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Transparency

How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Recently, certain issues have started to enter almost all our conversations about organizations, business, public life and our personal realities. Transparency is one of those urgent, increasingly prominent issues.

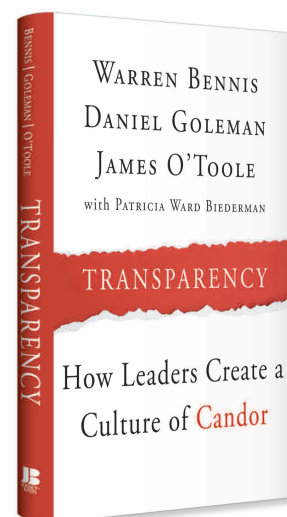
The word *transparency* encompasses candor, integrity, honesty, ethics, clarity, full disclosure, legal compliance and a host of other things that allow us to deal fairly with each other. In a networked universe, where competition is global and reputations can be shattered by the click of a mouse, transparency is often a matter of survival.

In *Transparency*, experts explore what it means to be a transparent leader, create a transparent organization and live in an ever-more-transparent world culture. The three interconnected essays offer insights that will help leaders think more clearly and act more thoughtfully in matters relating to transparency, an issue that becomes ever more important as this fascinating, difficult era unfolds.

The authors look at transparency from three different vantage points — within and between organizations, in terms of personal responsibility, and finally in the context of the new digital reality — all with an emphasis on how these relate to leaders and leadership. They show how digital technology is driving the new transparency, one that is paradoxically both more and less dependent on the will of the individual.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How leaders can show courage, integrity, candor and responsibility.
- How to create a transparent organization.
- How to embrace transparency, a good thing but rarely an easy one.
- How to take the long view of transparency.
- How to become a better follower and a better leader.



by Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole
with Patricia Ward Biederman

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: TRANSPARENCY

by Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole with Patricia Ward Biederman

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Creating a Culture of Candor

In the spring of 2007 something unprecedented happened in the southern Chinese city of Xiamen. In a nation notorious for keeping citizens in the dark, word got out that a petrochemical plant was to be built near the center of the lovely port city. The factory would have produced toxic paraxylene, and residents who learned of the plans were understandably alarmed.

A decade ago, concerned Chinese citizens could have done little to stop the plant's construction. But this is a new age, not just in China but throughout the world. Via e-mail, blogs and text messages, word of the plan spread and a protest was organized against it. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported, hundreds, perhaps thousands of protesters gathered at Xiamen's city hall to oppose the plant.

Chinese officials refused to acknowledge the protest and shut down Web sites that opposed the plant. But using today's ubiquitous communication technology, protesters were able to circumvent the official silence. Participants took photos of the protest with their cell phones and posted them on the Web. Much to the chagrin of Chinese officials, some photos were transmitted straight to sympathetic media. The result was a victory of electronics-driven light over official darkness. City officials have postponed construction of the plant until a new study of its environmental impact is completed.

'Not Lying'

Today the word *transparency* pops up in stories about everything from corporate governance to the activities of the U.S. Justice Department. In the mouths of those in power, its meaning tends to be fuzzy, although, as *New York Times* essayist John Schwartz writes, when officials

say they are being transparent, "what they really mean is 'not lying' and 'not hiding what we're really doing.' But that doesn't sound as nice or vague, does it?"

The vagueness is understandable, however. As we all know, claiming to be transparent is not the same as actually *being* transparent. Even as many heads of corporations and even of states boast about their commitment to transparency, the containment of truth continues to be a dearly held value of many organizations. Sadly, you can say you believe in transparency without practicing it or even aspiring to it.

While opacity is far less of a problem in the United States than in some other nations, it continues to characterize many, if not most, American organizations. And lack of transparency is usually no accident. It is often systematically built into the very structure of an organization.

Rise of the Blogosphere

The effort to withhold information from the public has become an all-but-impossible task because of profound changes in the global culture. Most important of these is the emergence of electronic technology that facilitates sunlight, and the rise, over the last decade, of the blogosphere — a development that has made transparency all but inevitable.

In today's culture, no corporate wrongdoing can be safely entombed forever in a company's locked file cabinets. A decade ago, secrets often remained buried until a professional journalist could be persuaded to reveal them. Today anyone with a cell phone and access to a computer has the power to bring down a billion-dollar corporation or even a government.



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What Is a Culture of Candor?

