

royaldutchshellplc.com

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This is an old revision of this page, as edited by Johnadonovan (talk | contribs) at 19:16, 24 December 2007. It may differ significantly from the current revision (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royaldutchshellplc.com>) .

(diff) ← Previous revision | Current revision (diff) | Newer revision → (diff)

royaldutchshellplc.com is a gripe site operated by 90 year old Alfred Donovan and his son John Donovan, which is critical of Royal Dutch Shell. On 11 June 2007, Ed Crooks of the Financial Times described it as "*an anti-Shell website run by a father and son partnership that has been a long-running thorn in the company's side.*" (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/06/11/financial-times-energy-filter-stirring-words-on-sakhalin/>) Due to an oversight, the management of the Royal Dutch Shell Group had not registered the dotcom name for the new company which resulted from the unification in 2005, of The "Shell" Transport and Trading Company Plc and the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company Limited. The domain name had already been registered by Alfred Donovan (http://shell2004.com/week22/shell_wages_legal_fight_over_web2june05.htm) , who exploited a loophole which allows an online critic to legally use a dotcom domain name identical to a target company's name or trademark. To fall within this category, the gripe site must be non-commercial, with no subscriptions and no paid advertising. To avoid being considered a cybersquatter the domain name and associated website must be active, with no attempt made to sell the domain name, especially to the company holding rights to the corresponding trademark or company name. Shell unsuccessfully (<http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/domains/decisions/html/2005/d2005-0538.html>) attempted to obtain via WIPO proceedings, ownership of this address and two other Donovan owned domain names: royaldutchshellgroup.com and shellnews.net.^{[1][2][3][4]}

Contents

- 1 Background to legal battles with Shell
- 2 Appeals to Shell shareholders, Shell employees, and the public
- 3 Connection with Shell Sakhalin-II project
- 4 Recommended by Fortune magazine for information about Royal Dutch Shell plc
- 5 Financial Times says website has long been a thorn in Shell's side
- 6 A gripe site can have a profound impact on global organisations
- 7 Shell "rattled" and put on the "back foot" by joint Campbell/Donovan safety campaign
- 8 Reuters describes royaldutchshellplc.com as "unofficial company Web site."
- 9 Sunday Telegraph article about "Online revolutionaries"
- 10 Essential reading for anyone who covers Shell
- 11 The Times reports Royal Dutch Shell at war with the Donovan family
- 12 BBC Essex interviews John Donovan
- 13 Nikkei BP says "The fate of Sakhalin 2 was changed by two British men"
- 14 Ethiopian "Jimma Times" mentions website in article about Shell lawsuit
- 15 Insider leaks news to RoyalDutchShellplc.com of thousands of IT job cuts at Shell

- 16 Legal action by Shell relating to website
- 17 References
- 18 External links

Background to legal battles with Shell

The Donovan's owned a chain of petrol stations in East London and Essex and created many sales promotion campaigns (<http://www.shellnews.net/Media/sales-promotion-magazine-don-marketing-%20advert-%20june-1991.html>) . In 1981, the Donovans devised a promotional game scheme for Royal Dutch Shell called "Make Money". Because the promotion was successful, many other Shell promotional campaigns followed, (<http://www.shellnews.net/2007/shell-don-marketing-game-pieces.html>) including a £4.5 million Mastermind TV Series themed game; a scratch card game offering £2.5 million in Harrods food prizes; a playing card themed promotion endorsed by UK TV celebrity Bruce Forsyth and in 1991, a £4.5 million "Every Card Can Win" scratch card game with a Star Trek theme.

