

Whistle-blower site taken offline

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an exercise in 'democracy'

[We are not surprised by the following report of information suppression on the Internet. We have never harboured any illusions regarding just who it is that demands free speech be sacrificed on the altar of profit and expediency. Is it a coincidence that Big Business in the form of a Swiss Bank -- no less -- has taken action to stifle a web site dedicated to anonymous leaks? How else could leaks be safely disseminated?

In the interests of the community, democracy and free speech we are obliged to offer this site as a temporary outlet for such information.]



A controversial website that allows whistle-blowers to anonymously post government and corporate documents has been taken offline in the US.

Wikileaks.org, as it is known, was cut off from the internet following a California court ruling, the site says.

The case was brought by a Swiss bank after "several hundred" documents were posted about its offshore activities.

Other versions of the pages, hosted in countries such as Belgium and India, can still be accessed.

However, the main site was taken offline after the court ordered that Dynadot, which controls the site's domain name, should remove all traces of wikileaks from its servers.

The court also ordered that Dynadot should "prevent the domain name from resolving to the wikileaks.org website or any other website or server other than a blank park page, until further order of this Court."

Other orders included that the domain name be locked "to prevent transfer of the domain name to a different domain registrar" to prevent changes being made to the site.

Wikileaks claimed that the order was "unconstitutional" and said that the site had been "forcibly censored".

Web names

The case was brought by lawyers working for the Swiss banking group Julius Baer. It concerned several documents posted on the site which allegedly reveal that the bank was involved with money laundering and tax evasion.

The documents were allegedly posted by Rudolf Elmer, former vice president of the bank's Cayman Island's operation.

A spokesperson for Julius Baer said he could not comment on the case because of "pending legal proceedings".

The BBC understands that Julius Baer asked for the documents to be removed because they could have an impact on a separate legal case ongoing in Switzerland.

The court hearing took place last week and Dynadot blocked access from Friday evening.

Wikileaks says it was not represented at the hearing because it was "given only hours notice" via e-mail.

A document signed by Judge Jeffery White, who presided over the case, ordered Dynadot to follow six court orders.

As well as removing all records of the site from its servers, the hosting and domain name firm was ordered to produce "all prior or previous administrative and account records and data for the wikileaks.org domain name and account".

The order also demanded that details of the site's registrant, contacts, payment records and "IP addresses and associated data used by any person...who accessed the account for the domain name" to be handed over.

Wikileaks allows users to post documents anonymously.

Information bank

The site was founded in 2006 by dissidents, journalists, mathematicians and technologists from the US, Taiwan, Europe, Australia and South Africa.

It so far claims to have published more than 1.2 million documents.

It provoked controversy when it first appeared on the net with many commentators questioning the motives of the people behind the site.

It recently made available a confidential briefing document relating to the collapse of the UK's Northern Rock bank.

Lawyers working on behalf of the bank attempted to have the documents removed from the site. They can still be accessed.

Dynadot was contacted for this article but have so far not responded to requests for comment.

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