



The Privacy Advocates: Resisting the Spread of Surveillance (MIT Press)

Colin J. Bennett

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Today, personal information is captured, processed, and disseminated in a bewildering variety of ways, and through increasingly sophisticated, miniaturized, and distributed technologies: identity cards, biometrics, video surveillance, the use of cookies and spyware by Web sites, data mining and profiling, and many others. In *The Privacy Advocates*, Colin Bennett analyzes the people and groups around the world who have risen to challenge the most intrusive surveillance practices by both government and corporations. Bennett describes a network of self-identified privacy advocates who have emerged from civil society--without official sanction and with few resources, but surprisingly influential. A number of high-profile conflicts in recent years have brought this international advocacy movement more sharply into focus. Bennett is the first to examine privacy and surveillance not from a legal, political, or technical perspective but from the viewpoint of these independent activists who have found creative ways to affect policy and practice. Drawing on extensive interviews with key informants in the movement, he examines how they frame the issue and how they organize, who they are and what strategies they use. He also presents a series of case studies that illustrate how effective their efforts have been, including conflicts over key-escrow encryption (which allows the government to read encrypted messages), online advertising through third-party cookies that track users across different Web sites, and online authentication mechanisms such as the short-lived Microsoft Passport. Finally, Bennett considers how the loose coalitions of the privacy network could develop into a more cohesive international social movement.



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