Amazon Removes WikiLeaks From Servers

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Under pressure from federal lawmakers, Amazon.com on Wednesday booted WikiLeaks, the whistle-blowing Web site, from its computer servers, three days after the group released a trove of embarrassing State Department cables and documents.

The move to drop WikiLeaks came shortly after members of the Senate’s Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee pressed the company to explain its relationship with WikiLeaks. The site WikiLeaks had previously been using went down for several hours after an Internet attack over the weekend, prompting the group to switch over to an Amazon host site, which rents out bandwidth and other services.

Then, on Sunday, WikiLeaks released thousands of classified government documents and sensitive diplomatic cables that humiliated the State Department and revealed sensitive U.S. assessments of foreign leaders. The Obama administration responded with outrage and set up a special committee to tighten security and evaluate the damage from the documents’ release.

On Wednesday, WikiLeaks announced on Twitter that it had been dropped from its host site.

“WikiLeaks servers at Amazon ousted. Free speech the land of the free — fine our $ are now spent to employ people in Europe,” the group wrote in its Twitter message. “If Amazon are so uncomfortable with the first amendment,” the group later wrote, “they should get out of the business of selling books.”

Calls to Amazon’s Seattle office seeking comment were not immediately returned Wednesday night. But Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, chairman of the senate governmental affairs committee, said Amazon reached out to his office Wednesday morning, and that he planned on asking it “about the extent of its relationship” with the
group. He said he was also calling on other companies to sever any ties with WikiLeaks.

"WikiLeaks' illegal, outrageous, and reckless acts have compromised our national security and put lives at risk around the world," Mr. Lieberman said. "No responsible company – whether American or foreign – should assist WikiLeaks in its efforts to disseminate these stolen materials."

The founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, a former computer hacker, has been in hiding for some time, and his whereabouts are still uncertain. Mr. Assange was believed to have been in Sweden recently, but reportedly left last month after authorities there said he was wanted for questioning in connection to a rape and other sexual offenses. Officials with Interpol, the international police organization, issued a "red notice" this week calling for his arrest.
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