

Canadian Access to Information Act news story index

By Stanley Tromp, 2021

User notes

This Excel database contains a summary of every significant news article I could find that was produced from records obtained through requests under the Canadian federal *Access to Information Act*, since the law took effect on July 1, 1983.

Every story in the database was based on documents acquired through *ATI Act* requests, even if the capsule summary does not explicitly mention this (due to limited space). More than 6,500 articles were located, and placed in 46 topic categories. The *Index* is best viewed on a large screen, and the rows are word searchable, by Ctrl-F. Other features:

- Alongside several stories I have placed a {*} symbol, to draw attention to what I believe is an especially interesting, timeless or historically important *ATIA* example (and time-pressed readers could skip ahead to these results). A few have led to investigations, regulatory changes, and relief or justice for affected persons. Those marked {**} are, I believe, the most exemplary, and any one of these would have justified the *ATIA*'s passage
- Many of the articles are not based upon *ATIA* requests filed by journalists, *per se*, but from those filed by lawyers, interest groups (most often environmental), opposition parties, or the participants in events, who then in turn shared those records with the news media.
- This *ATIA* database was conceived as a companion to a parallel database I created of 2,000 news stories produced under the British Columbia freedom-of-information law of 1993. (This was [launched](#) by its sponsor [FIPA](#) in September 2019, for Right to Know Week.)

I have combined both sheets here into this single Excel file. The reader can toggle between them by clicking the **red** tab at the bottom for the federal *ATIA* sheet, and the **blue** tab for the B.C. FOI sheet. Their topic headings are cross-referenced.

For example, the regulation of fisheries in Canada is split between federal and provincial jurisdictions. So for British Columbian *FOIPP Act* articles about fisheries, one can go to Category 14 in the blue B.C. tab, while for federal *ATI Act* stories on this topic, see Category 31 in the red federal tab. There are other topics with some such split jurisdiction that are hence covered by both FOI laws, such as policing, the courts, environmental policy, the prison system, health and safety regulations, and resource management.

- Within the *ATI Act* worksheet, one can scroll to its bottom, below the **orange bar**, to find articles on Canadian topics that were produced through foreign FOI laws, mainly American.
- For *ATI Act* appellants and media lawyers: When contesting *ATIA* refusals at inquiry before the information commission or courts, one can search this database for the types of records that

have been released under *ATIA* before, and therefore ideally could be again, to cite as a kind of precedent.

- Taking the world view, such an FOI story database could be replicated in any province or country, and I would encourage this for the benefit of the public and journalism students (for it could also serve a source for story ideas). A non-profit group could hire a researcher, journalism student or retired reporter for this task, and perhaps update it yearly.

(P.S. Some of the stories in this sheet may cite the popular generic term "freedom of information" or "FOI," when the precise term should be "the *ATIA*," i.e., the stories came from using the federal *Access to Information Act*, not a provincial FOI law. The two terms are often used interchangeably.)

Introduction

I write these remarks in the Summer of 2021 from Vancouver, with rising worries of new variants of the Coronavirus 19 pandemic, while journalists, lawyers and government FOI officials labour from home, videoconference by Skype or Zoom, and try to replicate a semblance of a normal workday.

In this context, one might reasonably ask, “Can we afford to devote public resources to fulfill freedom-of-information legal obligations, when all our attention should be devoted to defeating the COVID-19 menace?” Others may wonder: “Could the contrary be true – that accountability to the public is now more vital than ever?” I shall attempt to answer such questions below.

The value of a strong *Access to Information Act* needs to be demonstrated than just asserted. To counter negative claims voiced by bureaucrats and politicians about how the FOI laws are utilized by applicants, I have written capsule summaries of 8,500 news articles produced via requests under FOI laws (2,000 for the B.C. provincial law, 6,500 for the federal). I hope to update this database each year (resources permitting), for both the B.C. FOI law and the *ATIA*, in time for Right to Know Week each September.

As can be readily seen, use of the legislation has led to stories on major issues as diverse as health, safety, government financial waste, public security, and environmental risks. They all share two common features: all reveal issues vital to the public interest (i.e., not simply about matters that the public “might find interesting”), and all were made possible through FOI.

The examples cited here can serve as an antidote against despondency or cynicism regarding the declining *ATIA* system, for they show how journalists can sometimes overcome the barriers of bureaucratic and political resistance to produce valuable results. These could serve as an inspiration for journalism students and other writers, as the type of stories they could produce also.

