

Snowden Joins Freedom of the Press Foundation

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Edward Snowden **Laura Poitras**

National Security Agency intelligence leaker Edward Snowden is to become a board member of the not-for-profit Freedom of The Press Foundation.

Established in late 2012, the foundation seeks to encourage "news organizations to publish government secrets in the public interest and for brave whistleblowers to come forward" the group's director, Trevor Timm told The New York Times.

The group was co-founded 14 months ago — initially to enable donations to government secret publication WikiLeaks — by the leaker of the Pentagon Papers, Daniel Ellsberg. In 1971, Ellsberg was charged with violating the U.S. Espionage Act for leaking documents about the U.S. war in Vietnam, the same act under which Snowden has also been charged. The charges against Ellsberg were later dismissed after improper government conduct in the trial against him.

In a statement released by the foundation, Snowden said he was honored to serve the cause of a free press. As Snowden is living in Russia, where he was granted temporary asylum last year, he will participate in board meetings via video link.

The foundation had initially feared that Snowden's inclusion on the board might violate the group's nonprofit tax status, though other groups with board members under indictment have not been penalized by the Internal Revenue Service, Timm said.

Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras, two journalists that helped publish the leaked NSA documents, already sit on the foundation's board.

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