

Leaking in the public interest

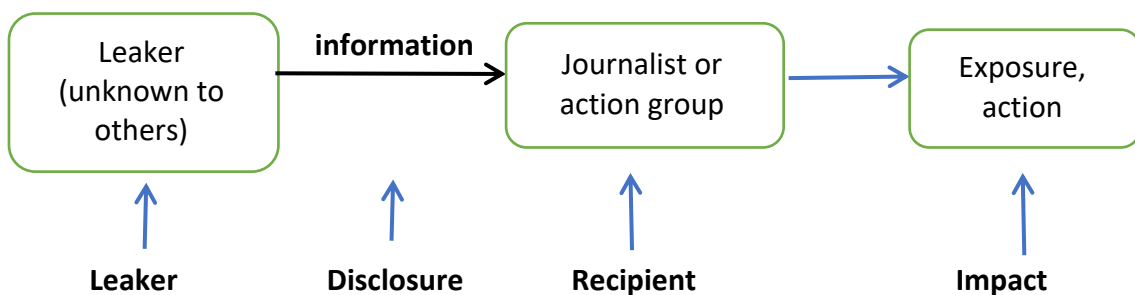


Leaking is revealing secret or inside information about problems to outsiders who can do something about it, without revealing your identity.

The public interest is what benefits people in general, rather than the personal advantage of the leaker and allies.

Why leakers remain anonymous

- As soon as you reveal your identity, you become vulnerable to reprisals such as harassment and dismissal. Whistleblower laws seldom provide protection.
- As soon as you speak out, the cover-up begins, and you won't be able to collect more information.
- Reprisals against whistleblowers scare others from taking action.
- The focus is on the whistleblower, diverting attention from the problem.

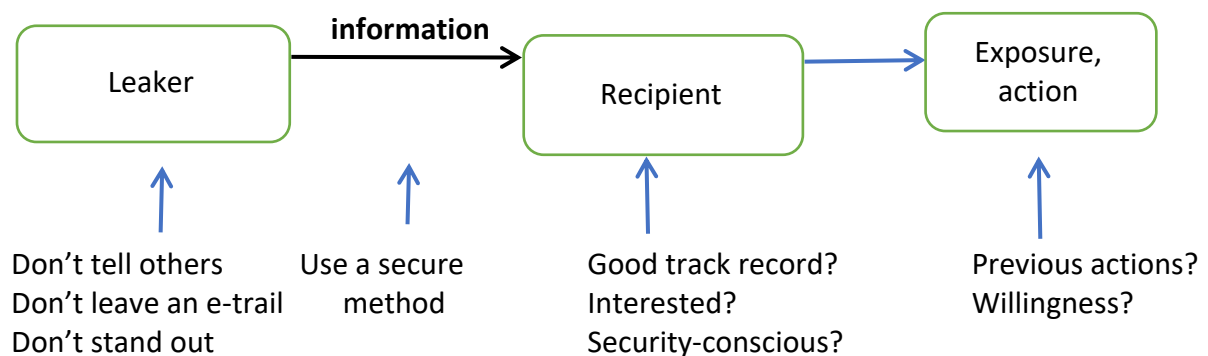


What leakers should do beforehand

- Consider other options, including remaining silent, acting internally against the problem, and leaving.
- Be sure it's in the public interest.
- Prepare for the possibility of being accused or exposed. Prepare emotionally and financially. Maintain a healthy lifestyle and practise being calm.

Doing it

Here are some things leakers can think about.



Special barriers in Australia

- Metadata retention. When you make a call, a record is kept of your number, the other person's number, when you called and how long. This information can be used to track you down.
- Encryption breaking. The government can request that encrypted messages be revealed. Encryption software is not a guarantee of security.
- Criminalisation of whistleblowing. In national security matters, whistleblowers and journalists can go to prison.
- Disruption. The Australian Federal Police can legally gain access to your phone and computer, and delete, modify or add data. They also can impersonate you on social media.

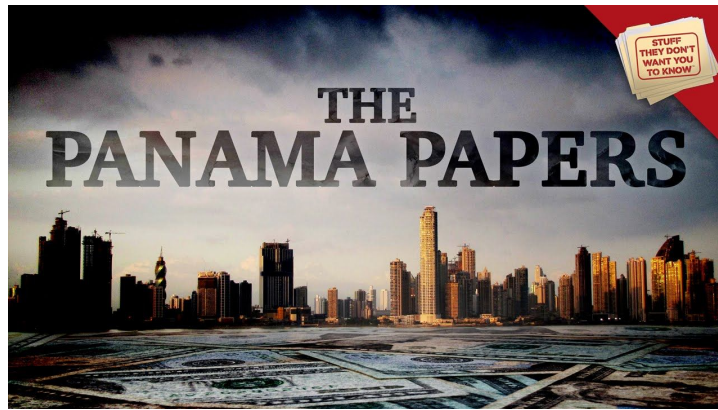
If you ring a journalist, police could search the journalist's phone and use metadata to identify everyone the journalist ever talked with — including you.

Famous leakers are not typical.

Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden are two of the most famous leakers. They are not typical: their identities were disclosed.

Most leakers remain anonymous. Their identity is never revealed. That's why you never hear about them.

Over 10 million documents about financial transactions, held by the company Mossack Fonseca, were leaked to journalists, who after further investigation broke the story in 2016. These documents exposed tax evasion by wealthy individuals. The leaker has never been identified.



Corruption needs to be exposed. It is unfortunate that protections are so weak and unreliable that whistleblowers choose to remain anonymous. It's safer to be a public-interest leaker.

Further information

<https://www.bmartin.cc/dissent/documents/rr/index.html#leaking>

Info sheet #1

Resistance Resources

<https://bit.ly/3ouoYtw>

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Comments are welcome to improve and update this info sheet.

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