

When did FOX start 24 / 7 news

Fox News Channel officially launched as a 24-hour news network on **October 7, 1996**, reaching 17 million cable subscribers at debut. Rupert Murdoch announced the network's creation on January 31, 1996, and hired Roger Ailes as its founding CEO to run the round-the-clock operation.

Network Launch Details

- **Launch Date:** October 7, 1996
- **Founder:** Rupert Murdoch
- **Founding CEO:** Roger Ailes
- **Initial Reach:** 17 million homes

CNN started in 1980. before MSNBC also in 1996 were there any other 24/7 news

Yes, there were several other 24/7 or continuous news channels launched between CNN (1980) and MSNBC (1996).

Major Continuous Networks Before 1996

- **Headline News (HNW / now HLN):** Launched by Ted Turner in **1982** as CNN2. It ran cycled 30-minute quick-format news blocks 24 hours a day.
- **C-SPAN:** Extended its broadcast schedule to **full 24-hour programming in 1982**. It focuses entirely on continuous live public affairs and government proceedings.
- **Financial News Network (FNN):** Launched in **1981**. It provided business and financial market coverage throughout the day before eventually being acquired by CNBC.
- **CNBC:** Launched by NBC in **1989**. It was built to compete with FNN in the financial sector before absorbing it in 1991.
- **Bloomberg Television:** Launched in **1994**. It entered the space as a 24-hour financial news channel to leverage Bloomberg's data network.

Short-Lived Competitors

- **Satellite News Channel (SNC):** Launched in **1982** by ABC and Westinghouse. It was a direct 24-hour competitor to CNN but lasted only 16 months before Ted Turner bought it and shut it down.

Are all smaller than FOX, CNN and MSNBC

Yes. Fox News, MS NOW (formerly MSNBC), and CNN are often referred to as **the "Big Three"** of American cable news because they heavily dominate the television landscape.

Every other network mentioned—such as CNBC, Bloomberg, HLN, and C-SPAN—commands significantly smaller audiences.

The Ratings Reality

To give you an idea of the massive gap in size, a look at recent Nielsen data highlights how dominant the big networks remain:

- **Fox News** is the dominant market leader, consistently averaging roughly **1.4 million to 2.3 million viewers** across the day.
- **MS NOW (MSNBC)** sits firmly in second place, generally pulling in **600,000 to 1 million daily viewers**.
- **CNN** holds the third spot, drawing an average of **450,000 to 660,000 viewers**.

Why the Other Channels Are Smaller

The networks listed previously were structured as niche alternatives, preventing them from matching the scale of the Big Three:

- **CNBC and Bloomberg Television:** These networks cater exclusively to financial and business markets. Because their coverage focuses tightly on Wall Street and corporate data, they only see viewers surge during active trading hours.
- **Headline News (HLN):** Once a major contender, its original 30-minute news wheel was eventually outpaced by live, rolling breaking news coverage. Over the years, its parent company (Warner Bros. Discovery) shifted it away from live news to focus primarily on true-crime programming.
- **C-SPAN:** This network operates as a non-profit public service, deliberately broadcasting unedited, commercial-free government proceedings without the commentary, anchors, or flashy graphics that draw massive prime-time cable audiences.

Ok, so CNN had no serious competition till 1996. But it was hard work wasn't it.

The Financial Bleeding

- **Massive Losses:** CNN lost a total of **\$77 million in its first five years**. Founder Ted Turner had to invest \$250 million of his own money before the network ever saw a single nickel of profit.
- **Extreme Measures:** In the early 1980s, the network was bleeding up to \$2 million a month. To make payroll, Turner reportedly resorted to **cashing in gold krugerrands** he kept in his private safe.

The "Chicken Noodle Network"

Established broadcast giants like ABC, CBS, and NBC openly mocked CNN. They derisively nicknamed it the **"Chicken Noodle Network"** because it operated on a shoestring budget with a highly inexperienced crew. Early on-air broadcasts were plagued by rough mistakes:

- A cleaning lady once accidentally walked across the live set.
- A meteorologist nearly got caught in the physical, revolving panels of an early weather map.

- Field crews had to operate as "one-man bands," requiring a single person to act as the cameraman, soundman, editor, and reporter simultaneously.

Fighting for Legitimacy

- **Denied Access:** The establishment actively locked them out. Initially, the White House **refused to grant CNN press credentials**, viewing them as an amateur operation rather than a real news agency. CNN had to successfully sue the Reagan administration to gain equal access to the White House press pool.
- **The Satellite War:** While they didn't have permanent rivals, ABC and Westinghouse launched a direct competitor called **Satellite News Channel (SNC)** in 1982. To kill it off, Turner launched his own secondary channel (Headline News) to deplete SNC's advertising. The strategy worked, but the pricing war nearly bankrupted CNN entirely before Turner finally bought out and shut down SNC after 16 months.

