



Governing With the News, Second Edition: The News Media as a Political Institution (Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion)

By Timothy E. Cook

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The ideal of a neutral, objective press has proven in recent years to be just that—an ideal. In *Governing with the News*, Timothy E. Cook goes far beyond the single claim that the press is not impartial to argue that the news media are in fact a political institution integral to the day-to-day operations of our government. This updated edition includes a new afterword by the author, which pays close attention to two key developments in the twenty-first century: the accelerating fragmentation of the mass media and the continuing decline of Americans' confidence in the press.

"Provocative and often wise. . . . Cook, who has a complex understanding of the relationship between governing and the news, provides a fascinating account of the origins of this complicity."—James Bennet, *Washington Monthly*

"[*Governing with the News*] addresses central issues of media impact and power in fresh, illuminating ways. . . . Cook mines a wealth of historical and organizational literature to assert that the news media are a distinct political institution in our democratic system."—Robert Schmuhl, *Commonweal*

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Cook (political science, Williams Coll.; *Making Laws and Making News*, Brookings, 1989) has written before on the media in U.S. congressional and presidential politics. His latest book offers an overall theory of the interconnectivity between the mass media and the American political process. Cook begins historically, summarizing how the nascent federal government used postal regulations to encourage an engaged, although not necessarily purely free, press. As journalism became more professionalized and less overtly partisan, it increasingly involved itself in news making?anticipating events that seem newsworthy, that translate now into "soundbites"?rather than news reporting. Cook believes that one consequence of media actors basing their reporting on high-level government sources is presentation of an authorized version of the news, reflecting what political actors need to have reported. This rather dry work is tightly argued, and though the media bashes the media for not being "objective," casual readers will find little evidence of that tension here. Recommended for academic libraries.?Scott H. Silverman, Bryn Mawr Coll. Lib., Pa.

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Review

"Provocative and often wise.... Cook, who has a complex understanding of the relationship between governing and the news, provides a fascinating account of the origins of this complicity." - James Bennet, Washington Monthly; "Governing with the News addresses central issues of media impact and power in fresh, illuminating ways.... Cook mines a wealth of historical and organizational literature to assert that the news media are a distinct political institution in our democratic system." - Robert Schmuhl, Commonweal; "While we worry about the media's influence on politics, we rarely notice that journalists are political actors, part of the governing system, a means for raising issues and getting them advanced.... Cook's dead-on analysis is a model of engaged scholarship." - Jay Rosen, Nation"

About the Author

Timothy Cook is professor of mass communication and political science and holds the Kevin P. Reilly, Sr., Chair of Political Communication at the Manship School of Mass Communication, Louisiana State University. He is coauthor of the award-winning *Crosstalk: Citizens, Candidates, and the Media in a Presidential Campaign*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

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