

WikiLeaks rival launches new secret-spilling site

January 28 2011, By FRANK JORDANS , Associated Press

(AP) -- A former WikiLeaks spokesman launched a rival website Friday, saying he planned to give whistleblowers more control over the secrets they spill.

The new platform, called OpenLeaks, will allow sources to choose specifically who they want to submit documents to anonymously, such as to a particular news outlet, said Daniel Domscheit-Berg.

"We'd like to work with [media outlets](#) that have an interest in informing the public," he told reporters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum meeting of top business and political leaders in the Swiss resort of Davos.

The difference between his group and [WikiLeaks](#), he said, would be that his group leaves reviewing the material up to the publication or advocacy group chosen by the source to receive the information.

WikiLeaks has struggled to wade through the vast amounts of material it received - particularly the hundreds of thousands of U.S. diplomatic cables - and been criticized for sharing the data with only a handful of media outlets around the world.

Domscheit-Berg said giving more professional journalists and analysts the opportunity to receive and sift through documents would speed up the process while making OpenLeaks less of a target, as it would not be publishing any of the material itself.

"We are not going to get under the same kind of scrutiny from governments and big corporations as WikiLeaks is currently," he said.

WikiLeaks and its 39-year-old Australian founder Julian Assange have come under increasing pressure since beginning to publish some 250,000 secret U.S. diplomatic cables in November.

Domscheit-Berg, a former spokesman for WikiLeaks who fell out with Assange, said the two websites and others soon to be launched could complement each other, helping to "decentralize" the whistleblowing process.

OpenLeaks will begin testing in several weeks and could be fully operational later this year, he said. So far it has received no outside funding, but should that ever be the case it would be done transparently, he added.

Jeff Jarvis, who teaches journalism at the City University of New York and attended the launch, said the appearance of WikiLeaks, OpenLeaks and others points to a shift in control over information.

"It used to be that he or she who held secrets held power," Jarvis told The Associated Press. "Now he or she who creates transparency holds power."

"The inspiration that's occurring out of all this is very important," he added. "What it says to people in power and government and business is: 'you can't hide.'"

More information: <http://www.openleaks.org/>

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