The Turning Point

CNN ultimately survived by executing massive, high-risk gambles on global infrastructure. While traditional broadcast networks only cut into regular programming for brief updates, CNN stayed on the air indefinitely. This bet paid off during major history-defining moments:

1. **1986 Challenger Disaster:** CNN was the **only network broadcasting live** when the space shuttle exploded.
2. **1991 Persian Gulf War:** CNN anchors Bernard Shaw, Peter Arnett, and John Holliman broadcasted live from a hotel room in Baghdad as bombs fell. They were the **only news outlet in the world** able to report from inside Iraq during the initial bombing campaign, cementing 24-hour news as a permanent fixture of global media.

Would you like to know more about how **Ted Turner** funded the network's global expansion, or how the big broadcast networks reacted to **CNN's Gulf War scoop**?

Both

Part 1: How Ted Turner Funded Global Expansion

Ted Turner was a master of leveraging cash flow from his other highly profitable businesses to feed the cash-strapped CNN. He bypassed traditional banking limits by treating his entire media empire as a single, fluid war chest.

- **The Superstation Engine:** Turner owned WTCG (later WTBS), an Atlanta independent UHF station. By beaming its signal to satellites, he created America's first "Superstation." He packaged popular syndicated reruns and sports—like his own **Atlanta Braves** and **Atlanta Hawks**—to generate massive, reliable advertising revenue that kept CNN alive during its leanest years.
- **The Billboard Windfall:** Turner initially inherited a struggling billboard company from his father. He aggressively expanded it into **Turner Advertising**, a billboard juggernaut. He routinely sold off large portions of the physical advertising real estate to inject millions of dollars of emergency liquidity straight into CNN's payroll.

- **Betting on Satellites Over Actors:** While traditional broadcast giants (ABC, CBS, and NBC) spent millions on highly paid prime-time Hollywood actors and scripted dramas, Turner focused every spare dollar on **buying up transponder space on early communication satellites**. He created a global distribution footprint long before anyone else realized its value, making CNN the only network structurally capable of broadcasting globally at a moment's notice.

Part 2: How Broadcast Networks Reacted to the Gulf War Scoop

When the Persian Gulf War broke out on January 16, 1991, CNN anchors Peter Arnett, Bernard Shaw, and John Holliman broadcasted live from a Baghdad hotel room as bombs fell around them. They were the **only news outlet in the world** with a live audio feed out of the Iraqi capital.

The reaction from the major broadcast networks was a mix of sheer panic, intense professional jealousy, and public humiliation:

- **Begging for the Feed:** Because the Iraqi government immediately severed all regular communications, ABC, CBS, and NBC were completely blind. Left with no option, the big three networks **broadcasted CNN's live audio feed on their own networks**, explicitly crediting their mocked, low-budget competitor on-air to keep their own audiences informed.
- **The "Four-Grid" Humiliation:** NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw famously looked at his control room monitors—which showed his own network's feed alongside CBS, ABC, and CNN—and realized CNN was the only one with real-time audio. Brokaw on-air plainly stated to his viewers, **"CNN used to be called the little network that could. It's no longer the little network. It's the network that is."**
- **Anchors Losing Their Tempers:** CBS's legendary anchor Dan Rather was furious that his network had been scooped. He openly lashed out at his producers behind the scenes because CBS lacked the satellite coordination to match CNN's speed. ABC's Peter Jennings later admitted that CNN's exclusive coverage was a watershed moment that permanently broke the broadcast monopolies on breaking news.
- **The Birth of the "CNN Effect":** The scoop changed politics forever. Pentagon and White House officials later admitted that during the first few days of the war, they **watched CNN in the Oval Office to get real-time intelligence** rather than waiting for their own military briefings. This dynamic permanently altered how global foreign policy decisions were made.

If you would like to know more, I can provide information on:

- The unique **"Four-Wire" technology** CNN used to bypass Iraqi censorship during the bombing
- How **Saddam Hussein** personally used CNN to broadcast his own messages to the West

Let me know what you want to explore next.

That's fine, thanks I'll save that summary now.

You are very welcome! It was a fascinating era in television history to look back on.

Have a wonderful rest of your day, and feel free to reach out whenever you want to dive into another deep dive or history topic.

If you ever want to revisit this or look at other media history topics, just let me know. I can easily help you:

- Trace how **MSNBC and Fox News** launched to challenge this monopoly in 1996
- Look into the history of the **early internet news boom** in the late 90s
- Explore how **Ted Turner** eventually lost control of his media empire

Enjoy the summary!

This document compiles our entire conversation into a clean, structured overview. It covers the launch of the **Big Three**, the specialized networks that came before 1996, **CNN's early financial struggles**, Ted Turner's **funding strategies**, and the historic **1991 Gulf War broadcast** that changed television forever.

