

## **Internet Group Anonymous Declares "War on Scientology"**

*By Chan Enterprises*

*Dated: Jan 21, 2008*

*"Anonymous" are fighting the Church of Scientology and the Religious Technology Center.*

CLEARWATER, Florida - Anonymous announced their intention to combat the activities of the Church of Scientology on Monday. A spokesperson said that the group's goals include bringing an end to the financial exploitation of Church members and protecting the right to free speech, a right which they claim was consistently violated by the Church of Scientology in pursuit of its opponents.

This announcement came as a response to attempts by the Church to keep secret an internal video meant to be viewed only by Scientologists, featuring actor Tom Cruise. Despite their efforts, the movie was leaked and rapidly spread across the Internet. The video caused much controversy, and members of Anonymous posted a message to several of their websites proclaiming war against Scientology. Soon after, Anonymous struck at the church; they blocked access to its website, made prank calls, organized protests, distributed anti-Church pamphlets and information, and extracted secret files from the Church of Scientology and its parent company, the Religious Technology Center.

Anonymous' members cited several reasons for their actions against the Church of Scientology: many have stressed the alleged human rights violations under the auspices of the Church. Others accused the Church of fraud due to its costly ceremonies, while some merely sought the entertainment they refer to as "lulz," a corruption of the Internet slang "LOL," or "laugh out loud."

Most members, however, were concerned with the threat to free speech that the Church posed. This was most evident in the recent attacks on websites such as Digg and YouTube, where the Church filtered anti-Scientology comments and replaced their content with the text "[This comment is no longer available due to a copyright claim by Church of Scientology International]."

"The so-called Church of Scientology actively misused copyright and trademark law in pursuit of its own agenda," one Anonymous commented. "They attempted not only to subvert free speech, but to recklessly pervert justice to silence those who spoke out against them."

The Church of Scientology's legal struggle with its online detractors began in 1994 with the Usenet group "alt.religion.scientology", a community which spoke out against the Church. Legal representatives from the Church confronted them specifically over the use of Scientology in their name, citing trademark infringement and misrepresentation. This led to numerous lawsuits, and the group was shut down. The Church of Scientology later found itself in several further conflicts on the Internet, including some with popular websites such as Google and Slashdot, as well as an alleged "war" with users of the website YTMND.com.

The members of Anonymous do not plan to end their attacks on the Church of Scientology. Instead, they will continue until the Church of Scientology reacts, at which point they will change strategy. Their main goal is to render the church powerless, and so the war could be one of attrition.

Science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard founded the Church in 1953. In the 55 years since its inception, the Church has faced allegations of being a commercial enterprise that harasses its critics, exploits its members, and neglects adults in its care. Scientology has also faced criticism over the cost required to progress through its "auditing" system, with the total bill for completing the course estimated at \$365,000 -

\$380,000.

[http://www.whyairetheydead.net/Universal\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Rights.html](http://www.whyairetheydead.net/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights.html)

<http://www.discord.org/%7Elippard/skeptic/03.3.jl-jj-scientology.html>

[http://www.nyupress.org/netwars/textonly/pages/chapter06/ch06\\_.html](http://www.nyupress.org/netwars/textonly/pages/chapter06/ch06_.html)

<http://www.news.com/2100-1023-959236.html>

<http://slashdot.org/yro/01/03/16/1256226.shtml>

[http://www.ytmnd.com/news/?news\\_id=40](http://www.ytmnd.com/news/?news_id=40)

<http://www.xenu.net/archive/prices.html>

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#### About Anonymous:

Anonymous is a collective composed of many Internet users, combined under one name. The group gained fame through popular image-boards and accrued influence both on the Internet and the real world. They have launched offensives against a wide variety of targets, including the social website Habbo Hotel and various White Supremacy entities. Anonymous played a major role in the capture of Canadian pedophile Chris Forcand.

Category	Religion, Internet, Society
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