Access and privacy legislation (also known as information rights legislation) has been an evolving feature of Canadian life for more than twenty years. Public archives, as custodians of the records of their government sponsors, are profoundly influenced by these statutes. There are two factors that combine to make Manitoba unique in the Canadian access and privacy landscape. The Provincial Archives of Manitoba does not assume the role of "gatekeeper" of access to records in archival custody. Instead, it serves as "guide" to them and to all other records covered by the legislation, in its role as the central administrative office for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This approach has resulted in both benefits and challenges for the Provincial Archives. By the same token, the more common role of a provincial archival institution—actually determining access to records in its custody and control—has, according to the literature, been challenging and problematic. This thesis is a case study of the "Manitoba model". It explores the history of public recordkeeping and the creation of a reliable government records program at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, which provided the foundation of access to information. It also discusses how information rights legislation developed in Manitoba, the role of the Provincial Archives in this development, and the impact on it of the responsibilities which have resulted from this role. The thesis examines some of the issues arising out of Canadian access and privacy legislation which have particular implications for archival institutions and concludes with suggestions for changes which address the question of the role of a public archives in relation to information rights legislation.