world.

WikiLeaks is a buttress against unaccountable and abusive power.

We propose that authoritarian governments, oppressive institutions and corrupt corporations should be subject to the pressure, not merely of international diplomacy, freedom of information laws or even periodic elections, but of something far stronger — the consciences of the people within them.

### **Should the press really be free?**

In its landmark ruling on the [Pentagon Papers](#), the US Supreme Court ruled that "only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government." We agree.

The ruling stated that "paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell."

It is easy to perceive the connection between publication and the complaints people make about publication. But this generates a perception bias, because it overlooks the vastness of the invisible. It overlooks the unintended consequences of failing to publish and it overlooks all those who are emancipated by a climate of free speech. Such a climate is a motivating force for governments and corporations to act justly. If acting in a just manner is easier than acting in an unjust manner, most actions will be just.

Sufficient leaking will bring down many administrations that rely on concealing reality from their peoples.

### **Does WikiLeaks support corporate whistleblowers?**

It is increasingly obvious that corporate fraud must be effectively addressed. In the US, employees [account](#) for most revelations of fraud, followed by industry regulators, media, auditors and, finally, the SEC. Whistleblowers account for around half of all exposures of fraud.

Corporate corruption comes in many forms. The number of employees and turnover of some corporations exceeds the population and GDP of some nation states. When comparing countries, after observations of population size and GDP, it is usual to compare the system of government, the major

power groupings and the civic freedoms available to their populations. Such comparisons can also be illuminating in the case of corporations.

Considering the largest corporations as analogous to a nation state reveals the following properties:

1. The right to vote does not exist except for share holders (analogous to land owners) and even there voting power is in proportion to ownership.
2. All power issues from a central committee.
3. There is no balancing division of power. There is no fourth estate. There are no juries and innocence is not presumed.
4. Failure to submit to any order may result in instant exile.
5. There is no freedom of speech.
6. There is no right of association. Even romance between men and women is often forbidden without approval.
7. The economy is centrally planned.
8. There is pervasive surveillance of movement and electronic communication.
9. The society is heavily regulated, to the degree many employees are told when, where and how many times a day they can go to the toilet.
10. There is little transparency and something like the Freedom of Information Act is unimaginable.
11. Internal opposition groups, such as unions, are blackbanned, surveilled and/or marginalized whenever and wherever possible.

While having a GDP and population comparable to Belgium, Denmark or New Zealand, many of these multi-national corporations have nothing like their quality of civic freedoms and protections. This is even more striking when the regional civic laws the company operates under are weak (such as in West Papua, many African states or even South Korea); there, the character of these corporate tyrannies is unobscured by their civilizing surroundings.

Through governmental corruption, political influence, or manipulation of the judicial system, abusive corporations are able to gain control over the defining element of government — the sole right to deploy coercive force.

WikiLeaks endeavors to civilize corporations by exposing uncivil plans and behavior. Just like a country, a corrupt or unethical corporation is a menace to all inside and outside it.

### **Could oppressive regimes potentially come to face legal consequences as a result of evidence posted on WikiLeaks?**

The laws and immunities that are applied in national and international courts, committees and other legal institutions vary, and we can't comment on them in particular. The probative value of documents posted on WikiLeaks in a court of law is a question for courts to decide.

While a secure chain of custody cannot be established for anonymous leaks, these leaks can lead to successful court cases. In many cases, it is easier for journalists or investigators to confirm the existence of a known document through official channels (such as an FOI law or legal discovery) than it is to find this information when starting from nothing. Having the title, author or relevant page numbers of an important document can accelerate an investigation, even if the content itself has not been confirmed. In this way, even unverified information is an enabling jump-off point for media, civil society or official investigations.

### **What is the difference between public and private leaking?**

People with access and motive can disclose information privately, typically to malicious interests, or they can disclose it publicly so everyone knows what is going on. Public disclosure can lead to reform

and grants a right of reply. Public disclosure gives a warning that that the information has been disclosed. Public disclosure augments justice.

## Technical

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### **Is WikiLeaks accessible across the globe or do oppressive regimes in certain countries block the site?**

The Chinese government actively attempts to block all traffic to WikiLeaks. Not merely <http://wikileaks.org> but *any* address with "wikileaks" in it. For instance, <http://wikileaks.org.nz>.

So far encrypted connections bypass this blockade.

