

The Weather Channel

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The Weather Channel is an American basic cable and satellite television channel that is owned by The Weather Company,^[6] itself owned by a consortium^[1] that is owned in turn by NBCUniversal and investment firms The Blackstone Group and Bain Capital – and includes the online weather services Weather Underground and Intellicast, and weather data and software company Weather Services International (WSI) among its properties.^[7] The Weather Channel has its headquarters located in Cumberland, Georgia, near Atlanta.

The channel broadcasts weather forecasts and weather-related news and analysis, along with documentaries and entertainment programming related to weather. In addition to its programming on the cable channel, TWC also provides forecasts for terrestrial and satellite radio stations, newspapers and websites, and maintains an extensive online presence at weather.com (<http://weather.com>) and through a set of mobile applications for smartphones and tablet computers. A sister network, Weatherscan, is a digital cable and satellite service that offers 24-hour automated local forecasts and radar imagery.

As of February 2015, The Weather Channel was received by approximately 97.3 million American households that subscribe to a pay television service (83.6% of U.S. households with at least one television set), giving it the highest national distribution of any U.S. cable channel.^[8] Actual viewership of the channel averaged 210,000 during 2013 and has been declining for several years.^[9] Content from The Weather Channel is available for purchase from the NBCUniversal Archives.

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The Weather Channel



The Weather Channel logo (2005-present)

Launched	May 2, 1982
Owned by	The Weather Company (TWCC Holdings: ^[1] consortium owned by NBCUniversal (25%), ^[2] ^[3] The Blackstone Group, Bain Capital, ^[4] exact Bain and Blackstone percentages unknown)
Picture format	1080i (HDTV) 480i (SDTV; letterboxed with weather information)
Slogan	<i>It's Amazing Out There</i>
Country	United States
Language	English
Broadcast area	United States, Puerto Rico and The Bahamas ^[5]
Headquarters	Atlanta, Georgia
Sister channel(s)	Weatherscan NBC CNBC MSNBC NBCSN
Website	www.weather.com (http://www.weather.com) Availability Terrestrial
UHF-TV Inc. (Willmar, Minnesota)	K34HO-D (channel 34)

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Selective TV, Inc. (Alexandria, Minnesota)	K50DB-D (channel 50)
	Satellite
Dish Network	214 (HD/SD)
DirecTV	362 (HD/SD)
	Cable
Available on most other U.S. cable systems	Consult your local cable provider or program listings source for channel availability
	IPTV
AT&T U-verse	1225 (HD) 225 (SD)
Sky Angel	320
	Streaming media
OneLink Communications	96

History

The Weather Channel was founded on July 18, 1980,^[10] by veteran television meteorologist John Coleman (who, at the time of the channel's founding, had formerly served as a chief meteorologist at ABC owned-and-operated station WLS-TV in Chicago and as a forecaster for *Good Morning America*) and Frank Batten, then-president of the channel's original owner Landmark Communications (now Landmark Media

Enterprises). The channel launched at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time on May 2, 1982. Originally, regional and local information was obtained by the National Weather Service for broadcast. Since 2002, all forecasting have been done on station in Atlanta.^[11]

Current

The Weather Channel uses special proprietary equipment that inserts information on current and future local weather conditions, and weather alerts issued by the National Weather Service and the Storm Prediction Center, if it is viewed on a cable television provider. The original WeatherStar technology has been upgraded on larger cable systems to the IntelliStar, which incorporates "Vocal Local" to announce current conditions, weather bulletins and detailed local forecasts. Subscribers of satellite, IPTV and some smaller cable providers originally saw only a roundup of local TWC-sourced forecasts for major cities across the U.S., as well as national and regional satellite and radar images, and severe weather watch and warning maps when active. However, satellite customers with newer systems or interactive receivers have the choice of "roundups" or localized forecasts. For both cable and satellite viewers, popular and smooth jazz music plays in the background during these segments. Some older WeatherStar units are still in use by small cable companies that cannot afford to upgrade to the IntelliStar. The WeatherStar units are also able to overlay text-based local contact information over the national feed during certain business advertisements aired on the channel.