One might also contemplate the potential loss of such stories if the *ATIA* system erodes still further. If the *ATI* practice followed the *Act* to the letter (as it should but is currently not), and if the statute itself was amended to meet world FOI legal standards, then the journalists might well have produced twice as many such stories.

Such a boost is surely necessary, for “I think 2020 will be the lost year of FOI in Canada,” said access specialist Dean Beeby, who sounded the alarm in the early weeks of the pandemic. “Overwhelmed FOI units will be months in recovery. And responses to substantial FOI requests related to the COVID-19 crisis are likely a year away.”

To many in this unprecedented era, time seems suspended. Yet this limbo need not be an (entirely) lost period. A time of enforced inactivity or isolation is an opportunity to study, to draw lessons and inspiration from the past, reflect on its meaning, and prepare for the eventual return to a fuller-functioning state.

This current crisis - or the worst of it - will pass. One of my goals is to supply FOI journalists and law reform advocates with a means to overcome the challenges of the *ATIA* system, to lay a solid groundwork for the re-opening, to renew our efforts, and perhaps even to help spark a renaissance in Canadian FOI journalism.

A fivefold purpose for the *ATI Act News Story Index*

(Purpose 1) An inspiration and story idea generator for journalists

Beyond an archive, this catalogue was also intended to be useful as an active tool for both journalism students and working reporters. They can browse through the subjects, in Column B, for story ideas, and the database is topic word searchable by Ctrl-F. Even with the government’s new FOI obstructionism, many records that were obtained before can still be retrieved again; this is at least worth trying. One should always bear in mind that the record types and FOI process are more important here than the subject matter, *per se*.

The first category in this index entails what may be the most important *ATIA* subject for British Columbians – the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which oversees most of the province. Fine FOI-based stories on the B.C. RCMP have been produced before (especially by Chad Skelton of the *Vancouver Sun*), yet this is nearly impossible now, because for the past decade, the RCMP *ATIA* office in Ottawa, claiming vast backlogs, has been virtually frozen and behaves almost as though exempt from the law.

Even in these challenging times, the news media still work as an indispensable bridge between government and the public; the vast majority of Canadians will never file an FOI request, and so, by default, the records that the media requests will generally provide what the public sees. Although the media in Canada file perhaps five to ten percent of FOI requests, the benefit to the public interest is felt far beyond these statistics. The *Index* also demonstrates the value of FOI journalists’ efforts to editors, news media owners, publishers.

(Purpose 2) The Public Interest

If the public asks, “Why should we care if we have a good FOI law?”, a kind of answer can be found here. For many readers, the most worthwhile summaries may be found in Category 10 – Personal Requests. These stories are based on FOI or privacy requests that were filed not by journalists but by individuals or their family members, often in some form of distress. It demonstrates that obtaining records is not solely within the purview of experts, and their usage best shows the professed goal of such laws – to empower the average citizen.

Most powerful are the articles on the mistreatment of children and animals, some of which have lost none of their power to unsettle. The old adage of journalism’s mission being “to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted” has been well realized here, with articles that can bring some degree of justice to the powerless, and voice to the voiceless. It is difficult to comprehend how even the most jaded cynic or avid government loyalist can fail to see their value.

Here we can see politicians contradicted by policy experts, warnings not heeded, the hypocrisy of preaching one course in public and doing the opposite in private, draft reports watered down for their final public versions, and more (particularly for those adept at reading between the lines). In stark contrast to the bland, vague reassurances of government public relations, we encounter the sharp bite of reality as we read in graphic detail inspectors’ reports from the trenches. The stories also belie the most pernicious, self-serving myth of all – “What the people don’t know won’t hurt them.”

Some are akin to the tip of an iceberg, hinting at a much larger hidden problem, with a need for future research and followup stories (as with the 2005 Quebec sponsorship scandal which all began with a single narrow *ATIA* request). Few scandals are wholly without precedent, and other articles, little noted at the time, have foreshadowed major events later. For instance, a Canadian Press story of 1994, used *ATIA* records to show how the federal government, urged on by the Revenue Department, was keen in 1988 to plug offshore corporate tax loopholes; it presaged the Panama Papers furor of 2016 nearly three decades later.

The articles require a second look, for when they appear in daily media they may be forgotten within days, but many should not be, because we could be living continuously with the unresolved or recurring problems that they have raised. Moreover, not every FOI story necessarily reveals a scandal, but can still be helpful in educating the public on the scope of an obscure issue, and on how government operates. We need to showcase the indispensability of the beleaguered legitimate news media in this “post truth” age. My fondest hope is that the public may finally realize that not everything value can be had for free online, and here see the merit of FOI journalism, enough to financially support its production and so to ensure its survival.

