



The Art of Access: Strategies for Acquiring Public Records

David Cuillier, Charles Davis

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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.

The Art of Access is a how-to guide for putting the law into action and using ingenuity to pry records loose. Building on their own experience and interviews with more than 100 practitioners, FOI experts and longtime journalists David Cuillier and Charles Davis help you rethink the information-gathering process and develop a document state of mind. With Cuillier and Davis's strategies, get ready to:

- overcome roadblocks and illegal denials;
- better understand government officials' perspectives so you can more successfully work with them;
- find more and better online resources and mine them effectively; and
- write document-based stories that resonate with readers.

A **“Pro Tips”** feature showcases advice from some of the best in the business, from media lawyers and prominent journalists to a private investigator and other access experts. At the end of each chapter, a **Try It!** section offers exercises and story ideas that will empower you to start finding and using documents right away. **Appendixes** include a comprehensive list of online FOI resources as well as an annotated Record Album that guides you A–Z to records on everything from abandoned buildings and air quality to workplace safety and zoning.

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