We also have many thousands of [Cover Domains](#), such as <https://destiny.moood.com> or <https://ljsf.org> and you may write to us or ask around for others. Please try to make sure that the cryptographic certificate says "wikileaks.org" (you should get a warning using most browsers).

In addition you can use [Tor](#) or [Psiphon](#) to connect to the site, but note that the default urls for these sites are also currently filtered by the Chinese government.

We have additional ideas to make bypassing the Chinese firewall easier which we hope to integrate at a later stage.

### **Is anonymity completely protected by the site?**

It is hard for WikiLeaks to protect against "means, motive and opportunity" which are unrelated to WikiLeaks, but to date, as far as we can ascertain, none of the thousands of WikiLeaks sources have been exposed, via WikiLeaks or any other method.

Whistleblowers can face a great many risks, depending on their position, the nature of the information and other circumstances. Powerful institutions may use whatever methods are available to them to withhold damaging information, whether by legal means, political pressure or physical violence. The risk cannot be entirely removed (for instance, a government may know who had access to a document in the first place) but it can be lessened. Posting CD's in the mail combined with advanced cryptographic technology can help to make communications on and off the internet effectively anonymous and untraceable. WikiLeaks applauds the courage of those who blow the whistle on injustice, and seeks to reduce the risks they face.

Our servers are distributed over multiple international jurisdictions and do not keep logs. Hence these logs cannot be seized. Anonymization occurs early in the WikiLeaks network, long before information passes to our web servers. Without specialized global internet traffic analysis, multiple parts of our organization and volunteers must conspire with each other to strip submitters of their anonymity.

However, we also provide instructions on how to submit material to us, by post and from netcafés and wireless hotspots, so even if WikiLeaks is infiltrated by a government intelligence agency submitters cannot be traced.

### **Have you made any modifications to Tor to ensure security? If so, what are they?**

WikiLeaks can't discuss details of security matters because we want to do everything possible to help lower the risk of sources being identified. It suffices to say that anonymity for sources is a critical part of the design criteria.

Our modifications are reviewed by experts. At a later stage these reviews may be made public.

Because sources who are of very substantial political or intelligence interest may have their computers

bugged or their homes fitted with hidden video cameras or other surveillance technology, we suggest very high-risk leaks are done away from the home.

For the strongest anonymity we use a combination of postal and electronic techniques.

## **Is WikiLeaks blocked by the Chinese government?**

Yes, since January 2007. We consider this a sign that we can do good work. We were slowly establishing our work and organization, but in response authoritarian elements in the Chinese government moved to censor us, exposing their contempt for basic human rights and their fear of the truth.

We have a number of ways around the block, some of which are [very easy](#). See [Internet Censorship](#) for more information.

## **Publishing**

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### **How does WikiLeaks test document authenticity?**

WikiLeaks staff examine all documents and label any suspicions of inauthenticity based on a forensic analysis of the document, means, motive and opportunity, cost of forgery, what the authoring organization claims and so on. We have become world leaders in this and have an enviable record: as far as can be determined, we have yet to make a mistake. This does not mean we will never make a mistake, but so far, our method is working and we have a reputation to protect.

Given that many of the most prestigious newspapers, including the New York Times [Judith Miller, 2003], have published reports based on fabricated documents, WikiLeaks believes that best way to truly determine if a story is authentic, is not just our expertise, but to provide the full source document to the broader community - and particularly the community of interest around the document. So for example, let's say a WikiLeaks' document reveals human rights abuses and it is purportedly from a regional Chinese government. Some of the best people to analyze the document's veracity are the local dissident community, human rights groups and regional experts (such as academics). They may be particularly interested in this sort of document. But of course WikiLeaks will be open for anyone to comment.

Journalists and governments are often duped by forged documents. It is hard for most reporters to outsmart the skill of intelligence agency frauds. WikiLeaks, by bringing the collective wisdoms and experiences of thousands to politically important documents will unmask frauds like never before.

WikiLeaks is an excellent source for journalists, both of original documents and of analysis and comment. WikiLeaks will make it easier for quality journalists to do their job of getting important information out to the community. Getting the original documents out there will also be very helpful to academics, particularly historians.

### **How many steps are there between my submission and publication?**

For online submissions, all a [whistleblower](#) needs to do is upload the document and specify the language, country and industry of origin, likely audience, reasons for leaking and approaches to verification.