The business relationship which operated on an international basis (<http://www.shellnews.net/Media/marketing-magazine-john-donovan-shell-make-money-game.html>) , floundered after Shell appointed a new National Promotions manager in 1992 to whom the Donovan's promotional ideas were disclosed on a confidential basis. In 1994, the Donovan's issued a Writ against Shell in respect of a follow-up "Make Money" promotion claiming breach of confidence and breach of contract. They also threatened to sue each of Shell's 2,000 UK petrol stations. The Donovan's accepted a £60,000 settlement but continued to pursue legal claims over a Shell Nintendo scratch off game and a film themed collector game called "Now Showing". Shell settled both claims in October 1996. During the course of the litigation, the Donovan's founded the "Shell Corporate Conscience Pressure Group" and what may have been the worlds first "gripe" websites. Shell referred to the Donovan's internet activity in a [1] (<http://shellnews.net/2006/affidavit/shell-press-release-dated-17-march-1995.htm>) press statement issued on 17 March 1995. An article published on 11 June 1998 by The Daily Telegraph under the headline of "Donovan's beef with Shell on-line" (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/03/11/daily-telegraph-donovans-beef-with-shell-on-line-thursday-june-11-1998-2/>) reported that "*Donovan is publicising his **gripes** on two elaborate and colourful internet websites, don-marketing.com (<http://www.don-marketing.com/>) and shell-shareholders.org (<http://www.shellshareholders.org/>)* .

In June 1999, a High Court trial commenced in respect of a claim by John Donovan against Shell relating to a loyalty programme utilising smart card technology for a multi-retailer scheme by Shell. The legal costs were estimated to be over a million pounds. According to a report in The Sunday Telegraph Shell Legal Director, Richard Wiseman, denied allegations made by Donovan against Shell and said that he was "misguided" and had been wrongly encouraged by Shell's previous payments. Donovan alleged that Shell had used an undercover agent, Christopher Phillips, in the run up to the trial. According to The Sunday Telegraph report Shell's lawyers admitted that they hired Mr Phillips, but only to carry out "routine credit inquiries".^[5] According to an article published in February 2007 by Prospect magazine, "*Shell agreed to settle out of court, paying the Donovans a sum "in the thousands" as part of a "peace treaty" stipulating that neither party speak about the matter in future*". The article quotes Donovan as alleging that Shell subsequently broke the "peace treaty".^[6]

Alfred Donovan and John Donovan are both retired from commercial activities. Their former company, Don Marketing, ceased trading several years ago. Their websites are all non-commercial; do not seek or accept donations, offer all services without charge, and carry no advertising.

Appeals to Shell shareholders, Shell employees, and the public

Royaldutchshellplc.com was described in an article (http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=8209) published in February 2007 by Prospect magazine in the following terms: "*The Donovan website has become an open wound for Shell*". It has been used to publish appeals on behalf of a number of parties who wanted to reach Shell shareholders and/or Shell employees, or the public e.g.

- An appeal by the World Wildlife Fund(WWF) in relation to environmental concerns about Shell's Sakhalin II project. Part of the WWF appeal published on the Donovan website on 2 February 2006, stated: "*If you have a story you would like to tell, then please get in touch with us or Alfred Donovan in confidence, or make your views known to EBRD. This is a crucial time for influencing this project, when it is essential the real story of Sakhalin comes out.*" A further appeal on behalf of the WWF was published on the Donovan website in March 2006.^{[7][8]}
- An appeal by The World Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility. The statement by the ECCR published on the Donovan website on 25 January 2006 included the following explanation and appeal: "*The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility intends to bring a shareholder resolution to Royal Dutch Shell plc's 2006 AGM. ECCR believes that Shell's impacts on 'frontline' communities and the environment in County Mayo, Ireland, the Niger Delta, and at Sakhalin II in Russia merit urgent attention. The resolution calls for a major improvement in Shell's performance in terms of community and stakeholder consultation, risk analysis, and social and environmental impact analysis. ECCR needs 100 Shell shareholders to co-sign the resolution before the end of February.*"^{[9][10]}
- On 25 January 2006 an appeal by Zack Brown, an Arctic Wilderness Associate of the Public Interest Research Group. Brown stated: "*Our campaign continues to push Chevron and ExxonMobil on the Arctic, but in 2006 most of our attention will focus on Royal Dutch Shell.*" He went on to make the following appeal: "*As a part of our effort, we are building a large pool of individual Royal Dutch Shell common stock investors. If you, or anyone you know owns Royal Dutch Shell common stock (RDS-A or RDS-B) please contact Zack Brown at the U.S. Public Interest Research Group Education Fund...*"^{[11][12]}
- An appeal by U.S. lawyers, Bernstein Liebhart & Lifshitz in September 2004 for evidence in respect of a major class action law suit brought against Shell in relation to an oil and gas reserves recategorisation.^{[13][14]} In September 2004, Bernstein Liebhart & Lifshitz confirmed that they had received calls as a result of the appeal.^[15] In March 2006 the litigation was given permission to proceed as a global class action against Royal Dutch Shell.^{[16][17]} A Shell shareholder to represent all non holders of Royal Dutch Shell stock was found following an appeal published on the Donovan website on 20 January 2006.^[18]
- An appeal for support by Friends of the Earth in the Netherlands was posted on the royaldutchshell.com website from 20 December 2006 for a campaign entitled shelladvert.org.^[19]

