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INFOST 120-202

Mod 9 Case Study

Is WikiLeaks ethical in their approach to journalism? According to Floridi, he says their motivation was based on resentment and that their activities put innocent people at risk. Weineke says that their leaks are “vast and indiscriminate” and are intended to “embarrass” rather than fix the problem. To counter Weineke, when information is released, I’d say it’s not up to the source or publication to release a “fix” to a problem, but rather raise awareness of said problem. To counter Floridi, on what basis can it be said that WikiLeaks’ motivation is based on resentment? Anytime any sensitive information is released, it will almost certainly put someone at risk.

In the case of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange, the face of WikiLeaks, I would place Julian Assange and Wikileaks under the category of whistleblowing by reasoning of deduction because it doesn’t really fit the other two categories in my opinion. Whistleblowing, according to John Boatright, must be about conduct deemed illegal and/immoral in nature and harmful to the general public if not revealed. Julian Assange himself is a journalist and the information that he and WikiLeaks get is not necessarily from hacking a source themselves. They get most of their information from anonymous sources, so I wouldn’t call Assange a hacker. Plus, they “supposedly” analyze and verify their sources to make sure it is accurate.

I don’t believe Assange is a cybercriminal even though the content that WikiLeaks posts is sensitive. It should be protected the same way that other journalistic enterprises are. Julian Assange is a whistleblower because he leaks sensitive information to the public with the intent to “see evidence of the truth.” I take this from a deontological perspective in that they release these types of information because the public has a right to know.

I believe there are certain things that should be kept secret by the government and corporations. For example, military missions and espionage information is the type of stuff that should not be leaked to the public, because it could be leaked to the target enemy. So, in a sense, if this type of information is leaked then it would be a criminal act. Most of the things that WikiLeaks leaks are ethical problems and suspicious documents that pertain to our government and officials.

When there is information that is kept secret from the public that the public should know, then we should have a right to know. Especially if that information pertains to us as citizens of the U.S. I could argue both ways, I suppose. If there is a problem that I could solve before anyone finds out, I’d probably not tell anyone until it has been resolved. Or maybe not even tell anyone. However, if I am outside of the sphere of information and that thing affects me, I’d probably want to always know what happens. If we blindly trust what the government and corporations tell us, then we are playing into their hands and letting go of our freedom and liberty. I think if it is a case of invasion of privacy, or harm to software, harm to hardware, or overall harm to anybody, then the public should know. Harm being in physical form or cyberspace.

**Bibliography**

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