When we speak of transparency and creating a culture of candor, we are really talking about the free flow of information within an organization and between the organization and its many stakeholders, including the public.

For any institution, the flow of information is akin to a central nervous system: the organization's effectiveness depends on it. An organization's capacity to compete, solve problems, innovate, meet challenges and achieve goals — its intelligence, if you will — varies to the degree that information flow remains healthy. That is particularly true when the information in question consists of crucial but hard-to-take facts, the information that leaders may bristle at hearing — and that subordinates too often, and understandably, play down, disguise or ignore.

For information to flow freely within an institution, followers must feel free to speak openly, and leaders must welcome such openness. No matter the official line, true transparency is rare. Many organizations pay lip service to values of openness and candor, even writing their commitment into mission statements. Too often these are hollow, if not Orwellian, documents that fail to describe the organization's real mission and inspire frustration, even cynicism, in followers all too aware of a very different organizational reality.

Information Flow

Information flow simply means that critical information gets to the right person at the right time and for the right reason. Although the successful flow of information is not automatic and often requires the leader's commitment, if not intervention, it happens every day in organizational life, often in the most mundane ways.

For instance, a few years ago, General Electric became alarmed about a precipitous drop in appliance sales. At meetings on the matter, the conversation soon narrowed to how the problem could be solved by improving marketing: Should GE focus on pricing? On advertising? On some other change in marketing strategies?

Then someone from the company's financial services arm, GE Capital, spoke up. He put up a PowerPoint presentation showing that consumer debt had reached near-saturation levels. The problem wasn't that GE was failing to market its appliances successfully. The likelier problem was that customers were too strapped to buy the big-ticket items that GE sold. That single crucial bit of information swiftly shifted the conversation from marketing to financing, as the company began seeking ways to help customers pay for appliances. The right information had found its way to the right people at the right time.

Damming the Flow of Information

Just as the free flow of information can maximize the likelihood of success, damming its flow can have tragic consequences. An instructive example is the decision of Guidant executives to continue selling their Contak Renewal defibrillators even after they learned that the implanted heart regulators were prone to electrical failures implicated in the deaths of at least seven patients.

Because company officials remain silent on the matter, we can only speculate on why the firm decided not to recall the devices until 2005, three years after insiders learned of the flaw. Whatever Guidant's reasoning, the result was not only needless deaths but a catastrophic trust problem with its primary customers — not heart patients but the physicians who prescribe the lucrative lifesaving devices.

According to the *New York Times*, Guidant's share of the defibrillator market dropped from 35 percent to about 24 percent after the recall, apparently because of the disgust many physicians felt at the company's decision to conceal an embarrassing truth on which patients' lives literally depended. As one angry physician wrote to the firm: "I am not critical of Guidant's device problems — these devices are so complex, issues are expected. I will not, however, work with a company that put profit and image in front of good patient care and honesty in device manufacturing."

Choosing Transparency

It almost goes without saying that complete transparency is not possible — nor is it even desirable, in many instances. Just as national security concerns may justify limiting access to certain information to a small number of carefully vetted individuals, an organization may have a legitimate interest in holding close and guarding from competitors information about innovations, original processes, secret recipes or corporate strategies. Such secrets are reasonable.

However, secretiveness is often simply reflexive. And secretive organizations are vulnerable to exposure by both the mainstream media and their growing legions of amateur competitors. But even when lack of candor is likely to be harmful, many organizations continue to choose it over openness, as Guidant appears to have done.

Because the term *transparency*, like *courage* and *patriotism*, has the exalted ring of eternal truth, it is easy to forget that transparency is a choice.

'No Secrets'

The leaders who will thrive and whose organizations will flourish in this era of ubiquitous electronic tattle-tales

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are the ones who strive to make their organizations as transparent as possible. Despite legitimate moral and legal limits on disclosure, leaders should at least aspire to a policy of “no secrets.” The first beneficiaries of such a policy are the members of the organization itself, who are in a position to act on maximum rather than restricted information. According to *Fast Company* magazine, Whole Foods CEO John Mackey has a “no secrets” policy that includes posting every employee’s pay.

Even if unattainable, a “no secrets” policy is worth striving for. Given that secrecy and even privacy are less and less likely in a world where every teenager has a cell phone equipped with a camera and Internet access, we all need to remember that each of us is, more or less, always under scrutiny and on display. To forget that is to risk embarrassment or worse. Best to do or say nothing that you might have to apologize for if it makes headlines or is reported in a blog.