Royaldutchshellplc.com is also used to publish information by The National Union of Ogoni

Students (NUOS) "an independent, non-profit entity that functions as the students unit of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)." A letter from NUOS to President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was published on 17 December 2006. It demanded that the license granted Shell Oil to operate in Ogoni should be revoked. The following is an extract from the letter *"the worlds' most impoverished people inhabiting one of the world's wealthiest span of land. This irony ridiculously fed by succeeding governments of Nigeria and Shell Oil Company is unacceptable."*^[20] *Shell has unsuccessfully attempted to promote a reconciliation process with the Ogoni which would allow Shell to recommence oil production in Ogoniland.*^[21]

Connection with Shell Sakhalin-II project

Moves by the Russian government in relation to environmental issues concerning the Royal Dutch Shell led Sakhalin-II project in eastern Russia has created an international furore, with representations made to President Putin by Prime Minister Tony Blair and many other heads of government. On 18 October 2006, the Donovan's published an article confirming they had for some time been supplying information to the Russian government relating to Sakhalin II. Information in the form of Shell internal emails and Shell insider comments, posted on Royaldutchshellplc.com, were passed by the Donovan's to Oleg Mitvol, the Deputy Head of Rosprirodnadzor, the Russian Environmental Agency. In November 2006, Oleg Mitvol confirmed in an interview published (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2006/11/19/argus-eyescom-mitvol-turns-up-the-heat-i-received-these-letters-from-john-donovan-owner-of-the-anti-shell-website-wwwroyaldutchshellplccom/>) in This Week in Argus FSU Energy that the evidence on which a prosecution against Sakhalin Energy claiming \$10 billion in damages was being mounted, was supplied by John Donovan of royaldutchshellplc.com. Mr Mitvol was quoted as saying: "Who will take Sakhalin Energy to court? I will take them. I have documents proving that the Sakhalin Energy management was aware that the company violated technical standards, but carried on trying to meet project deadlines and refused to stop work. I am confident of winning my case in Stockholm. What documents are these? Where are they from? I have email correspondence between executives in Sakhalin Energy management from 2002. I received these letters from John Donovan, owner of the anti-Shell website www.royaldutchshellplc.com."^[6] The Russian energy company Gazprom (<http://www.gazprom.com/>) controlled by the Russian government subsequently obtained a majority holding (<http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,2060411,00.html>) in the Sakhalin-II project. A further report of the supply of evidence by John Donovan to Mitvol was published (<http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/2006-256-22.cfm>) on 13 November 2006 by Johnson's Russia List sourced from Interfax.

Recommended by Fortune magazine for information about Royal Dutch Shell plc

On 2 August 2006, CNNMoney.com (<http://money.cnn.com/>) published a feature (http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2006/07/24/8381730/index.htm) from Fortune magazine recommending books and websites focused on the world's top five companies, as ranked in the "Fortune Global 500". A company website with a corresponding website critical of the company's activities was featured for each multinational. For Royal Dutch Shell, listed as number 3 in the rankings, Shell's portal website [shell.com](http://www.shell.com) (<http://www.shell.com/home/Framework?siteId=home>) was cited along with royaldutchshellplc.com

Financial Times says website has long been a thorn in Shell's side

On 6 June 2007, the Financial Times published a front page article under the headline: "Pipeliners All! Shell's memo to Sakhalin (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/06/05/financial-times-%e2%80%98pipeliners-all%e2%80%99-shell%e2%80%99s-memo-to-sakhalin/>)

