

Elisabeth Murdoch calls for morality in media

LONDON, UK: Elisabeth Murdoch, daughter of Australian-born tycoon Rupert, urged the media to concentrate on morals as well as profit during a speech to television executives in Scotland on Thursday.

Giving the MacTaggart lecture at the Edinburgh International Television Festival, Murdoch said News Corp, her father's company, had been forced to rethink its purpose in the wake of the phone-hacking scandal which closed its News of the World tabloid.

News Corp was "currently asking itself some very significant and difficult questions about how some behaviours fell so short of its values," Murdoch said.

She is the third member of her family to make the address, following Rupert and brother James, who caused controversy in 2009 when he launched a scathing attack on the BBC and its dependence on a compulsory licence fee.

However, Elisabeth Murdoch told the audience that media companies needed to focus on more than revenue, arguing that "profit without purpose is a recipe for disaster".

She even praised the "vision and leadership" of outgoing BBC head Mark Thompson and described herself as "a current supporter of the BBC's universal licence fee".

In a thinly-veiled attack on the culture which existed at News International, the British publishing arm of News Corp, during the hacking scandal, she warned "the greatest threats to our free society are too often from enemies within.

"When there has been such an unsettling dearth of integrity across so many of our institutions, it is very difficult to argue for the right outcome, which must be the fierce protection of a free press and light-touch media regulation," she told Thursday's audience.

Murdoch, 44, founded production company Shine, which was responsible for hit shows *MasterChef* and *Merlin*.

Her speech ended with a glowing tribute to her father in which she praised his "vision, will and the sense of purpose to challenge the old world order on behalf of 'the people'."

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge