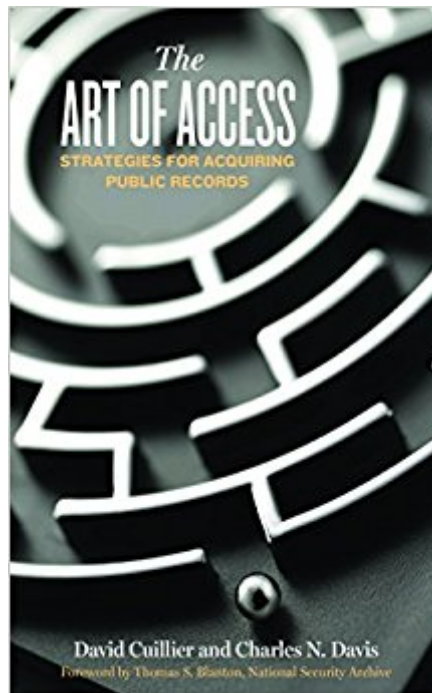




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The Art Of Access: Strategies For Acquiring Public Records



Synopsis

Whatever you're trying to learn about the world "as a journalist or as an informed citizen" public records often hold the key. But what records, where? And how to get them? It starts with understanding the Freedom of Information Act, but what you really need are strategies for dealing with the officials who stand between you and the information you seek. Gaining access to records is an art, one that requires an organized approach and a good understanding of human behavior.

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Customer Reviews

The book "The Art of Access" by David Cuillier and Charles N. Davis explains in detail the methods the average person can use to gain access to public documents that are related to government or tax-funded organizations or entities. From the start, the authors make clear that requesting and being able to have full access to such documents is an American right that should not be overlooked. Further, they explain that requesting and reading public documents in physical or digital form has benefits for everyone in society, not just journalists. Interestingly, far more businesses request public records than journalists, which may say something about the state of journalism. If you are intrigued with a certain house that's for sale, you can request public records to learn what

the crime rate is in its neighborhood or if any sex offenders live nearby. If you want information about your deceased grandpa, you can request an FBI file on him, if one exists. You can request an FBI file and public records on yourself. Cuillier and Davis convey numerous other examples of how requesting public documents can "help your life in ways that go far beyond work." Of course, public documents are crucial for journalists, too. Utilizing them can spur the writing of stories that a journalist's editor may not even consider. Accessing public records is an honest way for journalists to make sure public officials are being honest themselves in all realms of their governmental work. "The Art of Access" contains examples of intuitive journalists who used public records to write stories that brought to light dishonest practices by public officials. Requesting documents involves doing your homework, being diligent and sometimes playing hardball, but getting them can be attained.

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