

# WikiLeaks accuses 'cowardly' Amazon of lying

December 3 2010, by Chris Lefkow

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The Amazon homepage pictured in Washington in September 2010. WikiLeaks lashed out at Amazon on Friday for kicking the whistleblower website off its servers, accusing the US company of lying and being "cowardly."

WikiLeaks lashed out at Amazon on Friday for [kicking the whistleblower website off its servers](#), accusing the US company of lying and being "cowardly."

The accusations came after Amazon broke days of silence and provided its first explanation for its decision to no longer provide Web-hosting services to [WikiLeaks.org](#).

Amazon Web Services, in a statement on its website, said it cut off WikiLeaks because it had violated the company's terms of service and not because of any government pressure.

WikiLeaks fired back at Amazon with a message on its Twitter feed. "Amazon's press release does not accord with the facts on public record. It is one thing to be cowardly. Another to lie about it," WikiLeaks said.

Amazon is best known as an online retailer but it is also a major provider of Web-hosting services, renting out space on its computer servers to customers around the world.

In its statement, the Seattle-based Amazon said "there have been reports that a government inquiry prompted us not to serve WikiLeaks any longer. That is inaccurate."

"There have also been reports that it was prompted by massive DDoS attacks," the company said in a reference to distributed denial of service attacks on the WikiLeaks website.

"That too is inaccurate," Amazon said. "There were indeed large-scale DDoS attacks, but they were successfully defended against."

DDoS attacks occur when legions of zombie computers, machines infected with viruses, are commanded to simultaneously visit a website.

Amazon said Amazon Web Services rents computer infrastructure on a self-service basis and does not pre-screen its customers.

"But it does have terms of service that must be followed," the company said. "WikiLeaks was not following them."

Amazon's terms state that customers must "control all of the rights to the content" stored on its servers and that the content "will not cause injury to any person or entity."

"It's clear that WikiLeaks doesn't own or otherwise control all the rights

to this classified content," Amazon said.



A photo taken December 3 shows a page on the WikiLeaks website featuring its founder Julian Assange. WikiLeaks lashed out at Amazon on Friday for kicking the whistleblower website off its servers, accusing the US company of lying and being "cowardly."

"Further, it is not credible that the extraordinary volume of 250,000 classified documents that WikiLeaks is publishing could have been carefully redacted in such a way as to ensure that they weren't putting innocent people in jeopardy," the company said.

"Human rights organizations have in fact written to WikiLeaks asking them to exercise caution and not release the names or identities of human rights defenders who might be persecuted by their governments," it said.

Some of the data stored by customers on Amazon's servers is controversial "and that's perfectly fine," the company said.

"But when companies or people go about securing and storing large quantities of data that isn't rightfully theirs, and publishing this data without ensuring it won't injure others, it's a violation of our terms of service, and folks need to go operate elsewhere," Amazon said.

EveryDNS.net, the US firm that had been hosting the WikiLeaks.org domain name, pulled the plug on the website late Thursday, saying the cyberattacks were threatening its other clients.

WikiLeaks was offline for several hours but reappeared on Friday with a new Swiss domain name, WikiLeaks.ch.

Another US company, Tableau Software, cut off the whistleblower website on Wednesday citing a violation of its terms of service. Tableau Software was being used by WikiLeaks to create charts of its cache of secret US diplomatic cables.

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