



## **Open Government: A Journal on Freedom of Information**

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Open Government: a journal on Freedom of Information

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### **Welcome**

Thanks to the funding from the Open Society Institute and the collaboration of authors and editorial members, we are glad to present the first issue of the OGJ for 2009.

2008 has been fruitful in terms of reports and studies concerning freedom of information. To name a few, in March 2008, Mr. Toby Mendel launched an updated and revised version of his work titled "Freedom of Information: a Comparative Legal Survey"; and, in June 2008, Dr. David Solomon delivered his report titled "The Right to Information: Reviewing Queensland's Freedom of Information Act". The report has been qualified by Mr. Rick Snell as a blueprint on how to move Freedom of Information into the next generation. In September 2008, Mr. Stanley L. Tromp published a report titled "Fallen Behind: Canada's

Access to Information in the World Context". The report offers a comprehensive analysis of Canadian and international access to information laws.

Also in 2008, a visual essay was released in the United States. We suggest to all our readers to view the film 'Secrecy'. It is an 80-minute film that addresses the effects of the increasing world of knowledge secrecy within the government versus open knowledge. For more information about this visual essay go to <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/secr.html>

In April 2008, we launched an essay contest. We thank all the authors for their submissions. The winners are David Cuillier (University of Arizona), Blythe Duell (Southeastern Oklahoma State University) and Jeff Joireman (Washington State University) for their article titled: "The thought of death, national security values and polarization of attitudes toward freedom of information". They will be receiving the \$500.00 CDN prize.

I send an invitation to all readers and authors to publicize the Open Government Journal.

### **This issue's articles**

This publication contains the winning article and one article from Canada.

The winning article, authored by Cuillier, Buell and Joireman, is a study which applies terror management theory from social psychology to test the effects of death on attitudes toward the press' right to access government records. Under a death thought condition attitudes are amplified such that people most value national security demonstrate even lower support for press access to government records and people who least value national security demonstrate increased support for access to public records when confronted with their own morality. The results provide on potential explanation for the polarization of public attitudes toward access to public records during times of mortal strife.

In the second article, Michel W. Drapeau analyses the current state of the Canadian freedom-of-information regime since the new Information Commissioner took office in January 2007.

For 2009, I urge the FOI community to send us their submissions for publication.  
The OGJ needs your input and collaboration.

Best wishes for 2009 to all readers!

Marc-Aurèle Racicot

Editor