Set a Good Example

The best way for leaders to start information flowing freely in their organizations is to set a good example. They must accept, even welcome, unsettling information. If leaders regularly demonstrate that they want to hear more than incessant happy talk, and praise those with the courage to articulate unpleasant truths, then the norm will begin to shift toward transparency.

Openness and what it says about the nature of the organization becomes a competitive advantage — in creating consumer loyalty as well as in recruiting and keeping the best people. Evidence that values matter to today’s consumer include the enormous interest in green products.

Values Matter

That values matter to those in the most creative part of the work force is evidenced by the vast number of people who seek employment at Google, whose motto is famously “Don’t be evil.” When we talk about creating a culture of candor, we imply that the organization ultimately has control over the process. Certainly, transparency is enhanced when an organization’s leaders are committed to it. But even when leaders resist it, transparency is inescapable in the digital age. The new transparency is not optional.

To the evident discomfort of some, recent candidates for the presidency of the United States faced questions during televised debates, not just from participants in time-honored Town Hall forums, but from visitors to the social networking site YouTube. Used to carefully vetted,

Classification Vs. Declassification

Writer Graeme Wood gives a vivid illustration of how transparency is a choice in his analysis in the *Atlantic* of how differently recent U.S. administrations have treated sensitive information.

Arguing that the administration of President George W. Bush is unprecedented in its insistence on secrecy, Wood says the current trend began in 1982 with Ronald Reagan, whose philosophy was, in effect, “When in doubt, classify.” By 1985, 15 million documents had been classified, far more than had been shrouded under President Carter. President Bill Clinton, who favored declassification, ushered in a new era, saying, in effect, “When in doubt, let it out.” Classification surged again under George W. Bush. In 2006, 20.6 million documents were classified, more than six times the 3.6 million classified under Clinton.

“Leaving aside the blinkering effect it has on congressional oversight, too much secrecy impedes the routine functioning of the executive branch, by making useful information difficult for many government employees to see,” Wood argues. Ironically, he points out, secrecy also has the unintended consequence of making leaks more likely.

controlled encounters, the candidates had to field questions lobbed from cyberspace by cartoon characters and people dressed in goofy costumes.

Just as YouTube has changed America’s political discourse, Google has made it impossible for any candidate to deny past actions or statements. Within seconds, anyone with a laptop can check on the candidate’s past positions and, within a few seconds more, report any distortions or self-serving memory lapses to the entire wired world. Whether the candidates like it or not, a culture of candor has been thrust upon them. ●

Speaking Truth to Power

In 2002, Enron’s Sherron Watkins, WorldCom’s Cynthia Cooper and the FBI’s Coleen Rowley were recognized as *Time* magazine’s “Persons of the Year” for courageously bringing news to the men at the top of their respective organizations that those leaders preferred not to hear. As *Time* reported, the three women weren’t looking to curry favor, weren’t looking for publicity, didn’t want to be whistleblowers, and all three — primary

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breadwinners in their families — courted great risk in terms of their jobs and careers. Sadly, not only did their warnings about serious ethical violations go unheeded by their bosses, the women then were marginalized, isolated, scorned and reviled by their organizations for their efforts to save them.

So why did they dare to speak truth to power? Their motivations differed, but the actions of all three were rooted in what they saw as a moral imperative to act. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

In almost all social organizations — families, sports teams, schools, businesses, government and nonprofit agencies — those lower down the pecking order experience, from time to time, the terror involved in having to tell unpalatable truths to those ranked above them. While few of us have had direct experience calling attention to Enron-scale fraud and deception, almost all of us have stories to tell of retaliatory fury from the enraged “alpha dogs” we mustered the courage to confront.

Personal Danger

Speaking truth to power is, perhaps, the oldest of all ethical challenges. Certainly, it is one of the most terrifying in that it entails personal danger: from the days of the first humans until only relatively recently, tribal leaders, clan elders, kings, tyrants, caudillos, gang leaders, ward bosses and neighborhood bullies all ruled by force. To question their decisions was to risk death.

Ethical transparency is predicated on the existence of two parties — a candid speaker of facts and a receptive listener.

Managers in companies with healthy cultures are constantly willing to rethink even their most basic assumptions through a process of constructive dissent. Companies get into moral and competitive hot water when their leaders are unwilling to test their operating premises about such often-taboo subjects as the nature of the working conditions they offer employees, the purposes of their corporation and their responsibilities to various stakeholders. The failure to openly examine such behavior-driving assumptions leads to what commonly is called *groupthink*, a state of collective denial or self-deception that often has disastrous business and ethical consequences.