This catalogue is also a necessary and eloquent corrective to a ruling party’s zealous loyalists and the bureaucracy’s obstructionists. These often try to trivialize and discredit the FOI law by fixating on what they call the “frivolous and vexatious” usage of it. Such requests might indeed occur, rarely, but at the same time such critics always remain silent upon the many creditable revelations - of human abuse, wasteful spending, environmental damage, the personal

cases cited in Category 10, and other grievous public harms – which were only made possible through FOI.

Plainly stated, if this catalogue does not convince detractors of the worth of FOI, then it is probable that nothing ever will. Moreover, while some complain of the cost of administering the FOI law, it is but a miniscule fraction of the federal budget. In fact, the access system often saves public funds, because public outrage over misspent money – revealed via media FOI requests – has induced government to trim the waste and tighten controls.

A common theme that emerges from the articles is the misuse of public or private sector powers. Its revelation by FOI is usually (but not always) followed by some justice, restitution, and improvement. On such misdeeds, it has been well said, “sunlight is the best disinfectant,” a relief to the public from the darkness of ignorance, and one of the few ways to curtail some forms of strange wrongdoing that can only thrive in secrecy. Whenever officials claim they want to withhold records because of fear the public might “misunderstand” them, it is more often the case they fear the public will understand them all too well.

Yet with the ineffectual FOI laws of this nation, we can produce far fewer FOI news stories than the American press does. In fact, I often utilize the U.S. *FOI Act*, and the contrast in responses with Canada is like night and day. The loss of hundreds of such untold and untellable news articles in the public interest that might have been possible amounts to a world of lost opportunities.

Today, quite oddly, the FOI freedom of the Mulroney years of 1984-93, i.e., the Golden Age of *ATIA* journalism (at least relative to what followed), feels about as detached and remote as the 1950s. Many of the records from 1980s-90s are no longer obtainable, after the *ATIA* system tightened up – such as frank policy advice and very detailed meeting minutes.

Further, several matters are no longer even recorded in the first place, as per the new pernicious trend towards “oral government” - hence the urgent need for new “duty to document” rules to be implemented. It should be a major task in the post-virus age to fight to *restore* such access (e.g., to entreat, “Cabinet background papers on that topic were released in full to the *Ottawa Citizen* in July 1988, so why not again today?”).

Some journalists, initially keen on FOI requests, are eventually worn down by enervating delays and sweeping exemptions, and so abandon the process. This response is most regrettable, for with shrewdness and endurance, good stories can still be rooted out using the law. Our task should be to revive the spirit of the earlier days in which such fine work was possible. Why should we, or the public, accept anything less?

(Purpose 3) To encourage needed FOI law reform

This third purpose stems directly from the second. It is well known that our FOI laws have fallen far behind the rest of the world - as detailed in my book on global FOI, *Fallen Behind: Canada’s Access to Information Act in the World Context*, updated in 2020 at https://fipa.bc.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020_FallenBehind.pdf. Ottawa needs

to raise our decrepit *ATI Act* of 1982 – ranked #52 amongst 128 nations by the Centre for Law and Democracy in Halifax - up to accepted global standards.

Two positive developments are the ban on *ATIA* search fees, upon a 2015 ruling by Justice Sean Harrington; and newly granting the Information Commissioner the power to order the release of information, though it remains to be seen how that power will work in practice. Yet many urgently needed reforms have been frozen in a circuitous time warp for three decades, akin to advocates addressing a granite wall, particularly on the three most urgent problems: the overuse of the *ATIA* Section 21 exemption for policy advice (which is now misapplied to bare facts), FOI-exempt publicly-owned subsidiary companies, and oral government.

The ruling party still yields to its obstructionist officials' eternal script with its vacuous three C's: "These are very *complex* issues, which require more *consultations*, because of the risk of unintended *consequences*." This is incorrect. The reforms are simple, they have been studied to death for three decades, and other nations have not been harmed by passing them, as per global standards. There is a better route: rather than have excessive secrecy project dishonesty, weakness and insecurity, open government projects honest and competent administration, confidence in one's own vision, and trust in the people.

