The First Secure Anonymous Platform for Wildlife Crime Whistleblowers

First 3-month Pilot
Development, Results, Challenges & Lessons Learned

Washington, DC – June 3rd, 2014
About the Elephant Action League (EAL)

Legally established in California in February 2013
Started operations in 2012

A small start-up based where is needed
No official presence in ‘hot’ Target Countries

Mission: To fight wildlife crime with Concrete projects and an Innovative and Collaborative approach.

Heterogeneous Background:
- Conservation
- Business
- Security
- Intelligence
- Law
- Communication
What EAL Does

- Wildlife Crime - Field Projects
- Special Projects
- Investigations
- Awareness activities
- CITES related
- Human-Elephant Conflict
What EAL Does

Wildlife Crime – Field Projects

**Tanzania**: support PAMS Foundation in anti-poaching, training to TANAPA’s rangers, Intelligence

**Gabon**: support Conservation Justice (EAGLE)

**Guinea C.**: support WARA-GALFF (EAGLE)

**Togo**: support TALFF (EAGLE)

Investigations

**Ivory & al-Shabaab** (in coll. with Maisha Consulting)

**Thailand** in collaboration with another NGO

**Sri Lanka** (about to begin - partner is confidential)

**WildLeaks**: 3 in preparation
WildLeaks
Launch & Mission

- Launched by EAL in February 2014 with zero communication investment
- First leak received within 24 hours from the launch

**Mission:** to receive and evaluate anonymous information/tips regarding wildlife and forest crimes and transform them into actionable items.

**The possible actions are:**
- Begin or continue an investigation (also in collaboration with the partners)
- Share the information with selected and trusted contacts within the relevant law enforcement agencies (before/after an investigation)
- Share the information with the media partners
- Do nothing if the information is not useful enough or if any use of the leak is considered dangerous for the source
Priorities: to prevent wildlife crimes and to facilitate the identification, arrest and prosecution of criminals, traffickers, businessmen and corrupt governmental officials behind the poaching of endangered species and the trafficking of wildlife and forest products.

Why WildLeaks?

- They are often ahead of us
- Need of new, innovative, disrupting approaches
- The role of the Civil Society
- More pressure on criminals but ALSO on corrupt government/security officials
- Target the upper layers of wildlife crime.
The Technology

Need:
To allow the sources to stay anonymous (if they wish) and to submit information in a secure way, always strongly encrypted.

Very secured platform built on the Tor technology
Tor is free software and an open network that helps users defend against traffic analysis.

What Do I need? Just the Tor Browser
https://www.torproject.org/download/download-easy.html.en
(NOT A MUST, I CAN DO WITHOUT IT)

In collaboration with The Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights
The Technology – Tor Browser

Congratulations!
This browser is configured to use Tor.
You are now free to browse the Internet anonymously.
Test Tor Network Settings

Search securely with Startpage.

What Next?
Tor is NOT all you need to browse anonymously!
You may need to change some of your browsing habits to ensure your identity stays safe.
Tips On Staying Anonymous »

You Can Help!
There are many ways you can help make the Tor Network faster and stronger:
- Run a Tor Relay Node »
- Volunteer Your Services »
- Make a Donation »

The Tor Project is a US 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the research, development, and education of online anonymity and privacy. Learn more about The Tor Project »
How It Works – Very Simple! 1st Step

3 Simple Steps

1st Step: Click on the Red Submission Button on our homepage

(but only after reading the information on our website – Green Button!)
**2nd Step:** You are taken to a simple secure platform where you can submit information and files.

Our Tor address? http://ppdz5djzpo3w5k2z.onion
How It Works – Very Simple! 2nd Step

Blow the Whistle

1 - Receiver selection  2 - Fill out your submission  3 - Final Step

Enter the information that is relevant to your submission and possibly upload the relevant accompanying files.

Details

1) Short title

This field cannot be empty

2) Full description

This field cannot be empty

3) Files description

Add files

4 Categories of Leaks

I can upload all kind of files
How It Works – Very Simple! 3rd Step

3rd Step: After the submission you will be given a Receipt Number 9333538708223368
This number is very important because it allows the user to connect to us again, in a secure and anonymous way, and to do the following:

• Add more information
• Send us a message
• Interact with us in an anonymous way

REMINDER: The Installation of the Tor Browser is Not a Must

Submission Created!

This receipt will allow you to login as the whistleblower for this Tip. Through this system receivers will be able to ask you questions on the Tip and you will be able to write a reply. You will also be able to keep track of who has viewed your submission and downloaded the files. Moreover, it will allow you to add other files to your submission.

Beware of the fact that this receipt, if fallen into the wrong hands, will lead to identifying you as the whistleblower for this Tip.

