

AFP This frame grab from classified U.S. military gun camera footage, shot from a U.S. army Apache helicopter, shows a group of men on a Baghdad street on July 12, 2007, just before the group was fired upon by the helicopter. Photo: AFP

Wikileaks' video on U.S. copter firing at civilians in Baghdad in 2007 a hit

Whistle-blowers and plain mischief-mongers, in equal measure, are divided on Wikileaks, which earlier this month published a classified U.S. military video of an Apache helicopter firing indiscriminately at civilians in Baghdad in 2007.

The website has become increasingly hard to ignore over the years. The impact of some of its 'scoops', according to some media watchers, far exceeds that of even established news organisations.

The 'collateral murder' video (available on www.collateralmurder.com) is not the first episode that has rankled the establishment. On earlier occasions, Wikileaks published 'screenshots of U.S. vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin's email account', listed the names and addresses of members of the British Nationalist Party (denied by the party) and more recently even published a 'U.S. intelligence document' that cites the website as a "danger to internal security."

The website allows anyone to make a secure submission of data. This data is scanned by a team of volunteers, including veteran journalists and staffers, for authenticity, according to information available in the public domain.

One of its directors, the elusive Julian Assange, who was accused of having been a big-time hacker in his teens, has been quoted in media as saying the site accepts classified, censored or otherwise restricted material of political, diplomatic or ethical significance. However, it does not take "rumour, opinion or other kinds of firsthand reporting or material that is already publicly available."

The site is run entirely with donations. Shortly after posting the 'collateral murder' video, the site put up a notice which says it has launched a fundraising drive to run full strength. So far, it has raised just \$3,70,000 against the target of \$6,00,000. The Sunshine Press, the non-profit organisation that runs Wikileaks, also calls for other technical and legal support that its patrons could help with.

Keywords: [internet](#), [website](#), [democracy debate](#)

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