

World Without Secrets

BUSINESS, CRIME, AND
PRIVACY IN THE AGE OF
UBIQUITOUS COMPUTING

Richard Hunter



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*This is for my wife Patty
and my children, Dean and Susan.*

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P R E F A C E

This book begins with the basic assumption that we're moving rapidly into a *World Without Secrets*, a world in which very little of consequence can't and won't be known about anyone or anything. To create a vision of the World Without Secrets and its workings, I've drawn heavily on the work of my colleagues at Gartner, Inc., the world's premier information technology advisory services company. I've also learned from the individuals who are making and applying the technologies that will be found in this world, and from other professionals, journalists, and researchers who have an interest in the subject.

I've been guided throughout by my belief that, regardless of the changes that occur in our environment, man made or otherwise, the nature of human beings doesn't change much. People generally seek to optimize their environments and circumstances in ways that serve their own immediate needs and desires first. They're inherently resistant to change to a far greater extent than the technologies they deploy. They have limited attention spans and limited capacities for the absorption of new information, especially information that challenges the established ways of thinking.

They tend to act first and think later. This has been especially true where tools and technologies are concerned, and it's more true now than ever. Years after the fact, we still don't understand the full implications of the introduction of now-common technologies such as the internal combustion engine, television, and nuclear power. Yet we continue to introduce new technologies at a blinding rate. The power of our technologies is arguably beyond our ability to control them, but the rate of introduction won't decline while there's money to be made and opportunities to be seized.