If you are interested in keeping it, please save it in a secure place and make sure it does not fall into the wrong hands

9333538708223368

Please copy in the box below your receipt to access the tip interface.
Example of a Leak (as received - back office)
Not Just Technology!
The *Modus Operandi*

**Assessment**
- Receiving Group
  - 4 people

**Validation**
- Strategic Partners & Advisors

**Action**
- Partners & Collaborators

**Research**
- Investigations
- Media

**LEAKS**
- Environmental Investigation Agency
First 3 months – Most RelevantLeaks/Info

In about 3 months:
- 24 leaks/tips
- >30 emails with info
- 3 investigations in preparation

Investigation in preparation
First 3 months – Most Relevant Topics

• Tiger poaching in Sumatra (Indonesia) – Shared

• Illegal trade of an African wildlife product into the U.S. – Shared

• Illegal trade of ivory (Hong Kong, Kenya, Mozambique)

  Prep for 3 investigations

• Illegal hunting of lions & leopards in S. Africa
  Shared

• Forest destruction in central Mexico
First 3 months – Most Relevant Topics

- Illegal trade of chimps in Liberia – Shared
- Illegal logging in Malawi (Mulanje cedar)
- Illegal fishing in Alaska
- Illegal logging/trade in Russia – Shared
The Role of the Media

Like law enforcement/Gov agencies, the media are potential partners and can play an important role. But it’s just one of the options we have.

In some cases, WildLeaks may determine that releasing information to the media may be the most effective means of addressing a particular issue.

This is normally done only after the investigative phase or after a determination has been made that an investigation is either unnecessary, not feasible, or may result in information reaching those involved in the criminal activity.
First Partnerships

Strategic/Managers
- Global Eye
- ECOJUST
- The Oxpeckers Center for Investigative Environmental Journalism
- Consulting

Advisors
- Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology
- Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC)
- Predators Group

Operational/Field
- UK
- Conservation Group
- Media
- Suomen Luonnonsuojeluliitto

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Les chimpanzés ne sont pas des animaux de compagnie

Les chimpanzés sont une espèce protégée par la loi. La vente de chimpanzés est interdite par la loi. Acheter des chimpanzés incite les vendeurs à capturer davantage d’ animaux.

Les chimpanzés peuvent devenir incontrôlables en captivité et représenter un grave danger pour vous et votre famille. En plus, ils peuvent transmettre des maladies mortelles comme Ebola.

Les chimpanzés souffrent mentalement et physiquement lorsqu’ils sont gardés dans des espaces clos et loin de leur milieu naturel.

N’achetez jamais de chimpanzé pour en faire un animal de compagnie. Signalez les personnes qui en possèdent à la maison ou qui en font le commerce:
Conservation group: orphan.apes@eva.mpg.de
Office Guinéen de la Diversité Biologique et des Aires Protégées, BP 761 Conakry
Ou faire une dénonciation anonyme à: www.wildleaks.org

Posters in 3 languages at airports, int. schools, embassies, hotels.

La chasse, la capture, la vente ou l'achat de chimpanzés est ILLÉGAL
Global Eye:
- Global Eye Counter Trafficking (USA)
- Global Eye Trust (Mauritius)
Operating methods overview

- Wildlife / forest products
- Application of professional intelligence methodologies (US Intel Standards)
- Specialisation in HUMINT
- COMINT capability
- 4-stage intelligence cycle
  - Snapshot
  - Geospatial node mapping
  - Infiltration
  - Interdiction / disruption
- Analysis & Verification

1. Assessment of assumptions
2. Hypothesis generation & testing
3. Assessment of bias (inc confirmation, anchoring)
Operating scale

Networks

- Developing Networks
- Strong Networks
Pilot’s Achievements

The first 3-month pilot phase of WildLeaks had the following 5 objectives:

1) POC (Proof of Concept)  ✔

2) Test the platform, the technology and the sharing systems  ✔

3) Introduce WildLeaks to the professional community and to the public  ✔

4) Begin/prepare the first investigation/s based on selected leaks  ✔

5) Develop first strategic and operational partnerships  ✔
Lessons Learnt

• There is a lot of people out there **willing to help**. And apparently they like us!
• They needed a reliable and **independent** tool, and the choice of full anonymity
• WildLeaks is becoming a recipient for confidential info **not only through the site**
• In addition to passively receiving information, WildLeaks can use its network to **actively seek information** regarding specific criminal activity
• WildLeaks could also be a **mapping tool** for certain issues/phenomenon
• The submission phase could be made simpler
• App for **mobile phones** ? Issue with real anonymity
Challenges

• WildLeaks needs to be known and trusted  >  More leaks
• We need to reach people in the cities AND in the field
• Specific countries penetration
• Extraction, Protection and Management of information from specific countries
• We deal only with wildlife and forest crimes, not animal welfare
• Law enforcement agencies are potential partners, not competitors
• Potential large amount of info to process > need to grow organically but fast
• Assessment & investigative capabilities > more partners in the field
• Tutoring/managing of potential whistleblowers
What We Are Working On - The Future

New project that will enhance the intelligence and investigative capabilities of our teams AND partners

More investigations done by WL, AND more investigations done by others, not necessarily our partners

It’s a Collaborative Project!
What Do We Really Need?

Citizens Referees

Who blow the whistle when they see something wrong

But we need to inspire people to help!
Thank You

Credit: PAMS Foundation

Andrea Crosta  
Elephant Action League (EAL) / WildLeaks  
ac@elephantleague.org  
ac@wildleaks.org

www.elephantleague.org  
www.wildleaks.org