It is all too easy for the Prime Minister and the B.C. premier to justify their broken FOI law reform electoral promises with the plea "COVID-19 response is all important now." But we need also to recall that politicians have manufactured excuses for inaction on this topic for decades before COVID-19 struck, and may devise new rationales for it again for decades after it passes. This current excuse only happens to sound a bit more plausible than the others.

(Purpose 4) The historical record

The *Index* can be of interest for Canadian historians, sociologists and political scientists also. What is out of sight is generally out of mind, last month's events are overridden in the river of time, and yesterday's articles are forgotten as "old news." Yet many should not be because we could still be living with problems that they have raised. Moreover, even dated or resolved issues can still provide an interesting record of social history. Memories grow faded and distorted with time, but the written records here remain fresh and accurate.

Another goal here is to preserve and pay homage to the work of journalists since 1983. Browsing this index makes us feel all the more acutely the retirement of prolific FOI champions such as Dean Beeby. Yet we can take much hope from the superb FOI articles being produced by the new generation of journalists. When seen in such a database, the stories are re-contextualized; quality FOI articles that frequently appeared in the 1980s and were taken for granted now assume a new stature in this bleaker news media age, whose stature will likely only grow in the years to come. Such journalists who write "the first rough draft of history" may have their historical influence overlooked.

Professional newsgathering is *not* a sunset industry, even – especially rather - in a so-called "post-truth era." Some such articles can galvanize us today, and can often be updated or replicated. It is vital for the public interest to pass on the FOI journalism torch to new generations of investigative reporters, of whom there will always be.

This story index may also be of interest to ATIP coordinators and staffers, as well as the Information Commissioner's office. The results show the often proud legacy of their service to the public interest (at times against substantial obstacles); their work may be underappreciated, even when applicants disagree with them on applications of the law. I especially hope they may note here the freer *ATI Act* interpretations of the 1980s and be guided by these.

(Purpose 5) A source of precedents for applicants in FOI legal appeals

For FOI applicants and media lawyers: When contesting FOI or *ATIA* obstructionism at inquiry before the Information Commission or the courts, one can search this database of 8,500 news stories for the types of records that have been released under FOI before, and so ideally should be again - especially with discretionary exemptions. Yet some types of records (seen as distinct from the subject matters, *per se*) would be withheld today due to more restrictive recent court orders, e.g., policy advice, national security memos, cabinet background papers.

Because most of these records (except for a very few) were not the subject of legal appeals back then, they are not indexed in legal case journals, nor in sectional indexes on Information Commissioners' websites, which are the only places that some legal researchers search. But indeed, this is a vital point – the agency freely released these records through the FOI process without challenge. The fact that the public body of the day usually chose to do so without raising a single plea about alleged “harms” could weigh for openness more strongly than inquiry submissions where the agency *did* plead such harms. This point could be favourably conveyed to the appellate body during arguments – and this news database could also be proactively consulted by the federal Information Commissioner (who in 2019 was granted the power to order records released).

Of course, this archive is only one supplement to, but no substitute for, other essential resources such as Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw. Yet who knows? If the appellate body is wavering between ordering documents to be released or not, the FOI applicant in certain cases may present relevant news articles, whereupon these could conceivably tip the balance in favour of disclosure (even if this might not be explicitly stated in the ruling). It is surely at least worth trying.

Although the news media in Canada generally file only between five to ten percent of FOI requests, the benefit to the public interest is felt far beyond these statistics. This fact has been widely recognized.

“I can't think of a major story in Ottawa that hasn't had an access component,” said reporter David McKie, who has broken many major stories as a producer in CBC Radio's investigative unit.¹ It was an *ATIA* request in the late 1990s by McKie and colleague Mike

¹ *There's a good reason why David fights Goliath; Big stories, from the sponsorship scandal to illegal daycares, began with a single request - even if it meant annoying those in power*, by Bill Curry. The Globe and Mail, Sept. 22, 2007

Gordon that ultimately made public a key database inside Health Canada chronicling cases of adverse drug reactions.

The data allowed the CBC to report a major rise in adverse drug reactions among youth taking certain antidepressants, yet no public warning had been issued. A second story using the same database showed that thousands of seniors were dying each year from the drugs prescribed to them by doctors. “We’ve heard from countless Canadians and academics about the usefulness of this,” McKie said. “Canadians have used this information to go to their doctor to ask questions about the drugs they’re taking.” In 2005, Health Canada made the searchable database permanently available to the public. (I regard this as the best usage of the *ATI Act* to date.)

