

# **Radical Transparency and Digital Democracy**

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# Radical Transparency and Digital Democracy: WikiLeaks and Beyond

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To Wyatt and Sebastian,  
may you crack things open so that others might see*

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## About the Author

**Luke Heemsbergen's** research and teaching, lights fires and builds bridges between digital communication and political life. This work has been shaped by serving the public in the Canadian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and (separately) serving up international profits in the corporate sector. His return to academia allowed him to critically engage emerging forms of socio-political visibility afforded by digital communication technologies that open new power relations in society, including novel interfaces of the digital-material world such as 3D printing and augmented reality.

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# Acknowledgements

This book started a long time ago in a galaxy far from where WikiLeaks is now. When I left government to pursue a graduate degree, WikiLeaks was a quirky website that most people thought similar to Wikipedia, and I thought interesting enough to make a fun MA thesis. Fifteen years later, a lot has changed, and a lot of people have guided the thoughts that are expressed in these pages. Once again, I start by acknowledging Jess as my constant enabler and, through the turns of 2020, underwriter of this work. Robert Hassan, Helen Sullivan, and Sean Cubitt built any rigour that is displayed herein, and I continue to appreciate their lessons and friendship. Lincoln Dahlberg, thank you for your guiding comments to my early research that allowed this next chapter to flourish. Comrade-mates Robbie Fordyce, Suneel Jethani, Alexia Maddox, Bjorn Nansen, Luke van Ryn, Thao Phan, Nate Tkcaz, César Albarrán Torres, Andrew Schrock, Tom Sutherland, and Katie Warfield, your work and critique of mine inspired me to perspire towards the light. Special thanks to my RA, Dr Johnston, whose archival research did Harvard (and I) proud. Berkman friends, thanks for blowing my mind and breaking my research doldrums. Mikkel Flyverbom, thank you for making new prisms not only visible but also accessible for me in so many ways; I will be forever grateful to the Stohls, even if these particular acts of kindness are now forgotten amongst their many others. The support given during the research journey from the Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University (from Fethi to Jenny), as well as support from the University of Melbourne (Adrian especially) cannot be overstated. Endless thanks to Jen McCall for green-lighting a green author, despite me writing phrases like that, and for the continued support of the team at Emerald that saw the work through.

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