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Pro Golfer Zoeller sues to identify author of Wikipedia entry

IP address used to find author of defamatory comments

by Stuart Miles published on 25 February 2007

Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia that allows anyone to update and information has been caught up in a lawsuit that could have massive ramifications on how sites like this run and operate.

Fuzzy Zoeller, a pro-golfer is suing not the website owners, but the owner of an IP address from where allegedly defamatory remarks about him were posted onto the site.

The offending paragraphs, which allege that the golfer abused drugs, alcohol and his family were posted on 20 December 2006, and have since been removed, but not before a suit was filed.

The IP address of the posts has been traced back to education consulting firm Josef Silny & Associates of Miami, although Mr Silny says he is surprised that the complaint originated from his computer systems and doesn't know who at his company might have made the offending Wikipedia posts.

According to the Associated Press, the following statement comes from paragraph 11 of the lawsuit and includes the alleged remarks: "Later (Mr. Doe) went public with his alcoholism and prescription drug addiction, explaining that at the time he made those statements, he was ein the process of polishing off a fifth of Jack (Daniels) after popping a handful of Vicodin".

The statement continues that: "He further detailed the violent nature of his disease, recalling how he'd viciously beat his wife Dianne and their four children while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. He also admitted feigning a ruptured spinal disc in 1985 so as to be prescribed a multitude of prescription medication. He has since sought professional help and mended his



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fractured familial relationships. In May 2006, (Mr. Doe) said in a interview with Golf Digest magazine that he hadn't beaten his wife in nearly five years".

Wikipedia has been criticised in the past for being unreliable, even from its co-founder Larry Sanger who has since left the project.

"I did it to protect my family and my reputation", said Zoeller on his website.

We will keep you posted.