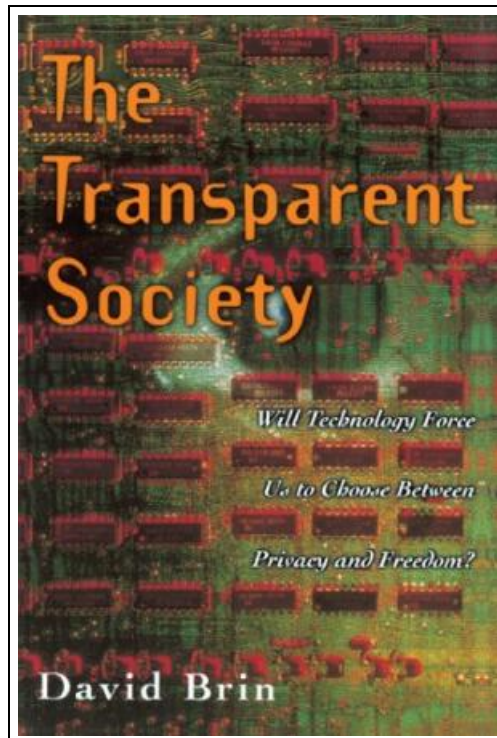


The Transparent Society: Will Technology Force Us to Choose Between Privacy and Freedom



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THE TRANSPARENT SOCIETY: WILL TECHNOLOGY FORCE US TO CHOOSE BETWEEN PRIVACY AND FREEDOM

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Basic Books. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 384 pages. Dimensions: 8.2in. x 5.3in. x 1.1in. In New York and Baltimore, police cameras scan public areas twenty-four hours a day. Huge commercial databases track your finances and sell that information to anyone willing to pay. Host sites on the World Wide Web record every page you view, and smart toll roads know where you drive. Every day, new technology nibbles at our privacy. Does that make you nervous? David Brin is worried, but not just about privacy. He fears that society will overreact to these technologies by restricting the flow of information, frantically enforcing a reign of secrecy. Such measures, he warns, won't really preserve our privacy. Governments, the wealthy, criminals, and the techno-elite will still find ways to watch us. But we'll have fewer ways to watch them. We'll lose the key to a free society: accountability. The Transparent Society is a call for reciprocal transparency. If police cameras watch us, shouldn't we be able to watch police stations? If credit bureaus sell our data, shouldn't we know who buys it? Rather than cling to an illusion of anonymity—a historical anomaly, given our origins in close-knit villages—we should focus on guarding the most important forms of privacy and preserving mutual accountability. The biggest threat to our freedom, Brin warns, is that surveillance technology will be used by too few people, now by too many. A society of glass houses may seem too fragile. Fearing technology-aided crime, governments seek to restrict online anonymity; fearing technology-aided tyranny, citizens call for encrypting all data. Brin shows how, contrary to both approaches, windows offer us much better protection than walls; after all, the strongest deterrent against snooping has always been the fear of being spotted. Furthermore, Brin argues, Western culture now encourages eccentricity—we were programmed to...

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