

## US Government Essays 2016-2017

### Essay Project #1: Hackers, Hacktivists and Whistleblowers: Danger to Democracy or Corruption Disinfectant?

Government secrecy has a troubling and controversial history in the United States. Since the government is the people's government, then don't the people have a right to know what their government is doing in the name of the people? On the other hand, governments, corporations and people keep secrets because lives are at risk, corporate profits could be eviscerated by loss of proprietary information, personal secrets could be splashed over the internet causing embarrassment or worse, and anyone who gets a hold of our passwords and identification can use it to empty bank accounts, and cause tremendous personal harm. Secrecy also is the hiding place of the criminal, and whistle-blowers, hackers, and hacktivists can expose corruption and criminal wrongdoing that would otherwise never be known. Do whistleblowers, hackers and hacktivists make our society better by exposing government and corporate misdeeds, or are they dangerous, destructive anarchists and political actors seeking personal riches and fame, or competitive advantage? Or all of the above?

Sample Outline (You can use this if you wish, but you do not have to)

1. Opening
  - a. Opening – Story, anecdote, joke, quote, statistics, past experience, to get the reader's attention, introduce them to the topic, and get them to want to read more.
  - b. Thesis – Build up to your thesis using some of the arguments you will discuss later on, then bring out your thesis – the one sentence (rarely two or more) that answers the question - what is this essay about?
2. Main Body – Make your arguments, backed up by Data, Proof, and Evidence (DPE)
  - a. What is whistle-blowing, hacking and hacktivism
  - b. History
    - i. Pentagon Papers
    - ii. Julian Assange and Wiki leaks
    - iii. Edward Snowden
    - iv. Presidents and whistle-blowing, hacking and hacktivism
  - c. Benefits of whistle-blowing, hacking and hacktivism
    - i. Sunshine is the best disinfectant
    - ii. Corruption, government misdeeds, corporate crimes
      1. NSA Spying
      2. Cover-ups
  - d. Harms of whistle-blowing, hacking and hacktivism
    - i. Endangered lives
    - ii. Loss of privacy
    - iii. Personal information
    - iv. Corporate trade secrets
      1. Hacked music, software, movies
      2. Torrents
    - v. Weapons technologies
      1. WMD: Nuclear, Chemical, Biological
      2. Stealth
  - e. How should we deal with this issue?
    - i. Encourage or discourage whistleblowers/hackers/hacktivism?
    - ii. Laws protecting whistleblowers?
      1. Obama and prosecuting whistleblowers
    - iii. How corrupt is corrupt?
3. Conclusion – Restate thesis, summarize arguments, leave reader with task, idea, motivation or purpose.

1. Make sure to include citations every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you found in your own independent research. Use APA citation notation (found on website). Using others work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay.
2. Papers should be 8-10 pages in length in Times New Roman or Ariel 12 point font, double spaced, pages numbered, cover page optional, references on last page (as per APA notation), 1 inch borders on top/bottom and left/right, stapled (no covers or binders). Be sure to include name and period.
3. Please type all work on a computer.
4. Please provide 2 copies of the essay, one will be returned.