

New Yorker launches online anonymous tip system

May 15 2013



The New Yorker magazine is displayed in an Upper East Side newsstand in New York on October 9, 2012. The New Yorker magazine on Wednesday unveiled a new online system for anonymous whistleblower tips, based on technology developed by the late Internet activist Aaron Swartz and a former hacker.

The New Yorker magazine on Wednesday unveiled a new online system for anonymous whistleblower tips, based on technology developed by the late Internet activist Aaron Swartz and a former hacker.

The system called Strongbox was unveiled amid an uproar in the news media over the US government seizure of phone logs from the Associated Press, in a probe of a news leak which officials said threatened national security.

"This morning, The New Yorker launched Strongbox, an online place where people can send documents and messages to the magazine, and we, in turn, can offer them a reasonable amount of [anonymity](#)," senior editor Amy Davidson said.

"The underlying code, given the name DeadDrop, will be open-source, and we are very glad to be the first to bring it out into the world, fully implemented."

Swartz, an activist who committed suicide in January as he faced a potential [prison sentence](#) for breaking into a university research database, developed the system with Kevin Poulsen, a former hacker who is now an editor at Wired magazine.

The New Yorker said the system was designed to avoid putting [media organizations](#) at the center of investigations of news leaks.

"Readers and sources have long sent documents to the magazine and its reporters, from letters of complaint to classified papers," Davidson said.

"But, over the years, it's also become easier to trace the senders... Strongbox addresses that; as it's set up, even we won't be able to figure out where files sent to us come from. If anyone asks us, we won't be able to tell them."

The system aims to encourage the anonymous submission of newsworthy information, in the manner of [WikiLeaks](#) and other Internet sites.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) set up its own tip system in May 2011 called SafeHouse.

Poulsen said Swartz agreed to work on the secure-submission system "with the understanding that the code would be open-source."

"The New Yorker, which has a long history of strong investigative work, emerged as the right first home for the system," Poulsen said in a posting on the New Yorker website.

© 2013 AFP

Citation: New Yorker launches online anonymous tip system (2013, May 15) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-05-yorker-online-anonymous.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.