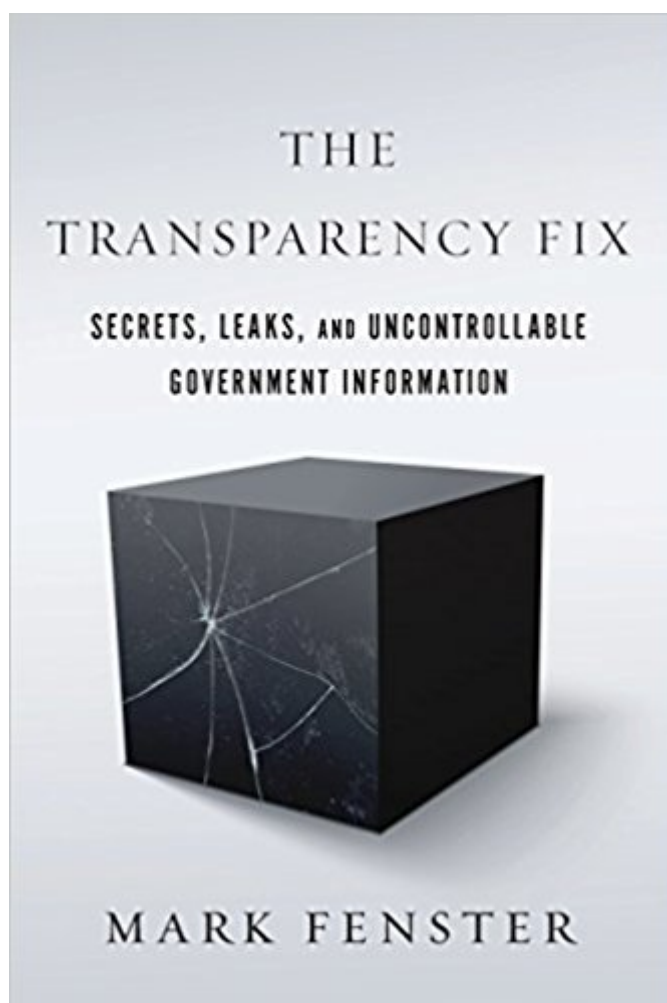


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The Transparency Fix: Secrets, Leaks, And Uncontrollable Government Information



Synopsis

Is the government too secret or not secret enough? Why is there simultaneously too much government secrecy and a seemingly endless procession of government leaks? The Transparency Fix asserts that we incorrectly assume that government information can be controlled. The same impulse that drives transparency movements also drives secrecy advocates. They all hold the mistaken belief that government information can either be released or kept secure on command. The Transparency Fix argues for a reformation in our assumptions about secrecy and transparency. The world did not end because Julian Assange, WikiLeaks, and Edward Snowden released classified information. But nor was there a significant political change. "Transparency" has become a buzzword, while secrecy is anathema. Using a variety of real-life examples to examine how government information actually flows, Mark Fenster describes how the legal regime's tenuous control over state information belies both the promise and peril of transparency. He challenges us to confront the implausibility of controlling government information and shows us how the contemporary obsession surrounding transparency and secrecy cannot radically change a state that is defined by so much more than information.

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Customer Reviews

"The Transparency Fix is an essential guide to the often heated debate over secrecy in American government. Mark Fenster explores the practical limits to keeping secrets in contemporary government and questions whether openness can really prevent abuses of power. A thoughtful,

pragmatic analysis of an enduring problem." (Alasdair Roberts University of Missouri)"No one has done more than Mark Fenster to challenge the premises and policies of the open government movement. This book will be a foundational text in critical transparency studies." (David Pozen Columbia Law School)

Mark Fenster is the Cone, Wagner, Nugent, Hazouri & Roth Tort Professor at the Levin College of Law, University of Florida. He is the author of *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture* (1999, 2008).

This is an important book for the current age we inhabit, esp with a president who continually bemoans "leaking." Fenster provides a much-needed contextual basis for the intentional and unintentional spread of government information, offering cogent historical analysis and the kind of critical skepticism that makes you question basic precepts. Fenster has mastered a wide array of disciplines and writes in a beautifully lyrical style that is brilliant but also readable--he offers many thought experiments to challenge conventional wisdom about the benefits of "open" government while never descending into polemics or easy answers.

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