

ANONYMOUS PRESS RELEASE

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FREE-THINKING CITIZENS OF THE WORLD,

In the middle of this mass uprising amongst humanity over the censorship of Wikileaks, ANONYMOUS has made its voice heard among the cries for justice and freedom. Many people think they understand ANONYMOUS, but as an amorphous, opt-in entity, ANONYMOUS is - if we might understate ourselves - fractitious at best and anything but unanimous.

Individuals within ANONYMOUS believe many often contradictory things, even within that same individual. Such is humanity. Humans argue, disagree, fight, bicker, and often say hurtful things specifically to hurt one another. As a group of humans (at least to our knowledge - there may be a few dogs on the internet these days) ANONYMOUS holds many of these human qualities.

It may then seem odd to try to characterize or explain ANONYMOUS at all. Among this buzzing hive of thoughts, ideas, and dreams, the only common characteristics that one might perceive are only the ideas that hold the most traction among humans at large.

Many people will follow certain battle standards in the fight for greater justice. Some will fight those who prey upon children. Others will fight empires and kingdoms who do wanton violence against their own people.

The battle standard that ANONYMOUS follows, however, is the freedom of information.

Without information, one cannot fight for any other cause. Children will remain abused if their plight remains unknown. Nations will rage wars against their own people if cloaked in secrecy. Crimes will go unpunished, victims will go uncomforted, and walls will remain undefended.

As Thomas Jefferson put it, "Information is the currency of democracy." But we would go further and say that information is the life-blood of society. Humanity as a great mass of people is constantly transmitting and receiving a treasure-trove of information: sights and sounds, textures and tastes. We love, we hate, we laud, we lament - sometimes to only ourselves but often to others, and we take great comfort in the mere act of communication.

As humanity has pushed the boundaries of technology, we realize now that this act of sharing information acts as a kind of collective processing - fashions,

conventional wisdom, and even the scientific method itself are all the product not of a single genius but of countless humans laboring together.

A trillion times a trillion programs are running simultaneously in our little organic computers that are our brains, networking together through text, through speech, and through pixels. Not all these programs have immediate applications to the tasks we face every single day, but when it does pertain we are grateful that thousands of man-hours have been applied to refine great works of art and thought itself.

As beautiful as the collective dreaming of mankind may be, there are nevertheless those who wish to stifle the free exchange of information. The reasons for this are numerous: expression of political dissent is often repressed in autocratic regimes, and those offended by certain types of communication seek to have the offending material removed.

Indeed, not all information is beautiful or inspiring. Words of hurt and words of hate can and often do damage relationships, families, and individuals. But the crime committed, if any at all, is not the fault of communication itself. We can no more blame the act of speech for harming another as we can fault one's beating heart for spreading a cancer.

Instead, we affirm in the strongest possible sense that the solution to bad speech is more speech, not less. The indiscriminate use of censorship damages the human collective response to bad speech and makes it less capable of responding effectively when bad speech actually does occur.

When information is hidden from view for any reason, its sudden and inevitable revelation is necessarily shocking and cause for alarm. Without a precedent to relate to it and without open dialogue to communally process it, the information becomes harmful due to the censorship itself.

Furthermore, we warn free peoples everywhere of the dangers of private censorship on behalf of government. Government is necessarily slow of action as it reacts to the free expression of men and women. It is thus sad to note that the only effective method of pre-emptive censorship known to man is when the gatekeepers of information censor on behalf of governments.

If information channels are to be useful as methods of collective processing, then they must be agnostic to the message sent. Information is necessarily an enabler of crime, but it also an enabler of comfort. We warn that the hand used to censor must be watched at all times and questioned without ceasing, lest it be abused to cover the crimes of the censor.

We challenge the citizens of democracies everywhere to hold their governments accountable to the people. As the past century has progressed, we have seen governments expected to do more for their people, including the provision of

public pensions and the pursuit of national interests abroad through military interventions. Insofar as the public is aware of what is being done in their name, then we leave it to the institutions of law and the ballot-box to decide what is best for these nations.

Insofar as the people are kept in ignorance about what is done in their name, though, we object in no uncertain terms to elected officials covering up crimes to avoid scrutiny. Knowledge of one's own government's dealings are the responsibility of the people, and with great power in the state must come great scrutiny. We thus work for a radical transparency in governments everywhere, to hold them accountable for crimes committed in the state's name.

We call also for a public and open debate over the issues of copyrights and patents. For too long, we have watched private companies abuse these legal channels as a form of litigational capital. Software copyright firms, for example, exist for the primary purpose of buying copyright claims to harass others. Pharmaceutical firms spend a significant quantity of their monopoly profits not on research and development but on defending their patents.

Indeed, Kiss bassist Gene Simmons is on record as having said, "Make sure your brand is protected... Make sure there are no incursions. Be litigious. Sue everybody. Take their homes, their cars. Don't let anybody cross that line." We have come to a sad impasse as a society where the law is a battlefield of giants where the mere threat of legal action can cause financial crisis.

We thus cannot in any way support any business models which rely on the slavery of information for its own sustenance. If the freedom of information requires that the laws be changed, then we work towards those ends in a peaceful and reasoned manner. We will not stand idly as the law is used to protect the strong and to persecute the weak.

We understand that money is required to promote the arts and sciences, but we cannot allow the law to be used to enforce an empire of tyranny, harassment, and abuse. If the people decide to promote the arts and sciences, then we call for governments everywhere to promote them directly rather than through the creation of enforced monopolies.

If the law does not adapt to the new realities brought by new technologies and the Internet, then the march of technology will rob them of the ability to uphold the law. We thus call for governments everywhere to promote freedom of information whatever, wherever, and however it may arise. Governments which refuse to change with the changing world risk being left behind by it.

WE ARE ANONYMOUS
WE ARE FREE
AND WE WISH YOU WOULD BE TOO