“The Act’s many highly visible achievements far outweigh the disappointments,” wrote then Information Commissioner John Grace, a former journalist. “A day seldom goes by without stories in the news media, courtesy of the access law, providing the public with information which otherwise would have never seen the light of that day.”²

Officials are now all too well aware of the economic stressors and tumult in the news media, and this reality has emboldened them to quietly push ever further to expand the boundaries of secrecy. As always for the media, persistence is essential, and a great deal can be at stake, as one journalism text notes:

If the reporter can be dissuaded by this initial [FOI request] refusal, and many can be, the government learns how well the strategy works and the information remains locked away. Thus the battle to pry loose government data that ought to be public is a battle for more than information – it represents the larger struggle for freedom of expression and the public’s right to know.³

Many impressive stories have been done in the first 37 years of the *ATI Act* in Canada, and overall they have surely helped make this nation a better place to live. But if we accept our ossified Canadian transparency laws and subverted processes, will we see far fewer stories such as these? Or shall we press harder for improvements so as to make it possible that the best is yet to come? The choice is ours.

Although it may appear a dystopian landscape for Canadian FOI journalism today, it is essential to view this situation as neither necessary nor inevitable. Most FOI misfortunes occur mainly because we permit them to. Here we can draw inspiration from the Newfoundland FOI reaction of 2012, when the citizens of that province rose up against an appalling proposed Bill that would have downgraded their FOI law into the worst in Canada, and instead successfully pushed to transform their access statute into the best.

² Information Commissioner John Grace, *Annual Report 1993-94*. In the same chapter he added: “This report also comes to say that the *Access to Information Act* is irreversibly, relentlessly, and indispensably, transforming the old, closed, bureaucratic culture.”

³ Maxine Ruvinsky, *Investigative Reporting in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008

Let us continue that fine legacy of the 1980s and build upon it. To the public I would say: If you believe you should have the right to view records on health and education, or crime and the environment, or official spending and public safety - records whose production you paid for, and which were presumably created for your benefit – then speak out now, lest the government interpret the silence (rightly or wrongly) as consent or indifference.

A Postscript - FOI in the Coronavirus-19 Era

I began assembling this *ATI Act* database in early 2020, as a companion to the British Columbia FOI story index of September 2019. Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and imposed a new dimension on the project, for the global consequences for the freedom of information system are onerous indeed. Canada's Information Commissioner issued a statement on April 2, 2020, calling upon government to try to fulfill its transparency obligations, despite all these challenges. She also posed a range of vital questions:

“Many public servants are working from home, and occasionally, using other private communications channels such as personal telephone or computer. are minutes of meetings — even those taking place by teleconference or video conference—continuing to be taken and kept? Are all relevant records —such as decisions documented in a string of texts between co-workers—ultimately finding their way into government repositories? Do employees have a clear understanding of what constitutes “a record of business value” and that this record must be preserved for future access?” Indeed, for all these reasons, we must be vigilant that this era does not become a black hole for the historical record.

Meanwhile, around the world, some nations are delaying FOI responses, while others have stopped accepting new requests entirely. “We've got, on the one hand, this incredible need for accountability and on the other hand, the institutions of accountability are operating well below their normal levels,” said Toby Mendel, executive director of the Centre for Law and Democracy ([CLD](#)). “So, it's a cocktail for lack of accountability and at this time, the importance of access to information is much, much greater than ever.”

Organizations that already struggled to respond to FOI requests will likely make record access “an even lower priority” during a pandemic, said the executive director of the B.C. Freedom of Information and Privacy Association ([FIPA](#)). “But it also could push the country's access to information systems to modernize.” Let us hope so.

There are other factors that render this COVID-19 era a bleak one for FOI. Newspapers, with much of their advertising revenue vanished, now subsist while facing the prospect of bankruptcy, laying off staff, and considering government aid; hence fewer journalists file FOI requests.

“None of this bodes well for government’s most important tool in its fight against the coronavirus: public trust,” noted Justin Silverman on FOI slowdowns. Yet we should never accept any diminishment of Canadian FOI rights, for which we have labored so hard to implement and improve upon for decades. As Ken Rubin said in a speech to a FIPA event, two months after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York:

“I want to continue to stimulate others to go out and dig around, question authority, and act up front. Nothing will make me back down when Ottawa gets overly power-hungry and wants to trash both the access and privacy acts.... This is not the time to be consumed by fear and anxiety.” This has a familiar ring, and these principles should apply today, so that FOI rights will not become another casualty of the virus.

