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The US embassy cables



Wikileaks under attack: the definitive timeline

Since Wikileaks released the US embassy cables on 28 November it has come under pressure on several fronts, from DDoS attacks to frozen bank accounts. We list the companies, politicians and organisations making life difficult for Wikileaks and Julian Assange

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WikiLeaks' home page showing an image of Julian Assange after the move to a Swiss host. Photograph: Valentin Flauraud/REUTERS

On Sunday 28 November [Wikileaks](#) began releasing the first of its 250,000 leaked US embassy cables. Almost immediately, a hacking attack known as a "DDOS" – distributed denial of service – attack tried to knock it off the net. These are the attacks that have followed in the succeeding days.

Sunday 28 November

- **TECH:** [DDoS attack](#) hits WikiLeaks as first set of US diplomatic cables is published.

Wednesday 1 December

- **TECH:** **Tableau Software**, which offers free software for data visualisation, [removes the public views of graphics built using information about the diplomatic cables](#). It is the first company to distance itself from Wikileaks, and [admits that the reason was pressure from Senator Joe Lieberman](#), an independent senator with ties to the Democratic party.
- **POLITICS:** **Lieberman**, chairman of the Senate's committee on homeland security, calls for Wikileaks to be taken offline. "I call on any other company or organization that is hosting Wikileaks to immediately terminate its relationship with them. Wikileaks' illegal, outrageous, and reckless acts have compromised our national security and put lives at risk around the world. No responsible company - whether American or foreign - should assist Wikileaks in its efforts to disseminate these stolen materials."

- **TECH** **Amazon** removes Wikileaks's content from its EC2 cloud service, but later insists it did so because the content could cause harm to people and did not belong to Wikileaks – and that it was not due to political pressure or the hacker attacks against the site.

Friday 3 December

- **TECH:** Wikileaks.org ceases to work for web users after **everyDNS.com**, which had provided a free routing service translating the human-readable address into a machine-readable form, ends support.

Wikileaks shifts to a backup domain registered in Switzerland but actually hosted in Sweden, at Wikileaks.ch, though the cables are hosted in part by **OVH**, an internet provider in the north of France.

EveryDNS claims that the DDOS attacks against Wikileaks were disrupting its service provided to thousands of other customers. The company says it is "following established policies so as not to put any one EveryDNS.net user's interests ahead of any others. Lastly, regardless of what people say about the actions of EveryDNS.net, we know this much is true - we believe in our New Hampshire state motto, Live Free or Die."

- **POLITICS:** French industry minister **Eric Besson** writes to internet companies warning them there will be "consequences" for any companies or organisations helping to keep WikiLeaks online in the country.

Saturday 4 December

- **MONEY:** **PayPal**, owned by US auction site eBay, permanently restricts account used by WikiLeaks due to a "violation of the PayPal Acceptable Use Policy". A spokesman said the account was suspended because "[it] cannot be used for any activities that encourage, promote, facilitate or instruct others to engage in illegal activity." You can still donate at Commerzbank Kassel in Germany or Landsbanki in Iceland or by post to a post office box at the University of Melbourne or at <http://wikileaks.ch/support.html>

- **TECH:** **Switch**, the Swiss registrar for Wikileaks.ch declines pressure from US and French authorities to remove the site or block access to it.

Sunday 5 December

- **TECH:** The **Pirate Party** in Sweden says that it has taken over the hosting of the Cablegate directory of Wikileaks after the server in France at **OVH**, which had been hosting the contents of the US diplomatic cables released so far, goes offline.

Monday 6 December

- **MONEY:** Credit card company **Mastercard** withdraws ability to make donations to Wikileaks. "MasterCard is taking action to ensure that WikiLeaks can no longer accept MasterCard-branded products," the credit card outfit says.

- **TECH:** Wikileaks' servers in Sweden attacked by distributed denial of service attack.

- **MONEY:** **Postfinance**, the Swiss postal system, strips WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange of a key fundraising tool, accusing him of lying and immediately shutting down one of his bank accounts. The bank says that Assange had "provided false information regarding his place of residence during the account opening process." Assange had told Postfinance he lived in Geneva but could offer no proof that he was a Swiss resident, a requirement of opening such an account. Postfinance spokesman Alex Josty told The Associated Press the account was closed Monday afternoon and there would be "no criminal consequences" for misleading authorities. "That's his money, he will get his money back," Josty said. "We just close the account and that's it."

Tuesday 7 December

• **MONEY:** Credit card company **Visa** withdraws ability to make donations or payments to Wikileaks. "Visa Europe has taken action to suspend Visa payment acceptance on WikiLeaks' website pending further investigation into the nature of its business and whether it contravenes Visa operating rules," said a spokesman.

Wednesday 8 December

• **MONEY** Speaking at the LeWeb conference Osama Bedier, vice-president of platform, mobile and new ventures for **PayPal** says that "What happened is that on November 27th [the day before Wikileaks began releasing cables] the State Department, the US government basically, wrote a letter saying that the Wikileaks activities were deemed illegal in the United States. And so our policy group had to take a decision to suspend the account... It was straightforward from our point of view."

Note: an earlier version of this article wrongly referred to easyDNS.com as having provided DNS routing for Wikileaks. This was wrong, and the company was not involved at that time - although easyDNS.com is now providing routing for Wikileaks.ch.

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