The article was about a leaked motivational memo in the form of an email from David Greer, the Deputy Chief Executive of Sakhalin Energy, the company in which Shell is a shareholder and former owner. The email was circulated to Sakhalin-2 staff. The article stated that "The memo was leaked to the website www.royaldutchshellplc.com, which has long been a thorn in Shell's side. Shell confirmed the e-mail was genuine but was reluctant to discuss it further". The article quoted extensively from the memo. The entire content of the leaked memo was published (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/06/05/financial-times-%e2%80%98pipeliners-all%e2%80%99-shell%e2%80%99s-memo-to-sakhalin-the-e-mail-in-full/>) by the FT on the same date. The FT also conducted a separate online poll asking the question: "Is this the worst motivational memo ever?" (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/06/07/financial-times-ft-poll-on-greer-memo-updated-07-june-2007/>)

One passage in the motivational memo was so striking that Time Magazine published it in their "Quotes of the Day" feature on 6 June 2007: "... So Lead me, Follow me or Get out of my way; Success is how we bounce when we are on the bottom". (<http://205.188.238.109/time/quotes/0,26174,1629779,00.html>)

A keen eyed FT reader noticed that inspirational passages were appropriated from a famous speech given by the legendary U.S. General George S Patton, on 5 June 1944 on the eve of D-Day the Sixth of June. On 7 June 2007, a quarter page follow-up article was published in the Financial Times newspaper and on the FT.com website, under the headline: "*Sakhalin motivational memo borrows heavily from Patton*". (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/06/06/financial-times-shell-mans-motivation-memo-is-straight-from-the-patton-script-talent-borrows-genius-steals/>)

On 9 June 2007, The Moscow Times published a front page article under the heading: Sakhalin Pep Talk From 'Old Blood and Guts' (http://www.tellshell.net/blog/_archives/2007/6/9/3008757.html) The article said: "*Greer's memo, which was leaked to an anti-Shell web site, [Royaldutchshellplc.com](http://royaldutchshellplc.com), appears to show the pressure that he and his fellow managers have been under, as it talks of "the risk of becoming a team that doesn't want to fight and lacks confidence in its own ability."* The Moscow Times article contained forthright comments by the Russian environmental watchdog, Oleg Mitvol, about the email.

On Monday 11 June 2007, the Financial Times published a further article (http://www.tellshell.net/blog/_archives/2007/6/11/3013806.html) on the subject this time headlined: "*Motivational memos must make their message clear*". One of the opening paragraphs stated: "*The memo (www.ft.com/shell) is crass, poorly punctuated and most of it wasn't even written by its author, David Greer, deputy chief executive of Royal Dutch Shell's Sakhalin Energy Investment Company. He had lifted the words of General George S. Patton with no attribution, and clumsily adapted them to spur on his team of recalcitrant pipeline engineers*".

On Friday 22 June 2007, The Moscow Times published a front page story (http://www.tellshell.net/blog/_archives/2007/6/21/3038557.html) with the headline: "*Sakhalin Energy's Greer Steps Down*".

The article revealed that *"A motivational e-mail written by Greer to staff working on the project, originally leaked to an anti-Shell web site, Royaldutchshellplc.com, was the subject of a front-page story in the Financial Times earlier this month."* It went on to say *"David Greer, the Sakhalin Energy deputy CEO running the giant Sakhalin-2 oil and gas project, has left the company unexpectedly just weeks after a leaked e-mail he wrote revealed the pressure that managers working there were facing"*. The article said that Greer had been a 27-year Shell veteran and was leaving to pursue other business interests.

There is a Wikipedia entry covering the David Greer memo affair entitled Plagiarism controversy over Sakhalin-2 motivational memo.

A gripe site can have a profound impact on global organisations

An "Accountability in Action" newsletter (<http://www.oneworldtrust.org/?display=accnewsjul07>) published in July 2007 by the One World Trust, an independent research organisation associated with the UK legislature and the United Nations, said: *"As The Royal Dutch Shell plc website shows, a gripe site can have a profound impact on global organisations"*. The newsletter went on to say: *"The site has not only cost Shell billions of dollars in Russia... even Shell insiders unhappy with the company use it"*. The article also said: *"Royaldutchshellplc.com is just one of many examples of how the Internet makes it possible for concerned individuals to initiate discussion about global organisations, post and share information about organisational actions and their impact, and provide a common forum for affected stakeholders. At the very least, 'gripe sites' such as this have a valuable watchdog function and remind global companies of the power of public opinion – thus forcing them to confront weaknesses in their own accountability"*. Email correspondence in August 2007 (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/08/01/todays-email-correspondence-with-senior-shell-lawyers-wednesday-1-august-2007/>) between Royal Dutch Shell Plc and the owners of the website provide evidence of the unusual involvement by the website in the day-to-day functioning of the company.