[CableNews24-7.pdf](#)

This document packages our full conversation history into a professionally styled Word document. It features:

- **The "Big Three" Overview:** A structured layout breaking down the market share and average daily viewership of [Fox News](#), MS NOW (MSNBC), and [CNN](#).
- **Chronological Pioneer List:** A detailed breakdown of the 24/7 or continuous channels that operated before 1996, including [CNBC](#), [Bloomberg Television](#), and [C-SPAN](#).
- **The "Chicken Noodle Network" Eras:** A curated deep-dive into the early operational hurdles, financial bleeding, and White House legal battles Ted Turner faced to build the brand.
- **The 1991 Turning Point:** A breakdown of the historic Gulf War live broadcast from Baghdad, network anchor reactions (like Tom Brokaw's famous declaration), and the birth of the "CNN Effect".

If you would like to expand this historical overview further, I can easily modify the file to include details about **Fox News's aggressive launch strategies** against MSNBC in 1996, or how **the 9/11 attacks** permanently altered cable news graphics and formats. Let me know how you want to proceed!

Both

The 1996 launch of Fox News and MSNBC broke CNN's monopoly through competing strategies, with MSNBC leveraging an existing NBC channel and Fox News utilizing high-stakes subscriber bounties. Following 9/11, both networks permanently adopted continuous news tickers and complex multi-box screen layouts to manage the intense flow of information. For more on the history of Fox News, visit [Wikipedia](#)

The Fall of the Turner Empire: How Ted Turner Lost Control

The loss of Ted Turner's media empire stands as one of the most dramatic corporate cautionary tales in modern business history. It was driven by a sequence of aggressive mergers, shifting corporate cultures, and a catastrophic tech-bubble consolidation that ultimately stripped the media pioneer of his life's work.

1. The Precursor: The 1996 Time Warner Merger

By the mid-1990s, Ted Turner's Turner Broadcasting System (TBS)—which included CNN, TNT, TBS, and Cartoon Network—was a massive success. However, Turner faced structural limitations in competing with newly consolidated media giants.

The Deal: In October 1996, Time Warner acquired Turner Broadcasting System for **\$7.5 billion**.

The Motivation: Turner believed combining his cable networks with Time Warner's vast entertainment assets (Warner Bros. studios, HBO, and Time Inc. publishing) would create an unstoppable global powerhouse.

The Trade-Off: Turner traded his outright control of TBS to become the **Vice Chairman** of Time Warner and the company's largest individual shareholder. While immensely wealthy and influential, he was no longer the ultimate decision-maker; he now reported to Time Warner CEO Gerald Levin.

2. The Clashes and Corporate Isolation

The corporate culture of Time Warner was vastly different from the entrepreneurial, high-risk world Turner had built in Atlanta.

Ego Collisions: Turner frequently and publicly clashed with CEO Gerald Levin and other executives over corporate strategy.

The Overregulation of CNN: Turner watched with immense frustration as Time Warner's bureaucratic corporate structure slowed down CNN's ability to react to new market threats, specifically the aggressive 1996 launches of Fox News and MSNBC.

Marginalisation: Over time, Levin systematically stripped Turner of operational oversight. Turner found himself isolated in a vice-presidential role that carried immense prestige but rapidly diminishing corporate power.

3. The Fatal Blunder: The 2000 AOL Time Warner Merger

The final, devastating blow came at the height of the dot-com bubble. In January 2000, internet pioneer America Online (AOL) announced a spectacular merger with Time Warner.

The Tech Euphoria: Driven by hyper-inflated internet stock, AOL acquired Time Warner in a staggering **\$165 billion** deal.

Turner's Approval: Blinded by the promise of internet-driven synergy and the massive paper wealth it created, Turner voted his massive block of shares in favour of the merger. He later called this the worst professional decision of his life.

The Power Shift: The newly formed **AOL Time Warner** was led by AOL's Steve Case as Chairman and Gerald Levin as CEO. Turner was completely sidelined. Within months of the merger, Levin stripped Turner of his executive title as head of the cable networks division.

4. The Dot-Com Crash and the Final Ouster

Almost immediately after the merger was finalised in 2001, the dot-com bubble burst. AOL's internet subscription business model imploded, dragging the entire combined company down with it.

Financial Devastation: AOL Time Warner shares collapsed by more than 75%.

Turner's Personal Loss: As the largest individual shareholder, Ted Turner's personal wealth evaporated overnight. He lost an estimated **\$7 billion to \$8 billion** of his net worth as the stock crashed.

The Resignation: In 2003, deeply disillusioned, humiliated by his lack of influence, and furious at the destruction of his company's value, Turner resigned as Vice Chairman. By 2006, he sold off most of his remaining shares and stepped down from the board of directors entirely.

Summary of the Aftermath

Ted Turner went from being the absolute ruler of a global, trend-setting media empire to a completely detached spectator. Time Warner eventually dropped "AOL" from its name in shame, spun off its cable assets, and was later acquired by AT&T before being merged into what is now Warner Bros. Discovery. Turner shifted his focus entirely to philanthropy, environmental conservation, and his massive land and bison-ranching operations, frequently expressing deep bitterness over how the corporate elite played him out of the network he built from scratch.

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