

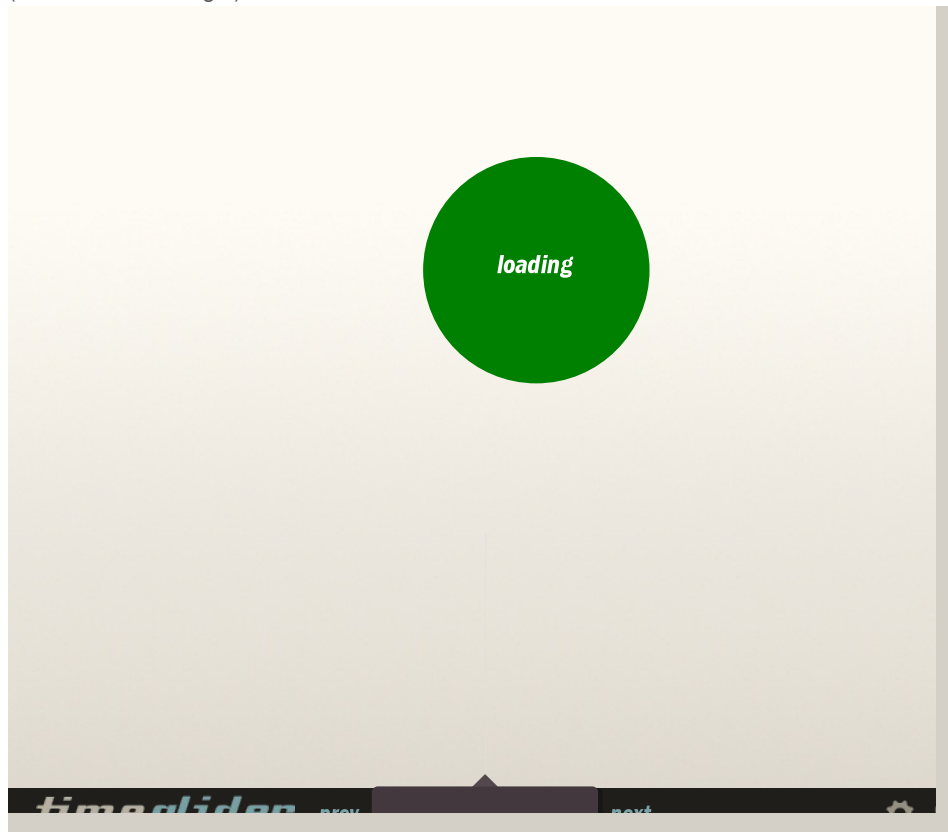
WIKILEAKS: THE LEAK BEFORE THE STORM

LE 20 OCTOBRE 2010 OLIVIER TESQUET & NOOR CHANDLER

For the past three months, Wikileaks has taken over the public debate and captured the attention of the media and the entire world. Owndi has now released an interactive timeline which will help put some order to the pivotal events in the past few months.

In the middle of July, Wikileaks released 77,000 confidential documents concerning the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan, an event we dubbed **“the biggest leak in the history of war”**. On that occasion, Owndi created an **application** aimed at giving an order to the overlap and overload of information. The site administrators, chief among them founder Julian Assange, came under fire from the Pentagon. Despite the internal tension and the attempts to knock it down, they are now about to publish a new salvo of classified files relating, this time, to the war in Iraq, just two months after as the U.S. military **completed its official withdrawal**.

Our interactive timeline, regularly updated, will help you keep track of the past ten weeks (scroll from left to right):



You can also find a larger version by visiting [this link](#).

Monday, October 18. Julian Assange posted **a statement on Twitter**, attempting to put an end to international speculation about the imminent publication, by Wikileaks, of nearly 400,000 classified documents on the U.S. military intervention in Iraq.

Sources, Where art ye?