The Risks of Speaking Truth

The risks of speaking truth to power are particularly acute for those in professional services firms — the lawyers, accountants and consultants who are the very gatekeepers charged with providing business leaders with

unvarnished assessments and warnings, and with objective advice and counsel. These professionals are too well aware that the fastest way to lose clients is to give them news they don’t want to hear. This is especially true when the news that needs conveying is that the client-CEO’s behavior is at the root of a company’s problems.

Another example: It takes extraordinary moral courage for a compensation consultant to tell a CEO that he or she is overpaid. In too many instances, conveyers of such news would soon find themselves out of a job. Even if one is not fired, the penalty for losing a major client in a professional services firm is a fate worse than death: derailment from the partnership track. As the demise of the Arthur Andersen accountancy demonstrated, the incentives in most professional firms too often encourage people to lie to, and for, clients. And that won’t change unless the ways in which professionals are evaluated and rewarded change.

The Legacy of Enron

In the wake of Arthur Andersen, Enron and similar instances of corporate lies and fraud uncovered over the last decade, increasing calls have been made in this country for transparency — that is, for business organizations free of dirty little secrets, the unveiling of which would destroy trust, ruin reputations and wreak havoc with profits. In fact, there really is no need for *any* business secrets in organizations beyond protecting plans for new products and processes and other sources of competitive advantage (protecting the personal privacy of employees is a different matter). As author Edward Lawler has shown, it even redounds to the benefit of organizations to post everyone’s salary.

Transparency, trust and speaking truth to power are complexly interrelated ethical and organizational concepts. To create cultures that manifest those characteristics, leaders must do several practical things: provide equal access to information to all, refrain from punishing those who constructively demonstrate imperial nakedness, refrain from rewarding spurious loyalty and empower and reward principled contrarians. But that is easier said than done.

Integrity

In Stephen Carter’s book on the subject of integrity, the distinguished Yale law professor lays out three requisite steps for the exercise of integrity:

- 1. Discerning what is right and what is wrong.**
- 2. Acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost.**

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3. Saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong.

The first step captures the idea of integrity as requiring a degree of moral reflectiveness. The second brings in the ideal of an integral person as steadfast, which includes the sense of keeping commitments. The third reminds us that a person of integrity is unashamed of doing the right thing.

Integrity, by and of itself, is an insufficient virtue: after all, radical ideologues can have oodles of it. Yet, at the same time, all other virtues are insufficient without integrity.

Giving Negative Feedback

Great unintentional harm can be done when speaking truthfully. That's why managers find it so difficult to give candid performance appraisals to subordinates whose work is not up to par. Because giving negative feedback is nearly as unpleasant as firing people, most managers shy away from giving such appraisals even though they realize that an honest assessment of underperformance is in the interest of their organization and also of the subordinate receiving the bad news. And since offering negative feedback upward — to one's boss — is even more unpleasant, that occurs in organizations more rarely still.

A Highly Visible Lesson

As much as an unimpeded flow of information is the sine qua non of a business organization's ability to meet competitive challenges, the free flow of information is also a necessity for a democracy to flourish. A dozen or so books written by Washington insiders published over the last few years document the costs in terms of careers, reputations and even lives when America's political leaders have been unwilling to listen to uncomfortable truths.

Just before the start of the Iraq War in 2003, General Eric Shinseki told Congress that many more troops than had been planned for would be needed to stabilize that country after the U.S. invasion. Soon after his testimony, Shinseki's role was marginalized by the administration: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld rebuked him, and the deputy secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, claimed that the general's troop estimate was "wildly off the mark."

Shinseki soon retired, but the lesson to other generals was clear, as Kori Schake, former director of defense strategy on the National Security Council, explained, "It served to silence critics just at the point in time when, internal to the process, you most wanted critical judgment."

While there is no way to make giving feedback fun for the bearers of negative assessments and for the recipients above or below them, Frank Daly (the recently retired "dean" of corporate ethics officers) teaches that it is advisable for people in organizations to "practice having unpleasant conversations."