All documents go into queue to obscure the date and time of their acquisition, and are then assessed by our editors to see if they fit our editorial criteria. Internally the document is distributed to backup servers immediately.

## **Can random people edit WikiLeaks documents?**

No. Source documents are kept pristine.

## **Who writes WikiLeaks leaked document summaries?**

WikiLeaks staff, sometimes in collaboration with the submitter. Historically, most summaries were written by Julian Assange.

## **Where do WikiLeaks articles come from?**

Analysis articles written on WikiLeaks are written by WikiLeaks staff, or, more usually, written by other publications, but based on WikiLeaks source material.

## **Organization**

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### **Who is behind WikiLeaks?**

WikiLeaks is a project of The Sunshine Press.

### **Is WikiLeaks a CIA front?**

WikiLeaks is not a front for the CIA, MI6, FSB or any other agency. Quite the opposite actually. It is a global group of people with long standing dedication to the idea of improved transparency in institutions, especially government. We think better transparency is at the heart of less corruption and better democracies. By definition spy agencies want to hoard information. We want to get it out to the public.

### **When and how was the idea for WikiLeaks first formed?**

It began with an online dialogue between activists in different parts of the globe. The overwhelming concern of these people was that a great deal of human suffering (through lack of food, healthcare, education and other essentials) stems from government resources being diverted through corruption of governance. This is particularly true in non-democratic and repressive regimes. The founding people behind WikiLeaks thought long and hard about how this problem could be fixed, and particularly about how information technologies could amplify the fix on a world wide scale.

It's interesting to note that one online commentator accused us of being naive in our high level goals. This is effectively praise to us. It takes a little bit of naivety in order to jump in and do something that otherwise looks impossible. Many great advances in science, technology and culture have a touch of naivety at their inception.

We're reminded of Phil Zimmerman, the creator of PGP, the world's first free and freely available encryption software for the masses. At the start of the 1990s when PGP was released, encryption was really only the realm of spy agencies. Governments classified it as a weapon. There was a huge outcry when Zimmerman dared to release this "dangerous" technology for the average person to use.

Fast forward a decade and a half: virtually everyone on the net uses encryption all the time, for everything from secure ordering, online banking to sending private love letters. The somewhat naive vision of a lone computer programmer in Boulder, Colorado, was at the heart of an extremely sensible and practical global revolution in privacy technologies.

WikiLeaks may be at the heart of another global revolution - in better accountability by governments and other institutions. We think this document leaking technology will effectively raise standards around the globe. We expect it to encourage citizens aware of consequentially unethical behavior to don the hat of brave [whistleblower](#), even if they have never done so before.

## Notes

- ↑ Malaria once prevailed throughout the United States and southern Canada (Bruce-Chwatt, 1988). As recently as 1890, the census recorded more than 7,000 malaria deaths per 100,000 people across the American South and more than 1,000 malaria deaths per 100,000 people in states such as Michigan and Illinois. It is important to note that diagnoses and reporting did not meet today's standards. By 1930, malaria had been controlled in the northern and western United States and generally caused fewer than 25 deaths per 100,000 people in the South.fwh In 1970, the World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Advisory Panel on Malaria recommended that the United States be included in the WHO official register of areas where malaria had been eradicated. In Canada, *vivax* malaria became widespread at the end of the 18th century, when refugees from the southern United States settled in large numbers as far north as "the Huron" in the aftermath of the American War of Independence. Malaria was further spread with the building of the Rideau Canal (1826-1832) (Duncan, 1996). By the middle of the 19th century, malaria extended as far north as 50°N. In 1873, the great malarious district of western Ontario was only a fraction of a large endemic area, extending between Ontario and the state of Michigan.

- <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/facts.htm> 
- [http://www.rbm.who.int/cmc\\_upload/0/000/015/367/RBMInfosheet\\_6.htm](http://www.rbm.who.int/cmc_upload/0/000/015/367/RBMInfosheet_6.htm) 
- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no1/reiter.htm> 
- <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/facts.htm> 
- [http://www.rbm.who.int/cmc\\_upload/0/000/015/367/RBMInfosheet\\_6.htm](http://www.rbm.who.int/cmc_upload/0/000/015/367/RBMInfosheet_6.htm) 
- <http://www.malariasite.com/malaria/Pregnancy.htm> 
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