The founder of Wikileaks took the opportunity to settle accounts with the mainstream press by exposing its lack of journalistic rigour. He especially singled out an article which appeared **on the Wired blog ‘Threat Level’**. Since then, hundreds of articles have announced the release of new leaks, expected for October 18. Defending **“scientific journalism”**, Assange regrets that dozens of newsrooms were duped by such a “sensationalist blog”, guilty of not having adequate sources and information.

In their article dated September 27, 2010, reporters Kevin Poulsen and Kim Zetter of Wired **revealed internal struggles** within the organization, especially between Assange and his right-hand man Daniel Schmitt. The transcript of a chat conversation between the two

activists was published on the blog: “Wikileaks is set to release the Iraq trove on October 18, according to ex-staffers - far too early, in the view of some of them, to properly redact the names of U.S. collaborators and informants in Iraq”.

But what does it mean to be a “Wikileaks staffer”? According to John Young, a veteran of open government through his site, Cryptome, **this is the particular DNA of the organization:**

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I believe there is nobody inside Wikileaks, that is a mistaken assumption about its existence. Various people participate in common activities but there is no formal organization, no officers, no employees, no legal existence. The WL “advisory board” is an informal arrangement with no legal existence, no responsibility, no legal liability. WL remains only a concept, an initiative, and as far as I know does not exist legally. However, Cryptome is also the same, only a concept without formal existence; it too is only an activity not a legal entity, it has no resources, no employees, no responsibility; it is a philosophical fiction somewhat like Wikileaks but there are considerable differences ...

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Much ado about nothing?

Wikileaks was quick to castigate Wired, and with it the entire body of journalism, for these inaccuracies. Scolded by Assange, Wired published a sort of self-acquittal this Tuesday, pointing out “[they] do not hate Wikileaks”. They do, however, claim to be victims of Assange contravening **Kerckhoffs’s principle** by taking up “security through obscurity.” The head of Wikileaks often contradicts himself, and in fact, in his statement, he does not deny the imminent publication of a new burst of War Logs. He does, however re-articulate the rules of the game: Wikileaks will never let their agenda known. For its part, **Mother Jones’s website didn’t hesitate to poke fun** at the behavior of the former hacker. Facing an obscure horizon, the next few days should help settle the hasty media.



Below, the statement released by Julian Assange:

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Where do all these claims about WikiLeaks doing something on Iraq today (Monday) come from? A single tabloid blog at Wired Magazine.

That's right. Over 700 articles, newspapers all over the world, and newswires fooled by a tabloid blog—and each other.

Of course you won't see this blog cited, generally, in the mainstream press articles, because that would lessen the credibility of these articles back to where they belong — unsubstantiated, and indeed, false claims made by a source that is not credible. What is journalism coming to?

But, Wired's blog is not just any source that lacks credibility. It is a known opponent and spreader of all sorts of misinformation about WikiLeaks. This dramatically ramped up since we demanded an investigation into what role they played in the arrest of the alleged journalistic source, US intelligence analyst, Bradley Manning

We condemned Wired magazine for that conduct and the magazine has been oppositional ever since. The two blogs concerned, "Threat Level" and "Danger Room", while having produced some good journalism over the years, mostly now ship puff pieces about the latest "cool weapons system" and other "war tech toys" as befits their names — "Threat Level" and "Danger Room".

These two blogs, and in particular editor Kevin Poulsen, have been responsible for a tremendous amount of other completely false information WikiLeaks.

A post today on "Danger Room" begins with:

"We're still waiting for WikiLeaks to make good on its pledge to reveal hundreds of thousands of U.S. military documents on the Iraq war."

Another fabrication.

WikiLeaks does not speak about upcoming releases dates, indeed, with very rare exceptions we do not communicate any specific information about upcoming releases, since that simply provides fodder for abusive organizations to get their spin machines ready.

Julian Assange

Editor-in-chief



Have a look at our first War Logs application, our live-blogging of the previous leak [FR], and all our articles on WikiLeaks

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Translation by Federica Cocco.

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