Shell “rattled” and put on the “back foot” by joint Campbell/Donovan safety campaign

Main article: Royal Dutch Shell safety concerns

On 1 September 2007, The Daily Mail newspaper published an article about a Shell employee safety campaign conducted jointly by royaldutchshellplc.com and the former Group Auditor of Shell International, Mr Bill Campbell. The article headlined "Shell on backfoot as 'gripe site' alleges safety concerns" (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/09/01/daily-mail-shell-on-back-foot-as-gripe-site-alleges-safety-concerns/>) said: *"ROYAL Dutch Shell is getting rattled by a 'gripe site' that alleges there are safety problems with its North Sea oil platforms."* The article revealed *"An internal Shell email admits the firm has been thrown 'on the back foot' because of claims put forward on the Royaldutchshellplc.com website."* It went on to say *"Campbell has emailed hundreds of MPs alleging Shell hasn't yet properly tackled health and safety failings."* The article featured a number of quotes from Shell internal emails revealing a state of uncertainty at Shell about how to deal with the allegations. One stated: *"As it stands we're on the back foot and our aim should be to develop a strategy (or options) that puts us in a more positive and secure position."*

In his letter to MP's (<http://energy.einnews.com/pr-news/9337-offshore-workers-died-as-a-result-of-a-touch-f-all-safety-regime-at-royal-dutch-shell>) , Campbell stated: *"I am a former Group Auditor of Shell International. I am writing to you on a matter of conscience in an effort to avert the inevitability of another major accident in the North Sea".* He went on to say: *"In 1999, I was appointed by Shell to lead a safety audit on the Brent Bravo platform. The audit revealed a platform management culture that basically gave a higher priority to production than the safety of Shell employees. To our astonishment we discovered that a "Touch F*** All" policy was in place. Worse still, safety records were routinely falsified and repairs bodged."* Campbell claimed in the letter that the failure to ensure that such policies were eradicated led to an avoidable accident on the platform in 2003 when two workers tragically lost their lives. Campbell expressed his expert opinion that because of a continuing failure to properly deal with safety issues a catastrophic accident is inevitable on Shell North Sea oil platforms.

In response to the allegations, a Royal Dutch Shell spokesman was quoted in the Daily Mail article as saying: *'Safety is Shell's foremost priority at all times. Shell strongly disputes any suggestion that we would compromise safety offshore. No fatalities are acceptable.'* The spokesman added: *'Although Shell disagrees fundamentally with the factual basis and interpretation of much of the information on which the Donovans base their various allegations, the company has always refrained from commenting on specific issues raised by the Donovans and will continue to do so.'*

On 8 September 2007, The Daily Telegraph newspaper published an article by its Industry Editor, Russell Hotten, under the headline "Pressure on Shell over safety of platforms". (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2007/09/08/cnshell108.xml>) The article reported: *"Royal Dutch Shell is facing a growing campaign about alleged poor safety on several North Sea oil platforms, with Britain's biggest trade union and a former executive of the company calling on MPs and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to investigate."* The article went on to say *"Mr Campbell, who has teamed up with a website that has been highly critical of Shell, appears to be of increasing concern to the company. A recent internal email admits that the website has thrown Shell "on the back foot". The company declined to discuss Mr Campbell but said that if anyone raised a safety issue "we take it seriously and look at it".*

Reuters describes royaldutchshellplc.com as "unofficial company Web site."

