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<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,1963246,00.html>

(NOTE: The article has been reduced to c. 35% of the original) (1)

The Guardian – Monday 4 December 2006

Afraid of the daylight

Given their record, no wonder ministers want to sabotage the Freedom of Information Act

David Leigh - david.leigh@guardian.co.uk

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Although the act only came into force last year, the prime minister and "first flatmate" Lord Falconer...are already plotting to sabotage this infant example of what a genuinely open democracy could be like.....

...ministers have set up a fantastical bureaucratic structure with the aim of obstructing inquirers at every turn.

At the Home Office for example...lists of requests have to be submitted twice weekly to the home secretary, John Reid, in case they are politically embarrassing. Questions from journalists have to be referred to the Department of Constitutional Affairs, which has set up a clearing house to make sure one department does not release something another might prefer to conceal.

The Home Office orders say: "All cases which fall within the DCA referral triggers or which are in any other way sensitive must be the subject of an individual submission to the home secretary ... the submission should be addressed to the home secretary and copied to the Information Policy Team, their IAP [information access practitioner], other relevant ministers, officials and press officers."

...

Falconer's second proposal is even stranger.... Organisations...and the BBC - will be allowed to ask only four questions a year. In other words, any body such as a newspaper that tries to make use of the act will be banned from doing so.

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