The First Amendment

- Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievance.

Journalism and the public

- Informed public essential to good government.
- Accountable government essential to democracy.
- An independent “press” is most likely to both inform and watch the government.
- Investigative reporting, accountability reporting, watchdog reporting are the keystones of journalism, but are not capable of earning enough money to sustain the effort.

What is investigative reporting?

- Information of importance to the public that powerful institutions would prefer to be kept hidden or secret.
- A method of comparing what ought to happen with what actually happens.
- Breaking laws or rules.
- Taking advantage of the helpless.
- Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.

Harvesting Cash
Theories of open data

- Governments prefer to lead you to the “right” answer, so they like colorful and “user-friendly” websites that convey their message.
- Transparency advocates look for government to first “wholesale” data, then work on their own website. They’ve had little luck.

Unexplored data

- Your seat at the table documents
- Recovery.gov data on the stimulus, esp the xml-format data on the detailed spending.
- Federal lobbying records
- Federal regulatory records
- Data.gov catalog lists others, though there is little in there that is something other than precompiled studies.