

Put enough eyeballs on it, no bug is invisible.

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The truth at any cost lowers all other costs.

FOREWORD

I've known Robert D. Steele for over fifteen years now, ever since he invited me to speak in 1996 to a gathering of international spies, intelligence managers, and professional intelligence analysts in Washington, DC.

Then in 2005, what looked like peaceful revolution showed up in the streets of Egypt and Lebanon. But it was hard to tell whether the footage of protests blossoming on Middle Eastern TV stations showed the activity of a lunatic fringe or revealed something that went far deeper. So at three AM one night, I convened an online group that included: a member of the State Department; one of UNESCO's top hundred intellectuals of the Islamic world; the former editor-in-chief of *Newsweek*; a tiny handful of others . . . and Robert D. Steele. Steele said it was one of the best brain trusts since Winston Churchill's late-night brainstorming sessions and FDR's kitchen cabinet. But he was prejudiced. He was part of the group. (Our Islamic intellectual, Dr. Munawar Anees, by the way, made a powerful case that the Arab lust for democracy was real.)

In all these encounters, I had the same reaction that Howard Rheingold and John Perry Barlow had when they spoke at Steele's first conference in 1992: Robert D. Steele was onto something.

What was it? Let's start with Julian Assange¹ and WikiLeaks.² In 2010, when WikiLeaks' materials blasted their way into the headlines, I loathed Assange for his dislike

of the United States. And I felt I was also supposed to be outraged by the carefully spooned-out flow of Assange's WikiLeaks. Outrage was my duty as a patriotic American. But I wasn't angered. My real feelings were held down below, way down at a non-verbal level. Why? Because I had been aware of many of the truths in WikiLeaks' revelations. I had shared many of the same opinions of the world leaders we are forced to deal with. The only truly objectionable material in Assange's leaks was the names of sources, names whose publication could get those sources killed and could shut down future flows of vital information.

I don't know about you, but I felt cheated by the fact that the government would not share its thinking with me. Maybe you are asking: Why in the world should our government share its thought process with the likes of you and me? You and I are just water molecules in a vast sea, grains of sand on an enormous beach. Surely we don't have the level of sophistication it takes to understand the subtle currents of international affairs. But research on collective smarts among every sort of beast from bacteria and baboons to Marxists, capitalists, and kleptocrats indicates one thing. A whompingly impressive processing power emerges when when we are all used together as components in a learning machine. What's more, my books—books like *The Lucifer Principle* and *Global Brain*—use biological paradoxes like depression and programmed cell death to make the case that our insecurities and our blue moods evolved to make us exactly that—modules.

Macroprocessors in a parallel distributed supercomputer. Neurons in a collective brain. Participants in a group IQ.

But secrecy has prevented people like George W. Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Hilary Clinton, and Barack Obama from using this slumbering group IQ. The result? Our “intelligence” gave us the clues to 9/11 in advance. But it failed to connect the dots. It failed to see the big picture. And our “intelligence” told us there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq when, in fact, there were not.

Faulty intelligence—dumbed-down intelligence—pushed us into a nine-year war, the Iraq War. A war that cost us more than a trillion dollars³ and gave us the biggest deficit in world history. What dumbs down our intelligence? Steele argues that it is the top-secret nature of our national “intelligence” programs.

There is a name for the alternative, a name for the kind of collective intelligence that Robert David Steele has been advocating and that Julian Assange was practicing. Steele calls it “Open-Source Intelligence.” And you’re about to read what it is. What’s more, you’re about to read how Steele, an intelligence professional who has been both a spy under deep cover and a co-creator of the Marine Corps Intelligence Center, came to realize that open-source intelligence is a necessity. This realization went hand in hand with his observation of something else crucial—that intelligence done in top-secrecy mode does not work!

Robert D. Steele argues more coherently than anyone I know what an open-source intelligence is and how it can operate. He reveals how he tried to work from the inside

to bring open-source intelligence to the military and to something even more vital: to our policy-makers. In fact, Steele saw firsthand how open-source intelligence can run rings around normal top-secret intelligence. And he saw from the inside exactly why.

