



The FBI monitored a prominent anti-war website for years, in part because agents mistakenly believed it had threatened to hack the bureau's own site.

Internal documents show that the FBI's monitoring of antiwar.com, a news and commentary website critical of US foreign policy, was sparked in significant measure by a judgment that it had threatened to "hack the FBI website" and involved a formal assessment of the "threat" the site posed to US national security.

But antiwar.com never threatened to hack the FBI website. Heavily redacted FBI documents, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and shared with the Guardian, show that Eric Garris, the site's managing editor, passed along to the bureau a threat he received against his own website.

Months later, the bureau characterized antiwar.com as a potential perpetrator of a cyberattack against the bureau's website – a rudimentary error that persisted for years in an FBI file on the website. The mistake appears to have been a pillar of the FBI's reasoning for monitoring a site that is protected by the first amendment's free-speech guarantees.

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