The Transparent Legislature

NCSL Legislative Summit, Louisville, KY
The Transparent Legislature

Daniel Schuman, Policy Council, Sunlight Foundation
Senator Pamela Althoff, State of Illinois
John Heining, Special Counsel, Legislative Council, State of Texas
Robert Horton, State Archivist/ Director of Library & Publications
Minnesota Historical Society

Discussion/ Q&A
Government has been at this for a while

- Florida’s tradition of open government dates back over as century to the passage of the Public Records Act in 1909.
- Its 1967 sunshine law is better known.
- At the federal level, Congress passed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in 1966.
The Public Record is Alive!

The 50 State Project
New York | San Francisco
Seattle | King Co.

State and Local Variations

THE NEW DATA ECOSYSTEM

Apps for Democracy

data.gov

Code for America

Apps for America

Apps for Democracy

An Innovation Contest

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Code of Federal Regulations in XML

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government. It is divided into 50 titles that represent broad areas subject to Federal regulation.

View more
The Risk of Malicious Compliance

Perhaps the greatest risk on the rest of the journey is the digital equivalent of malicious compliance – where government congratulates itself for making everything available in ways that huge volumes of undisciplined data obscure the stuff that could be used to hold a public agency to account, keep communities safe, fuel economic activity or some other public good.

Source: Government Technology, June 2010
Countries should be judged on their willingness to open up public data to their citizens

Open data as a basic right of citizens?
"I think obviously there are more fundamental ones, but within a democratic society if the democracy is going to work you have to have an informed electorate.”

Source: BBC, March 2010
"The openness of governments is one of the things which makes investors decide whether to invest. When you make the government open, when they can see what's happening, they're much more likely to bring their money and companies into your country."

Source: BBC, March 2010
And now for something completely different …

**Social networks and statehood**

**The future is another country**

Despite its giant population, Facebook is not quite a sovereign state—but it is beginning to look and act like one

Jul 22nd 2010 | BERLIN AND SAN FRANCISCO
Accessing “America’s Operating System”

Carl Malamud wants to get his hands on your body of work
Governing in the Sunlight

Source: The Sunlight Foundation, March 2010
Where is the Government's Blowout Preventer?
POSTED BY: NOAH KUNIN | 13 DAYS AGO
Just as there is now a new cap being fitted over the leaking oil well, patching a mechanical failure, Sunlight Foundation is left wondering whether the now-defunct Minerals Management Service will be fixed as well.

Earmark Transparency Still Makes More Sense than a Ban
POSTED BY: PAUL BLUMENTHAL | 17 DAYS AGO
The Sunlight Foundation recently sent a letter seeking cosponsors for H.R. 5258 and S. 3335, which would require the creation of a centralized database of earmarks and earmark requests.
Categories: Sunlight

Grading the New USA.gov
POSTED BY: NOAH KUNIN | 18 DAYS AGO
USA.gov just launched the new design of their website. Since we took a stab at redesigning it ourselves back in January 2009, Sunlight Foundation thought it would see if they took any of its advice.
Categories: Sunlight

Labor Groups Use Ark. Primary As Citizens United Testing Ground
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Paul W. Taylor, Editor at Large, Governing

Discussion/ Q&A