He saw why our so-called intelligence has been so retarded that it has endangered our economy and cast a pall over our future. He saw why the intelligence that is supposed to lead us to victory is consistently defeating us.

What did Robert David Steele see? The answers are in *The Open-Source Everything Manifesto: Transparency, Truth, and Trust*.

—Howard Bloom
February 3, 2012

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Government is not built to perceive great truths; only people can perceive great truths. Governments specialize in small and intermediate truths. They have to be instructed by their people in great truths. And the particular truth in which they need instructions today is that new means for meeting the largest problems on earth have to be created.

—Norman Cousins¹

I realized in 1988 that my life as a spy specializing in secrets was not only unproductive, it was in sharp opposition to what we actually need: full access to true information, to the complete diversity of views on any given issue, and consequently, the ability to create Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT). OSINT provides the foundation for direct democracy: participatory intelligence (decision-support), open-source policy-making, and participatory budgeting.

I bring to the writing of this manifesto my decades of professional experience in the field of intelligence-gathering, as well as a deep desire to help nurture a global movement to share information and knowledge as widely as possible. The new meme is a bit convoluted but it captures the universality of all minds, all information, all languages, all the time: Multinational, Multiagency, Multidisciplinary, Multidomain Information- Sharing and Sense-Making (M4IS2).²

Alvin Toffler anticipated this day in his book *PowerShift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century*,³ where he developed the idea of information/intelligence as a substitute for wealth, violence, labor, time, and space. Open-Source Everything—and in the information arena, M4IS2—is, I believe, the foundation of a prosperous world at peace. A public able to access all information all the time, and the obliteration of secrecy and top-down decision-making, will be among the hallmarks of a new era in our civilization. Both of these require integrity as core attribute.⁴

As a professional intelligence officer who held Top Secret and Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) clearances for thirty years (1976–2006), I was originally focused on national security secrets and employed by the U.S. government. With time and experience I slowly realized that the vast troves of “open” sources of information—meaning what is accessible to anyone willing to look or listen—are more reliable and more useful than “secret” sources that have built-in obstacles to validation and accountability.

Matt Drudge and the *Drudge Report* are a classic example of the changing dynamics of how the public is informed. He broke the Monica Lewinsky story at a time when the corporate media was holding back because of its incestuous relationship with the two-party tyranny that strives to control what We the People can learn.

Since then a vibrant literature has emerged about Collective Intelligence, with titles using that term and similar

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ones such as *Army of Davids*, *Wisdom of the Crowds*, *Smart Mobs*, *Here Comes Everybody*, and *Groundswell*.⁵

What all this boils down to is that normal average human beings, when they share information openly with one another and engage in respectful deliberative dialog, always, without exception, arrive at better conclusions than experts or elites who rely on “secret” information and generally have hidden agendas enabled by secrecy combined with public ignorance and apathy.

I am not alone in the conviction that real, lasting national security can best be obtained through complete transparency of government, business, and other facets of society, and this includes open access to all of the many available types of information. This is intelligence with integrity, in the public interest—the alternative to hierarchical, elitist organizations that allow the few to profit at the expense of the many. Of course, citizens must be educated, involved, and have the interest in civic and other affairs to maximize the use of public intelligence. The establishment of a transparent and open government, open society, and open economy that is truly of, by, and for We the People *requires* the self-actualization of We the People.

What we have learned in the past half century—and in the past decade most painfully—is that top-down governance has become corrupt and does not work. Central planning does not work—the nanny state attempts to micro-manage what it does not understand, glossing over high crimes by financial enterprises that have bought Congressional blindness. Attempts to conceal the truth from

the public that have worked in the past no longer work, and this is what has created the “cognitive dissonance” that is at the root of all revolutions. That is what has made Occupy Wall Street the potent force that it is, a force with more tools at its disposal than existed in Eastern Europe, sufficient at the time to depose the Soviet empire. One could argue that the American Empire has already been deposed; only in Washington, DC, and on Wall Street are they either in complete denial or making preparations for the last loot-fest before abandoning the ship of state they have sunk with greed. On the bright side, we have the promise of today’s rising digital youth.

