Why is ICIJ releasing company data including the names of so many people?

Several events in recent months, including the Offshore Leaks stories, have transformed the perceptions around tax havens and the secrecy they provide. There's growing consensus among world leaders, particularly in Europe, that basic company information should be public and transparent. In some countries, in fact, this information is already public. The Offshore Leaks Database begins to strip away the secrecy of the offshore system by partially opening the company registries of 10 offshore jurisdictions. Opening up the records serves the public interest by bringing accountability to an industry that has long operated in the shadows.

Should I assume that the people and companies mentioned in the database are involved in tax avoidance or evasion?

No. There are legitimate reasons to use offshore companies and trusts. ICIJ does not intend to suggest or imply that the people and companies included in the database have broken the law or otherwise acted improperly.

I don't see documents in the database. Where can I find them?

The information published in the Offshore Leaks Database is a small portion of the data ICIJ received. The public database does not include emails, memos, corporate documents, tax filings and other files from the original leak. ICIJ has also withheld certain materials because of privacy concerns, including passport numbers, bank information, assets and financial transactions.

You can find some documents linked to in the stories we have published on our [website](#).

What criteria did ICIJ use to select the data for the Offshore Leaks Database?

The purpose of the Offshore Leaks Database is to make company ownership information transparent. Any data that did not serve this goal were removed.

Why did you publish people's addresses?

Postal addresses were kept because they provide an extra layer of accuracy to the database which includes many names that are the same. ICIJ wanted to ensure that people don't get mixed up with others who share the same name. Addresses help verify identities.

Have you changed or enhanced the data for display in the Offshore Leaks Database?

No. Other than deleting obvious duplicate records, ICIJ has not altered the data. The relationships and networks you will find in the Offshore Leaks Database are presented as they appear in the original databases ICIJ obtained. We have not added information or enhanced the data in any way.

Why didn't ICIJ publish all of the data?

The Offshore Leaks Database is not a "data dump" of everything that was leaked to us.It is a careful release of basic corporate information. ICIJ will not release personal data en masse but will continue to mine the full data with its media partners to reportstories about the offshore economy.

Can I download the published Offshore Leaks Database?

Yes, we have made it available for those who want to download the entire published dataset and load it into their program of choice. It's offered in both csv and neo4j formats. You can download it here [LINK]. Our website is licensed under Creative Commons CC-BY-NC 3.0.

How can I search by country?

The Offshore Leaks Database does not yet have a country filter. We are working on that and hope to be able to add it to the database soon. In the meantime, be aware that typing a country name, for example "Mexico," in the search engine is like searching it in Google. You will get every result that contains that word but not necessarily a comprehensive list of all people and entities in the database with a contact address in that country. Tip: For more hits try searching city names, not just country names.

How can I access the rest of the files if I find something that I think is news-worthy?

As a news media organization, ICIJ only gives access to the files to other journalists and media organizations. If you are a journalist and want to partner with ICIJ, please send an email to investigations@icij.org. In this blog post we explain how we partner with reporters from around the world.

I am not a journalist but would like to help ICIJ in the Offshore Leaks investigation. What can I do?

We believe some of the best stories are yet to be discovered and that local knowledge is essential to the investigative methodology we are pursuing. If you find something worth investigating, please get in touch with us through the contact form in the Offshore Leaks Database. Our journalists will evaluate and pursue all leads and content submitted and, if merited, report on these issues.

Why has ICIJ withheld information on certain countries?

Some data from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Denmark have been temporarily removed from the database until we finish analyzing them. We will add those records to the Offshore Leaks Database in the coming months. A very small portion of the Canadian data has also been withheld and will be made public when our partners at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation finish reporting their stories later in the year.

How can I use the information in the database most effectively?

We encourage users to verify the information from the Offshore Leaks Database against other sources of information. Once you find the name of an offshore entity and its officers you can search those names in government-maintained company registries, court databases and other public records. In isolation, the Offshore Leaks Database does not tell the full story about an offshore business.

How did you work the data and build the Web application?

You can read stories about this here and here. The ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database was developed for the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists by

the Investigative Unit at La Nación newspaper, in San José, Costa Rica. The work in Costa Rica was done by Rigoberto Carvajal, Matthew Caruana Galizia, Marco Hernandez and Giannina Segnini.

Other journalists and programmers from the United Kingdom, the United States and Spain made contributions to the database, including Duncan Campbell, Matthew Fowler, Mar Cabra and David Donald.

Earlier in the process, German data journalist Sebastian Mondial helped ICIJ reconstruct the original databases so journalists could use them for their research.