



Open Government: A Journal on Freedom of Information

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Editorial

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Welcome

Welcome the 2nd issue of "Open Government: a journal on Freedom of Information", firstly I would like thank everyone who has supported the journal and sent notes of encouragement since the first issue. The journal is already picking up a wide readership and already has over 300 email subscriptions from at least 11 different countries. Next issue I'll also be able to give some indications as to who is accessing the journal via the website.

In the UK the first early pictures of the operation of the FOIA have started to emerge with the publication of the first FOI statistics from the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the annual report and first decision notices from the Information Commissioner.

Promoting the journal

The journal will shortly be available on the new Google Scholar academic search service plus the journal is also being added the following indexes:

- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
- Social Science Information Gateway
- Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

Work is ongoing to get the journal added to further indexes and citation databases, but I'm interested to hear from anyone with any recommendations.

As the journal is open access and non-commercial we have a limited budget for promotion, so please do pass on and promote the journal if you deem it be to be relevant to others. If you are willing to distribute a poster or some flyers at events, conferences etc please contact me at the email address below.

This issue's articles

This issue contains two articles on the Israeli experience of Freedom of Information legislation, the first by Dr. Yuval Karniel looking specifically at a Supreme Court decision, whilst Yoram Rabin and Roy Peled offer a more general overview in the other article, focusing on issues of implementation and progress so far since 1998.

Cultural change is a major issue in making any FOI regime work, Helen Gregorczyk tackles this issue in her article looking at experience from both the UK and overseas.

The issue of delay is a problem most users of Freedom of Information legislation will cite and Thomas Susman addresses the issue in his article about the proposed FOI legislation in the US put forward by Senator Cornyn. Delay has been raised by the Campaign for FOI in the UK following the publication of the initial statistics and in Canada recently (Roberts, 2005). Interestingly as well as tackling delay specifically the legislation introduced by Sen. John Corny would establish a new independent referee or ombudsman: the Office of Government Information Services, moving the US more towards a model used by European and Commonwealth FOI regimes.

The journal this issue also contains two viewpoint articles on the UK from two different standpoints – an overview of the UK experience so far from Professor Robert Hazell, Director of Constitution Unit at UCL and a view from the “coalface” from the David Chinchin and Adam Morris at the Metropolitan Police Service in London about the preparations for the UK Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The journal also contains an article on the EU Directive on reuse of public information, recently passed in the UK, which will have an impact on how people reuse the information they can access from Freedom of Information Act requests.

Contributions

I welcome articles from around world on the topic of Freedom of Information legislation. I'm also interested to hear from readers with views about issues of themes that the journal needs to cover.

The main focus of journal is upon detailed research and case studies that will be fully peer reviewed, whilst welcoming viewpoints and shorter articles.

Finally, in these difficult times in the UK, it is important to think and reflect before restricting access to information post the London terror attacks. The Editorial "The Dangerous Comfort of Secrecy" in the New York Times outlines the risks of increased classification of public information and quotes Thomas Kean's warning that an informed public is best ally against terrorism.

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