The youth of humanity all around our planet are intuitively revolting from all sovereignties and political ideologies. The youth of Earth are moving intuitively toward an utterly classless, raceless, omnicooperative, omniworld humanity.

—R. Buckminster Fuller⁶

What *does* work is agility at the lowest point in the system, and spontaneous agility across the system by a “mesh” of autonomous individuals who can Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (OODA),⁷ all without central direction or permission.

The U.S. government does not study anything holistically. Everything is studied and justified in isolation from all else. We, as a collective, can do much better. The future of intelligence is not secret, not federal, and not expensive. It is about transparency, truth, and trust.

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Here's the bottom line: The secret world of intelligence—at least in the United States of America—represents everything that is wrong with the government, the industrial era, our financial-economic system, and our ethics. It was in 1988 that I first realized, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the U.S. government is “the emperor wearing no clothes,” ignorant of most of what goes on in the world, substituting ideology for intelligence, and expensive, largely useless contracting and technology for thinking. We lack intelligence as well as integrity in that we are spending \$80 billion⁸ a year on secret collection sources and methods, processing virtually none of that, and producing, in the words of General Tony Zinni, USMC (Retired), “at best” four percent of what the President or a major commander needs to know, and nothing for everyone else.⁹

The government is not reporting or even perceiving the truths—the true costs, the true options—that need to be perceived in the public interest. Hence, we need a new craft of intelligence that focuses on creating public intelligence in the public interest.¹⁰ Instead of a top-heavy, opaque, centralized, and rigidified system that misses the big picture and rewards a few at the expense of the many, it is possible to create—at a fraction of the cost of what we spend now on largely worthless secret sources and methods—a “Smart Nation”¹¹ in which a mature decision-support function educates and enables every citizen to be a collector, producer, and consumer of legal, ethical, open-source intelligence, and also to be a vibrant member

of the authentic intelligence community of the whole—humanity connected as one, thinking as one, acting as one. Every citizen must be actively aware of, participating in, and overseeing research,¹² and that research should be focused on creating prosperity and peace, not war and poverty or suicidal seeds.¹³

Transparency, which engenders truth, is the foundation for all this.

This book is intended to be a catalyst for citizen dialog and deliberation, and for inspiring the continued evolution of a nation in which all citizens realize our shared aspiration of direct democracy—direct informed democracy.

Nothing would please me more, nor allow me to contribute to the future of humanity more ably, than to see these recommendations for creating public intelligence adopted and acted upon in the public interest, thus enabling informed participatory democracy. We the People must *choose* to be active.

As Occupy struggles to invent (or re-invent) a form of community decision-making that is open, accountable, and effective, their greatest challenge appears to lie with two of these three features: accountable and effective. This manifesto is a “call to arms,” not only for Occupy,¹⁴ which can be considered the soul of the working class re-emergent, but for all of us—Independents, members of the political parties shut out of the existing electoral process by the two-party tyranny,¹⁵ and the moderate members of the two parties captured by extremists and ideological politicians that monopolize the privilege of looting the

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public treasury, moderates who no longer consider their work or their political party structure—Republican or Democratic—to be of, by, or for We the People in any sense of the word.

Open-Source Everything is our path to power, peace, and prosperity, a restoration of the sensibility of the indigenous peoples of the world whose sacred knowledge we in the “advanced” West have disdained at our own peril.¹⁶ Open-Source Everything reconnects us all to the root power of the cosmic universe, restores our harmony, and unleashes our inherent gifts of innovation, entrepreneurship, and generosity. I hope this book can be a harbinger of a new paradigm, pointing to a direction that we can go with relative ease (away from war and domestic corruption) to achieve our goal of a world that works for all.

Homo sapiens is the “Wild Card.” Being is a mystery, Nature is a given, Science is a process, and Community—a prosperous world at peace—is a goal. The human species is the 900-pound gorilla that has the capacity to self-destruct for lack of temperance, or to become One with God through transparency, truth, and trust.¹⁷

—Robert David Steele
Oakton, Virginia
February 5, 2012