On 4 September 2007, Reuters published an article by Tom Bergin headlined: *"Shell loses exec on troubled Kazakh project-source"*. (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/09/04/reuters-shell-loses-exec-on-troubled-kazakh-project-source/>) The article said that a Royal Dutch Shell Plc executive *"working on Kashagan, a project under pressure from the Kazakh government for being overbudget and behind schedule, has quit, company sources told an unofficial company Web site."* The article went on to say that *"John Donovan, who runs a Web site critical of Shell and acts as a conduit for whistleblowers at the company, said Shell insiders had told him that John Stubbs, a senior project manager on Kashagan, had left the Anglo-Dutch oil major."*

Sunday Telegraph article about "Online revolutionaries"

On 9 September 2007, The Sunday Telegraph published an article by Juliette Garside under the headline: *"Online revolutionaries"*. (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2007/09/09/cnonline109.xml>) The opening sentence said: *"Revolutions used to happen in the streets*

- these days they take place online. And the targets are more often big businesses than bad governments." The article included a section about Royaldutchshellplc.com and its owners, "Alfred Donovan, now in his 90s, and his son John." The article went on to say: "Their site became a hub for activists and disgruntled former employees. It has been used to mobilise support for environmental campaigns by the likes of WWF, the environmental lobbying group, against drilling in the Arctic and Russia, for groups worried about Shell's social impact in Ireland and Nigeria, and by the company's former group auditor Bill Campbell to raise issues about employee safety."

Essential reading for anyone who covers Shell

On 12 September 2007, an article (<http://blog.prospectblogs.com/2007/09/12/shells-colchester-headache/>) was published on the Prospect Magazine website by a regular contributor, Derek Brower (<http://derekbrower.com/about/>), who is also the senior correspondent of Petroleum Economist. Under the headline "Shell's Colchester headache", Brower reminded readers that "In Prospect's February issue, I reported on John and Alfred Donovan, two men with a combined age of 150 years in a house in Colchester who have been trying relentlessly to prick holes in one of the world's biggest companies, Shell. They seem to be succeeding. Their website has become essential reading for anyone who covers Shell and the energy sector more broadly. It gets up to 4.6m hits a month." Brewer went on to report that "the Donovans have found another ruse to annoy Shell: the Data Protection Act (DPA)" and that "So far, the company has surrendered two large folders, including an article about them by a director, a press release about them that the men claim is defamatory, and much else." The article also said that Shell has not released under the DPA a copy of an email about them from Shell's senior lawyer to the Chief Executive Officer of Royal Dutch Shell, Jeroen van der Veer and was "paying the law firm Simmons & Simmons to handle their DPA requests". It also reported that "The company tried—and failed—to have their website closed down" and revealed "The Donovans say they have received CVs, business proposals, and even a terrorist threat sent to them: all were intended for Shell. (They kindly forwarded them on.)" The last sentence in the article said: "As journalists and disgruntled employees have realised, if you want to know what's up at one of the world's biggest companies—or just want a good moan about the latest oil spill—start with www.royaldutchshellplc.com."

The Times reports Royal Dutch Shell at war with the Donovan family

On 22 September 2007, The Times newspaper reported (<http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/columnists/article2507722.ece>) "Since the 1990s, Royal Dutch Shell has been at war with a family who registered a website, royaldutchshellplc.com. The Donovan family, led by 90-year-old Burma veteran Alfred, perhaps quixotically want Shell to change its management." The article said that Shell had "failed to shut down the site" which had attracted Shell job applications and even a terrorist threat "all of which are dutifully passed on to the company." The article went on to say "there are signs that Shell is developing a sense of humour. A recent letter from general counsel there suggests that "a truly alternative solution for all those people inadvertently contacting you is for you to choose a website and e-mail address without the word 'Shell' in it".

BBC Essex interviews John Donovan

On 11 October 2007, BBC Essex presenter Etholle George interviewed

(<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/10/14/bbc-radio-essex-unofficial-transcript-bbc-radio-essex-presenter-etholle-george-interviews-john-donovan/>) John Donovan concerning the website royaldutchshellplc.com. The interview was introduced as being "*the story of a high tech David and Goliath battle of the modern age.*" Etholle George asked questions about the websites Live Chat feature saying "*I've got it up on my screen at the moment... there are currently 32 people who are engaged in conversation on your website... absolutely fascinating...*" She later asked who the people were. The overall thrust of the questioning was that John Donovan must be obsessed to devote so much time to the website.

Nikkei BP says “The fate of Sakhalin 2 was changed by two British men”

On 12 November 2007, leading Japanese business magazine Nikkei BP published an internet article (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/11/13/nikkei-bp-japan-gripe-sites-are-becoming-more-powerful/>) about the Donovan's and their website, royaldutchshellplc.com under the headline: "Gripe sites are becoming more powerful". It said "*The fate of Sakhalin 2 was changed by two British men*", described as "*a 90-year-old man and his son*" – a reference to Alfred Donovan and his son John. The author of the article, Ryo Kuroki, a Japanese novelist, said that he had recently visited them at their home in Colchester Essex, a town located in the South East of the UK. The article revealed that "Alfred had fought against the Japanese army in the Burmese front as a communications officer."