How to Speak Truth Virtuously

Since there are both constructive and harmful ways to do so, it behooves speakers of truth to learn how to engage in the former — and to avoid the latter. In sum, before speaking truth to power can be considered virtuous, the act must meet several criteria:

- **It must be truthful.**
- **It must do no harm to innocents.**
- **It must not be self-interested** (the benefits must go to others, or to the organization).
- **It must be the product of moral reflection.**
- **It must come from a messenger who is willing to pay the price.**
- **It must have at least a chance of bringing about positive change** (there is no virtue in tilting at windmills).
- **It must not be done out of spite or anger.**

This list is neither complete nor all-inclusive, and meeting each criterion requires considerable ethical analysis. ●

The New Transparency

The digital revolution has made transparency inevitable, not just in this country but worldwide. The Internet, camera-equipped cell phones and the emergence over the last decade of the blogosphere have democratized power, shifting it inexorably away from the high-profile few to the technology-equipped many. Historians of the phenomenon say this new digital transparency was born barely a decade ago (in 1998) when online columnist Matt Drudge revealed that the *Washington Post* had quashed a story about then President Bill Clinton's dalliance with a White House intern.

Blogs began to multiply with the launch in 1999 of San Francisco-based blogger.com, a free site that helped users create their own online forums. Since then millions of blogs have sprung up around the world, and their collective clout has transformed politics, the mainstream media and the public and private lives of people everywhere.

In the past, we often had to wait until a courageous whistleblower came along before we learned an institution's

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secrets. Now a company's most incendiary internal memos may be disclosed by an anonymous blogger, without ties to any newspaper or television station but with inside knowledge, who can reach thousands, even millions of readers. Now anyone with Internet access can take on the most powerful institutions on earth, without making any significant financial investment and often with little or no fear of reprisals.

The Role of Blogs

Because of the blogosphere's ability to expose secrets to outsiders, George Washington University professor Michael Cornfield has described it as "half forensic lab and half tavern."

Web logs, as blogs are properly called, are also strange hybrids that combine multiple functions. Currently the most popular facilitator of Web logs, Google, gave the trademarked name Blogger to the free application that allows users to set up their own sites. Google explains at Blogger.com: "A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world."

Corporate Bloggers

A blog is, in short, a tool. One notable denizen of the blogosphere is the corporate blogger. A handful of top executives have made names for themselves as bloggers, including General Motors' vice president and car guru Robert Lutz, who describes himself as "at the wheel of FastLane blog." But the most effective corporate bloggers are often non-managers who allow outsiders to peek inside their companies and project a David-unafraid-of-the-corporate-Goliath persona despite collecting a paycheck.

Fortune magazine featured a popular employee blogger from Microsoft, Robert Scoble, in a story on the pervasiveness of blogs. Scoble's most notable achievement appears to be lessening the hostility routinely directed at his employer, so often treated as the Great Satan by the digital elite.

Chairman Bill Gates told *Fortune* that Scoble's and other blogs by Microsoft staff have enhanced the company's image. "It's all about openness," Gates said. "People see them as a reflection of an open, communicative culture that isn't afraid to be self-critical."

By their nature, blogs challenge hierarchies, introducing an outsider's or non-elitist voice into the conversation at hand. When those voices are wise or even simply contrarian, they benefit the organization by challenging its dominant assumptions, preventing tunnel vision and

reminding the powers that be that they don't have a lock on all useful truths.

Transparency's Woes

But there is a downside to the instantaneous access to all kinds of information that is making organizations more transparent. The same forces are fast making privacy a thing of the past.

For example, the digital technology that allows supermarkets to manage inventory as never before, also allows Big Brother to peer into the shopping cart of every patron who signs up for an electronic discount card. The grocery chain stores the specifics of every trip to the supermarket Mrs. X makes in its computer files.

As more and more of our personal records go online, our ability to keep our information confidential will continue to diminish, no matter how conscientiously privacy advocates strive to protect it. At the same time, the ubiquity of cell phone cameras makes each of us the potential target of amateur paparazzi. The lack of privacy that results from transparency can be annoying, embarrassing and infuriating.

Electronic Advisers

Transparency would not be a problem in a world in which everyone is decent and fair-minded. In the real world, thugs and predators have computers, too.

If the new transparency changes our expectations of privacy in ways that can be problematical, the digital technology that drives it also has an invaluable upside. One of its remarkable strengths is its ability to tap into the wisdom of crowds, in writer James Surowiecki's resonant phrase. We can access collective intelligence as never before, making primitive forms of tapping opinion, such as focus groups, obsolete. We can also benefit from the wisdom of the group in such modest but valuable forms as the aggregate restaurant ratings in the popular Zagat guides and the collective recommendations that send many consumers to angieslist.com to find roofers and other service providers.

