



## **CSC 203 (Section A) Final Paper**

***“WikiLeaks Evaluation”***

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Truth is a matter of perspective. That being said, there are many truths to a story. Today, the world struggles with seeing the truth as societies are built on lies and money. The truth is said to be told through the media as news and gossip; however, one should look carefully as to what is posted, for the entire transparent truth is rarely ever given. Most stories posted by journalists tend to favor a specific party for many reasons, be it money or any profit. Some of those who can see this reality are motivated to search for the truth and let it surface to the sight of the whole world.

WikiLeaks plays a major role in the truth-seeking journey as it has been providing the public with truths that were untold by other media since 2007, when it officially launched its goal<sup>i</sup>. This non-profit organization gathers news and information willingly submitted by anonymous sources, evaluated and decided upon. Ethical measures are certainly taken into consideration throughout the process before and after deciding to spread the word.

In order to undertake an ethical standard in operation, WikiLeaks has set some basic principles as reference to its deeds. Since sharing critical information with the public is highly risky, security of the material and stakeholders is a major concern, which is why most of WikiLeaks's principles revolve around basic security concepts; integrity, availability, and confidentiality.

**First and foremost, any submitted material is leaked as it is, without any modification.**

This is a simple gesture of maintaining integrity of the person who knew about it. Once any information is submitted to WikiLeaks via their electronic drop box, it is professionally evaluated. This means that any leaked news, is leaked because it is the plain, objective truth, an untarnished truth, and the truth does not need modification. The truth speaks for itself. That along with the news story acquired by WikiLeaks is posted, in order to let the public formulate an opinion.

**Second, submitted information is checked for any falseness before it is leaked.** Therefore, incidents are verified of their authenticity. Every detail is closely examined and interpreted by WikiLeaks's inspection team in order to determine fakeness. The procedure of the performed investigation is characterized by traditional journalism techniques fused with modern-day technology methods to establish a deep forensic analysis, determination of cost of forgery, the means of every action, motives, opportunity of each stakeholder, claims, interrogation, legal support as well as the provision of international verification.

**Third, the anonymity of whistle blowers is highly regarded.** WikiLeaks recommends that the submission of any material is to occur via the anonymous electronic drop box providing security through cutting-edge cryptographic technologies, which provides submitters with maximum security. The identity of the whistle blower is never revealed due to the importance of maintaining the security of WikiLeaks's sources. The way this procedure occurs it through international servers, across multiple jurisdictions without leaving traces or logs. WikiLeaks has overcome the location barrier internationally by providing a domain name lacking that of the organization; its legitimacy is checked via the certificate which is found to be provided by "wikileaks.org." Location is also unoppressive locally by encouraging informants to do their calling out of their homes in public places where their activity cannot be traced back to them; especially they are of political or intelligent association.

**Fourth, documents are published fully and uncensored.** This means that the news may include some identifying details of the concerned parties, which may put them at risk. For this reason, in order to protect the lives involved, WikiLeaks tends to remove specific details that may be of a threat either before or after a specific amount of time from news leakage. In the eyes of WikiLeaks, transparency is essential for a strong society. By shedding the light on corruption or any immoral act within the politics of a nation, be it on the governmental, organizational or corporation level, a call for action immediately takes hold of those who run the subsets of the country.

WikiLeaks is a fundamental entity in shaping a renewed medium for journalism by being a non-profit organization with no intention beyond providing the people with the truth. Being a revolutionary in its role, it is important to evaluate the principles that WikiLeaks abides by.

**According to the Kantian analysis,** all of WikiLeaks's principles represent a good will from the non-profit organization. WikiLeaks aims to show important information that other media would not. It provides the utmost truth in the intention of pointing out the flaws of the society to shape it to a better one. For the first three principles, WikiLeaks evaluates every single comma and full stop in order to place the submitters of information in a position where they are means for the public benefit. As for Mill's principle of harm, the third principle of WikiLeaks depicts this idea by leaking uncensored content; the viewers of the news must be well educated to decide for their own whether they are to view the critical information; this is the public's own good. Therefore, WikiLeaks's principles are right.

**The Rule Utilitarian analysis** would state the following rule: any journalism platform should leak important societal evidence solicited from those with the legitimate information as it is.

Benefits are a lot more than the harms, so their method of operation is right.

### **Benefits**

- Not editing content released creates trust between the organization and the whistle blowers
- Checking the incidents for authenticity most often guarantees the organization's credibility for its information
- Protecting the identity of whistle blowers
- Publicized flaws motivate the guilty parties to do better to improve their reputation
- Awakening of the masses on governmental corruption; thus, they are motivated to improve their voting choices and create a better nation
- Pointing out the crimes may lead the people to become aware of their surroundings and enhancing their safety ways
- Promoting freedom of the press and freedom of expression
- Providing safety of the informants

## Harms

- Crimes made public may lead the predators to flee
- Too much of the truth may cause a public panic or even a civil war
- Not revealing identities of whistle blowers may disappoint some of them; they might want to be famous for their coverage
- Publishing the documents in full may risk the lives of many; it may be too late before they are saved

### **WikiLeaks shows a variety of virtues as far as the Virtue Ethics analysis is concerned.**

WikiLeaks shows an element of respect<sup>1</sup> for whistle blowers in posting the content as it is. In addition, WikiLeaks shows its meticulous<sup>2</sup> ways in inspection, to make sure that the information is true. However, there are two ways to view the third principle: it may be selfish<sup>1</sup> of WikiLeaks in not revealing whistle blowers' identity as they prefer keeping their sources private so that they alone are able to use them. Whistle blowers would not be famous for their coverage. But also, it can be seen as protective<sup>3</sup> of WikiLeaks towards them since informants can be put at the edge of a gun for being responsible for valuable information. As for the fourth rule, which states that the documents are published in full i.e. they may contain life-threatening details, it is a bit reckless<sup>2</sup> to do so, as many lives are put at risk. There are three virtues and two vices shown. Since there are vices in their principles, it is not possible to operate virtuously through them. Therefore, it is wrong.

## References:

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<sup>i</sup> <https://wikileaks.org/About.html>