

## PANEL

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Prize-winning *Des Moines Register*; Tom Curley, the chief operating officer for *USA Today*; Margaret Gordon, dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington; Barbara Hunter, president of the public relations firm Hunter MacKenzie Cooper Inc. of New York; Ed Turner, executive vice president of CNN; and Dan Wieden, president of Wieden and Kennedy, the advertising agency that handles the Nike account.

Turner said CNN received a lot of complaints from people who believed that correspondent Peter Arnett was

nothing more than a mouthpiece for Saddam Hussein. But the reality, he said, was that the media were dependent on both the United States and Iraqi officials for sources.

Turner also noted that the media in the gulf had more restrictions imposed upon them than reporters in Vietnam.

"Had the war gone on longer than 100 hours, the policies imposed by the government would surely have come back to haunt," he said.

Advertising expert Wieden said the way to avoid sexism in ads is to get to know the consumer.

"Sexism is a very hard issue in the advertising busi-

ness," he said. "(An advertising agency needs) to get to know who you're talking to."

The panel also discussed the controversial topic of how to make mass media news appealing to individual groups in society.

"If you don't want to be informed in this society, you have a right to be a dummy," Curley said. But he said he fears the reason many people don't keep informed is because the media are often out of touch with community interests.

Overholser agreed, naming politics as an example of how news loses people's interest because reporters fail to make the important issues seem applicable.

Overholser referred to an example in Des Moines where citizens baked cakes in order to raise money to help out the local police as a political story with public appeal.

But she said the specialization of coverage in an attempt to appeal to every group in society is counterproductive.

Turner said CNN has always targeted the interests of the general public, not the specialized groups, and it will continue to do so. But he said the media should try to make the news appealing to all.

"It is, by God, your responsibility as a journalist to keep it interesting," Turner said.

## MEDIA

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is over, Curley said. No longer will editors and publishers decide what people see. Printing is going electronic, and it's "only a matter of time before we'll be able to self-select material to meet our needs," he said.

Because of an evolution in content and a revolution in delivery, "we'll be able to see more of what we want."

"The future is only as difficult to predict as understanding the present," he said. "Let us all enjoy the freedom that comes with this new power."

Turner, who recently reached public prominence because of CNN's gulf war coverage, said the appealing thing about the television industry is "who is to say one is wrong — we're all experts."

Turner joked about journalists' declining image by disclosing a colleague's three reasons for why reporters should be used in laboratory experiments instead of rats.

"First, there are more journalists," he said. "Also, you could get attached to a rat. And third, there are even some things a rat won't do."

There are also some things a journalist won't do, Turner said.

During the war, journalists became "pit bulls instead of watchdogs," he said.

"We are now accused of becoming lap dogs to the military during the gulf war," he said. "I think what the public wants is a watchdog. In Vietnam, when (the government) got in trouble was when the public thought they weren't being told the truth."

People's views of the news have remained the same, Turner said. They still want to see the news of the day. However, with the increase in cable programming they now have many more news sources, he said.

"The (network) talking head will talk less, which is a shame," he said. "There's nothing wrong with a talking head as long as it has something to say."

Turner said he has noticed a "linking of the world," through internationally broadcast channels and cable television.

"How we use this technology will show what kind of journalists we are and what kind of human beings," Turner said.

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