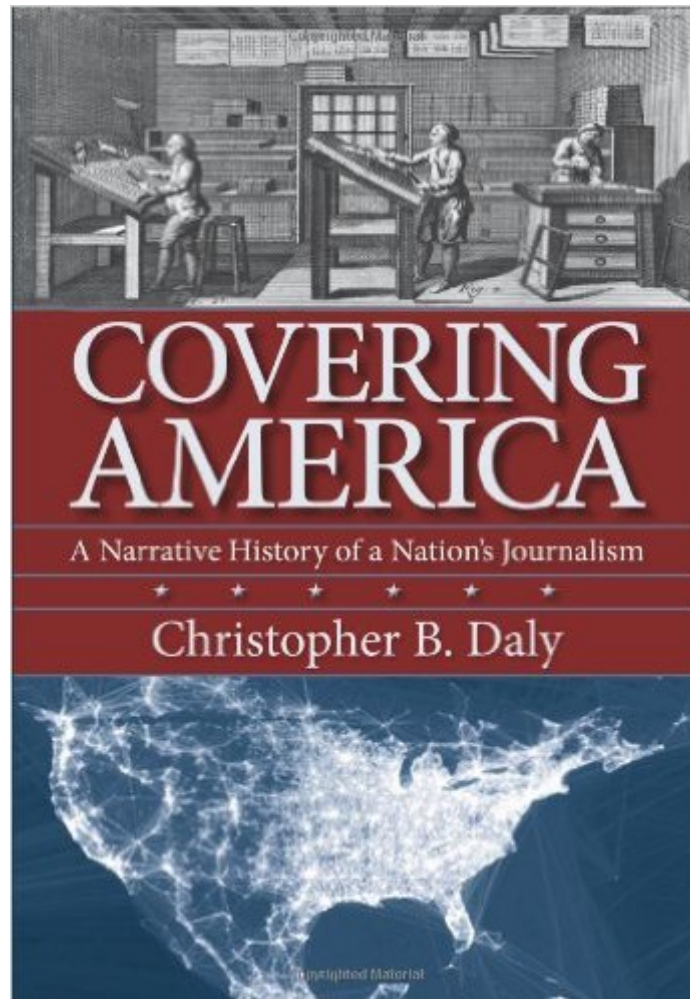# Covering America: A Narrative History Of A Nation's Journalism

Synopsis

Today many believe that American journalism is in crisis, with traditional sources of news under siege from a failing business model, a resurgence of partisanship, and a growing expectation that all information ought to be free. In Covering America, Christopher B. Daly places the current crisis within a much broader historical context, showing how it is only the latest in a series of transitions that have required journalists to devise new ways of plying their trade.Drawing on original research and synthesizing the latest scholarship, Daly traces the evolution of journalism in America from the early 1700s to the "digital revolution" of today. Analyzing the news business as a business, he identifies five major periods of journalism history, each marked by a different response to the recurrent conflicts that arise when a vital cultural institution is housed in a major private industry.Throughout his narrative history Daly captures the ethos of journalism with engaging anecdotes, biographical portraits of key figures, and illuminating accounts of the coverage of major news events as well as the mundane realities of day-to-day reporting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Everyone who cares about the "new media" -- whether for good or ill -- should read this book. It will make you a better citizen. Even if you don't care particularly about news and journalism, the history and personalities make it a fun and informative read.I had the privilege of reading the early drafts of this entire book. Now I have the real hardcover version in my hands that arrived today from . As the son (and grandson) of a printer, a person who did work with newspapers (helping them convert to

computerized typesetting in the 1970's), and an early blogger from 1999, I've lived through a very small part of the world covered in this book. I've invented things (the pioneering VisiCalc spreadsheet) and met many of those who were inventing the tools used by today's citizen and professional journalists. Reading this book was so helpful in putting the incredible evolution of journalism in the USA in perspective. What my generation has lived through is such a small part of a fascinating story with towering, sometimes courageous, and inventive individuals in each generation.Chris weaves together the history of the United States with the evolution of the practice and business of telling us about that history, and influencing it, as it happened. An experienced feature writer as well as an historian and teacher, he brings the personalities to life and relates them to what mattered to creating the journalism we've known and that we'll be seeing in the future. I think students of business and technology will find this of interest, in addition to the obvious journalism, history, and government majors.While the length (461 pages plus end-notes with many illuminating gems) may seem long, the sections of each chapter stand alone well like a magazine article as each personality or event is presented. They all flow together as a complete narrative if, like me, you find this hard to put down.

I teach a History of the Media class to high school students. This book is a good read if you have an interest in the development of the media in the United States and it is an excellent supplement for me as a resource. I haver several other book/textbook resources but this is by far the most comprehensive.

Professor Daly's book is by far the best history of U.S. journalism that I have ever encountered. The breadth of Daly's scholarship is astounding: he spent almost a decade digging into every aspect of U.S. media history, and the book meets the highest standards of academic inquiry in the Colonial Era as well as it does through the Civil War, the rise of radio and television, and the perpetual news cycle and digital technology of today.Daly's writing is also a particular advantage of the book, because it will draw in beginning and advanced students of the field. Daly tells the story of U.S. journalism through minutely crafted biographies of central figures and milestone events. He has a naturally authoritative voice, and his command of his research resonates through every passage.If you are considering a textbook to use for a journalism history course, you will not find a more thorough, informative, insightful, or better book. If you are simply interested in learning about U.S. media history, this is the best place to start. This is an achievement on a par with Michael Schudson's "Discovering the News." Daly's book is a profoundly impressive landmark in the history

of journalism.I should add that I am a lecturer in journalism and journalism history at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, though this review reflects only my view. I have been teaching journalism and journalism history for some 15 years at universities on three continents, and I was asked to teach the introductory course at ASU, Principles and History of Journalism, partly because of my knowledge of journalism history.

COVERING AMERICA is brilliant work using the best journalist techniques to tell the story of journalism itself. The chapter on the digital age is masterful. The whole book reminds one of Samuel Eliot Morison's great panoramic histories. If I taught journalism history, this is the book I would use. Heck, I wouldn't bother teaching, just tell the students to read the book.

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