We cannot yet foresee the full impacts that COVID-19 will have on freedom of information practice. After the crisis subsides, will, or should, or can it return to its former state? Will a longterm FOI powershift have resulted, and not one for the better? Will FOI law reform be pushed further away from the back burner, into the deep freeze? Must we fight just to regain our pre-existing rights, before pressing for improvements?

It is well known that periods of war and crisis are never the most opportune times for domestic critical inquiry and democratic reform. And yet this pandemic will not last forever, it is best to view it in the long view of history, and for now and in the years to come, the need for our persistence and vigilance on FOI rights on behalf of the public interest will surely be more pressing than ever.

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The database was sponsored by the non-profit B.C. Freedom of Information and Privacy Association, [FIPA](#)

Online Resources

Access to Information: general information – with link to ATI request forms

<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hgw-cgf/oversight-surveillance/atip-ai/prp/ai/index-eng.asp>

Access to Information and Privacy Coordinators

<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ap/atip-ai/prp/coord-eng.asp>

Information listings, and InfoSource

<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hgw-cgf/oversight-surveillance/atip-ai/prp/ai/sfgei-srgfff-eng.asp#A>

Search Summaries of Completed ATI Requests

<https://open.canada.ca/en/search/ati>

Office of the Information Commissioner

Main: <http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/>

Complaint form: <http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/lc-cj-logde-complaint-deposer-plainte.aspx>

British Columbia Freedom of Information and Privacy Association (FIPA)

www.fipa.bc.ca

The Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia

<http://www.nsrighttoknow.ca/>

Books on FOI process

*** *Your Right to Know: How to use the law to get government secrets.***

By Jim Bronskill and David McKie. North Vancouver: Self-Counsel Press, 2014, 152 pgs.

Forward by Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault. <https://www.self-counsel.com/your-right-to-know.html> PDF preview - https://www.self-counsel.com/docs/your_right_to_know.pdf

*** *Digging Deeper: A Canadian Reporter's Research Guide.***

By Robert Cribb, Dean Jobb, David McKie and Fred Vallance-Jones. Third Edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2015. 360 pgs. See chapter on ATIA methods.

https://www.oupcanada.com/higher_education/companion/comm_studies/9780199008490.html

Student companion -

https://www.oupcanada.com/higher_education/companion/comm_studies/9780199008490/student_resources.html

*** *Federal Access to Information and Privacy Legislation Annotated 2020.***

By Michael Drapeau and Marc-Aurele Racicot. Toronto: Carswell Pres, 2019. English and French. With recent case law precedents. Supplemented quarterly.

<https://store.thomsonreuters.ca/en-ca/pdp/federal-access-to-information-and-privacy-legislation-annotated-2020/30908457>

*** *The Art of Access: Strategies for acquiring public records.***

By David Cuillier and Charles Davis. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: 2010. 2nd edition. 226 pgs.

<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/the-art-of-access/book257467>

*** *Brokering Access: Power, Politics and Freedom of Information in Canada.***

Edited by Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012. 400 pgs.

<http://www.ubcpres.ca/brokering-access>

A NOTE ON METHOD. The stories summarized here have been collected from many sources. I have clipped and stored paper versions of articles for three decades, as well as located more recent stories from media outlets' websites (such as CBC and the Globe and Mail). Most of the earlier articles can be found on the Canadian Newsstream and the Canadian Business & Current Affairs (CBCA) databases available on public and university library websites. One can type or paste the article's title into their search engines to find the full texts.

Regarding the great *ATIA* research work of Ken Rubin for news articles, please see his website www.kenrubin.ca for a further listing of references to his media use of the access act. As well, his past articles - beyond citations - are housed and available at the National Library and Archives as an on-going publication, *Digging for Data Over the Years: 1970-2019* (ISBN 978-0-9865464-1-9).

Also see the fine FOI work published by the Blacklocks online news site - at <https://www.blacklocks.ca/about-us/> - a site created by seasoned Ottawa Press Gallery reporters in 2012. It estimated in 2020 that it had produced 1,419 original articles based on *ATIA* requests, yet these stories are not summarized in this database due to its paywall.

There may be several other *ATIA* stories produced by small local, alternative, online, or student newspapers and magazines, or by radio stations or cable TV – which cannot be found in the usual news indexes, and hence do not appear here. One of these is Frank Magazine - <https://www.frankmagazine.ca/> - whose now-defunct paper edition produced many *ATIA* stories in the 1990s.

BC FIPA's version of the *ATIA News Index* can be found at - <https://fipa.bc.ca/transparency-spotlight/>
