

WIKILEAKS CONTROVERSY

Half of Americans Condemn WikiLeaks Release; Britons and Canadians Split

People in the three countries think the release of classified cables will damage diplomatic relations between the U.S. and other countries.

[NEW YORK - Dec. 9, 2010] - The online publication of thousands of classified documents has been decried by half of Americans, but people in Canada and Britain are not as strong in their condemnation of the actions of WikiLeaks, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of representative national samples shows that practically half of respondents in the United States (47%) are following the WikiLeaks story “very closely” or “moderately closely”, compared to 44 per cent in both Canada and Britain.

Half of Americans (51%) believe WikiLeaks as wrong to publish tens of thousands of classified U.S. diplomatic cables, while one-in-five (19%) agree with its actions.

The views of respondents in the other two countries are definitely more nuanced. In Canada, 36 per cent of respondents say WikiLeaks was wrong, while 30 per cent claim it was right. Britain posts very similar numbers, with 38 per cent of respondents stating that WikiLeaks was wrong, and 33 per cent saying it was right.

At least three-in-five respondents in the three countries believe the release of these documents will damage diplomatic relations between the U.S. and other countries (BRI 65%, CAN 61%, USA 60%) and majorities also state that the release of these documents will make it harder for the U.S. to advance its foreign policy goals (BRI 60%, USA 59%, CAN 57%). However, while three-in-five Americans (62%) fear that the WikiLeaks release will put people’s lives at risk, including U.S. diplomats and soldiers, this view is shared by about half of Britons (51%) and Canadians (48%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **51% of Americans, 38% of Britons and 36% of Canadians believe WikiLeaks was wrong to publish classified information**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From November 30 to December 5, 2010 Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,005 Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panellists, 1,000 American adults who are Springboard America panellists, and 2,002 British adults who are Springboard UK panellists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1% for Canada and the United States and 2.2% for Great Britain. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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The WikiLeaks Justification

In August, a spokesman for WikiLeaks justified the website's actions, stating: "Knowledge about ongoing issues like the war in Afghanistan is the only way to help create something like safety. Hopefully with this understanding, public scrutiny will then influence governments to develop better politics."

A third of Americans (32%) agree with this justification, while almost half (47%) disagree with it.




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WikiLeaks Controversy

As you may know, a website called WikiLeaks has published tens of thousands of classified U.S. diplomatic cables over the past few days. How closely have you followed this story in the media?

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
Very closely	9%	12%	9%
Moderately closely	35%	35%	35%
Not too closely	28%	23%	31%
Not closely at all	28%	29%	26%

WikiLeaks Controversy

From what you have seen, read or heard about this issue, do you think WikiLeaks was right to publish this classified information, or wrong to publish this classified information?




	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
WikiLeaks was right to publish this information	30%	19%	33%
WikiLeaks was wrong to publish this information	36%	51%	38%
Not sure	34%	30%	30%

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WikiLeaks Controversy

Overall, do you agree or disagree with each one of the following statements? - **“Agree” listed**

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
The release of these documents will put people’s lives at risk, including U.S. diplomats and soldiers	48%	62%	51%
The release of these documents will damage diplomatic relations between the U.S. and other countries	61%	60%	65%
The release of these documents will make it harder for the U.S. to advance its foreign policy goals	57%	59%	60%

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WikiLeaks Controversy

UNITED STATES



A spokesperson for Wikileaks commented that its disclosure of classified U.S. documents is justified because “Knowledge about ongoing issues like the war in Afghanistan is the only way to help create something like safety. Hopefully with this understanding, public scrutiny will then influence governments to develop better politics.”

Do you agree or disagree with this rationale for publishing thousands of classified U.S. documents and diplomatic cables?

Agree	32%
Disagree	47%
Not sure	21%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record in Canada and the United States can be found at:

<http://www.angus-reid.com/services/record-of-accuracy/>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angus-reid.com/about/>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.angus-reid.com>**

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