Typically, we ease into relationships with electronic advisers. We take a chance on one of their referrals, and if we like the meal or the paint job, we feel confident using the resource again.

The problem here, of course, is that what looks like transparency may not be. The blogger who slams a restaurant may not be a run-of-the-mill diner. He or she may be the unscrupulous owner of a rival restaurant who decides to whack the competition electronically, a despicable sock puppet.

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'Nobody Knows You're a Dog'

Any number of commentators on the difficulty of establishing identity online cite a *New Yorker* cartoon that has been taped on thousands of computers: "On the Internet nobody knows you're a dog."

Genuine transparency is impossible as long as we cannot be sure that those online are who they say they are. Although digital technology may not be the sole cause of the problem, the United States is in the throes of an expertise crisis. Because the Internet is open to everyone, it tends to be a great leveler. But when all voices have the same force, it is harder and harder to identify those who have the training, experience and wisdom that make them truly worth listening to. Television today is full of self-appointed experts who make assured pronouncements on current events and other matters and yet have no credentials beyond a good haircut and an even better agent.

Devaluing Authentic Expertise

The mainstream media have accelerated this devaluing of authentic expertise by treating ordinary viewers and readers as the equals of those with genuine insight and experience. Thus, CNN devotes some time that could be spent hearing expert analysis to asking viewers what they think about American immigration policy and other issues of the day. Such public involvement may massage viewers' egos and increase loyalty to the station, but, arguably, it does little to advance the audience's understanding of important, often-complex issues.

This devaluing of expertise is of great concern to everyone who fears that the blogosphere may be the fatal blow to the world's great and beleaguered newspapers. Information in reputable papers is vetted by experienced journalists striving for the truth and committed to fairness. Bloggers may be committed to nothing more than making themselves heard.

Many feel that blogs will be an adequate substitute for great newspapers only when they go beyond repackaging content to generate comprehensive content of their own and when they commit to high standards of accuracy, fairness and conduct.

There Forever

The new electronic transparency has other characteristics that both organizations and individuals are just now coming to terms with. Negative information can be spread much more rapidly than in the past, and, once it is committed to the Internet, it is there forever. You can hire someone to spin what comes up when you Google your name or that of your organization, but you can't really make it go away.

There is another major problem with the new transparency besides its tendency to catch and preserve experience like some vast digital La Brea tar pit. That is the troubling fact that what is exposed usually seems true.

Authenticating Online Information

In a world in which organizational and personal secrets are revealed around the clock at blog speed, we have a greater responsibility than ever to vet and verify what we see. Lies, urban legends and distortions are as much a part of the mix as authentic revelations. Moreover, it is often impossible to determine the actual source of a nugget of information on the Web. For example, companies often add to their Wikipedia entries or delete information from them without leaving tell-tale fingerprints.

The Internet is a dispassionate delivery system; it doesn't care whether it trades in enlightenment or lies. As a result, governments, other institutions and individuals must find ways to authenticate online information, much as they earlier had to devise methods to determine the authenticity of signatures and \$100 bills.

Unanticipated Changes

The new transparency is no doubt changing us in unanticipated ways we don't yet recognize. With its millions of intrusive cameras, its constant potential for trumpeting past indiscretions through cyberspace, and its other discontents, the new reality will force us to adapt or go mad. Eventually, a new etiquette will evolve that will allow us to live more comfortably with the round-the-clock possibility of surveillance by anyone who happens to pass by.

Some new method will emerge that quiets the cacophony of ever-present cell phones and lessens the pain of being "flamed" online by any malcontent who decides to go after us. Until then, we will have to be more wary, and we'll have to develop thicker skins. And since the cameras aren't going away anytime soon, we'll have to find a way to lower the blinds in our glass houses, if only in our minds. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Transparency*, you'll also like:

1. **Judgment by Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis.** Leaders are remembered for their best and worst judgment calls, and it is a leader's judgment that can determine the fate of an entire organization.
2. **The Wisdom of Crowds by James Surowiecki.** Our everyday activities, our government and our economy are all affected by the power of crowds, and when things go awry, it is often because one of the key elements of an intelligent crowd is missing or underexpressed. Journalist James Surowiecki explores the underlying implications of the idea that large groups of people are smarter than an elite few, no matter how brilliant.