The article went on to say that "*in October 2005 Donovans contacted Russian President Vladimir Putin through the President's website (The site has a function to send E-mail to the president). The purpose was to provide the president with insider information on the cost overrun of Sakhalin 2 project*". It also mentioned the approach made to Oleg Mitvol, deputy head of Russia's environmental watchdog Rosprirodnadzor and the later confirmation from Mitvol in his interview with Argus Media that "the Russian side used the information provided by Donovans in negotiations with project sponsors of Sakhalin-II."

Ethiopian “Jimma Times” mentions website in article about Shell lawsuit

On 17 December 2007, an Ethiopian newspaper, the Jimma Times, published an internet article (<http://www.jimmatimes.com/article.cfm?articleID=17518>) under the headline "*ETHIOPIAN Employees accuse Shell of raiding retirement fund*" reporting that "*A litigation was brought against Shell by a trade union representing 90% of its Ethiopian employees.*" It went on to reveal that www.royaldutchshellplc.com had published an article about the story and in reference to the website said: "*The organization says its objective is to persuade Shell management to stand by the Shell Statement of General Business Principles pledging among other things, honesty, integrity and transparency in all of its dealings.*"

Insider leaks news to RoyalDutchShellplc.com of thousands of IT job cuts at Shell

On 21 December 2007, Reuters published a news story (<http://uk.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/idUKL2158046320071221>) with the headline: "Shell to cut thousands of IT jobs". The article

reported that Shell is going to outsource a substantial part of its information technology operations with the intention of cutting costs *"in a measure that may result in thousands of job losses"*. The article said *"One employee told the Shell protest website RoyalDutchShellPlc.com that 3,200 jobs could be lost, but the spokeswoman declined to confirm the numbers."* It went on to say that an internal Shell email had been supplied to the website which listed the IT outsourcing companies in final talks with Shell on taking on different aspects of the business.

According to a related article (http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/djf500/200712240838DOWJONESDJONLINE000120_FORTUNE5.htm) by Benoit Faucon of Dow Jones Newswires published on 24 December by CNMMoney.com, the IT job cuts could improve the credibility of Peter Voser, the Chief Financial Officer of Royal Dutch Shell Plc, to take over as Chief Executive of the company when the current CEO, Jeroen van der Veer, retires in June 2009. A Shell spokesperson was quoted as in the article as saying; *"We are in the middle of commercial conversations and expect contracts to be signed early in 2008 - at which point we will share more details."* The article went on to say *"The talks were first reported on the Web site royaldutchshellplc.com, which is critical of the company. That report said thousands of jobs - among staff or contractors - could be cut as result."*

Legal action by Shell relating to website

Eight Royal Dutch Shell Group companies collectively obtained in June 2004 an Interim Injunction and Restraining Order against a Shell whistleblower, a Malaysian geologist and former Shell employee, Dr John Huong, in respect of alleged defamatory postings attributed to Dr Huong on the Donovan website. The Shell action is directed solely against Dr Huong. Further proceedings against Dr Huong were issued by the same plaintiff companies in 2006 in respect of publications on the Donovan website in 2005 and 2006. The further proceedings include a "Notice to Show Cause" relating to a "contempt of court" action potentially punishable by imprisonment. Numerous proceedings (<http://www.shellnews.net/2006affidavit/shellnewsnetadaffidavitmay2006.htm>) have been issued by Shell in connection with the on-going litigation. On 6 August 2007, Mr Michiel Brandjes, Company Secretary and General Counsel Corporate of Royal Dutch Shell Plc kindly notified (<http://royaldutchshellplc.com/2007/08/06/in-high-praise-of-mr-michiel-brandjes-company-secretary-and-general-counsel-corporate-royal-dutch-shell-plc/>) 90 year old Alfred Donovan that the Shell plaintiff companies had *"on compassionate grounds"* waived the right to cross examine him in relation to an affidavit he had supplied in the Dr Huong case.

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