



Who Needs to Know?: The State of Public Access to Federal Government Information

Patrice McDermott

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Despite intense media scrutiny, only a small percentage of the American government's most essential information reaches the average person. This withholding of information is dangerous in a democratic society, where openness is a cherished value. Here's a sample of the topics included in *Who Needs to Know?*: -The history, use, and abuse of national security classification -The state of the Freedom of Information Act in the Bush Administration -Examination of the concept of sensitive but unclassified and the proliferation of such markings to shut off access to information -The administration's suppression of government science and scientists and its impact on policy and on government employees -The manipulation of the media for both political and ideological reasons -Suggestions on how to connect and communicate with organizations and your elected officials to effect a positive change in the state of public access to federal government information We the people need to understand how to interact with our government, engage in public policy decision-making, and hold the government (and those who act on its behalf or under its regulations) accountable for sharing information. Dr. McDermott provides historical context on this issue, along with expert insights and useful recommendations from her years at the forefront of the battle to protect the public's right to know.

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