The Weather Channel operates a service based on modified versions of the WeatherStar technology called Weatherscan, a separate channel which constantly displays local and regional conditions, and forecasts, along with The Weather Channel's logo and advertisements.

TWC's sister channels in Canada are the English language The Weather Network and the French language MétéoMédia, which use similar technology to that currently in use in the United States. The Weather Channel also runs websites in Latin America ("Canal de Tiempo"), Brazil (*Canal do Tempo*), the United Kingdom (*Weather Channel*), France (*Météo 123*) and Germany (*Wetter 123*). Apart from its stake in the Weather Network/MétéoMédia, TWC only runs its U.S. channel, although it does produce international forecasts.

A definitive history of the network, *The Weather Channel: The Improbable Rise of a Media Phenomenon*, by Jeffrey L. Cruikshank and network co-founder Frank Batten, was published by *Harvard Business Press* in May 2002, in honor of TWC's 20th anniversary.

Sale to NBCUniversal, Bain, and Blackstone

On January 3, 2008, Landmark Communications put The Weather Channel and its assets up for sale.^[12] On July 6, 2008, NBC Universal, Bain Capital and Blackstone Group agreed to jointly purchase The Weather Channel from Landmark, making it the channel's first ownership change in 26 years.^[13] The sale was finalized on September 12, 2008. NBC Universal also owned NBC Weather Plus, a rival service which was carried by and featured content from the NBC television network's local affiliates; that service announced its discontinuation three months later. Subchannels carrying Weather Plus have since switched to the similarly formatted The Local AccuWeather Channel, kept the Weather Plus engine, or switched affiliations to other networks such as This TV or the Retro Television Network; some have shut down entirely.

From November 2008 to February 2009, The Weather Channel laid off seven long-time on-camera meteorologists: Kristina Abernathy, Eboni Deon, Kristin Dodd, Rich Johnson, Cheryl Lemke, Mark Mancuso and Dave Schwartz (Schwartz would return to TWC in April 2014^[14]^[15]). With the exception of Deon, all had been on the air for more than ten years, and three of them had been employed by the network for more than twenty years. In July 2010, The Weather Channel terminated Bill Keneely, the last of the original on-camera meteorologists who appeared on the network's first broadcasts in 1982. In December of that year, the network also laid off on-camera meteorologist Nicole Mitchell, who later would file a lawsuit against The Weather Channel in 2012, alleging that she had been terminated because the channel's new owners disapproved of the time required by her simultaneous duties as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force Reserve as one of the "Hurricane Hunters" team;^[16] such reserve duties are protected by U.S. law (Mitchell now serves as the chief meteorologist at Al Jazeera America, which for a time also employed Eboni Deon).

Inevitably, the merger of NBC on-air meteorologists began in May 2009. Former NBC Weather Plus meteorologist Todd Santos joined The Weather Channel on May 2 of that year. Al Roker of NBC's *Today* began hosting a one-hour morning program called *Wake Up With Al*, alongside meteorologist Stephanie Abrams later in the summer. However, for New York City-based forecasting operations (those utilized for forecasts on MSNBC and CNBC, for instance), the former NBC Weather Plus forecasting, radar and graphics systems remain in place, with banners changed to fit The Weather Channel's graphics scheme. On September 10, 2009, The Weather Channel co-founder Frank Batten died.^[17]^[18]

Later years

In January 2012, David Kenny took over as chief executive officer of The Weather Channel, replacing former AOL executive Mike Kelly, who had been appointed as the company's CEO in the summer of 2009. Although all operations, sales support and marketing and the bulk of employees are located in the headquarters in Atlanta, Kenny declined to move there, and continues to live and work from his home in Boston,^[19] visiting Atlanta once or twice per quarter. This is counter to general company policy which discourages telecommuting for the majority of employees. Later in 2012, The Weather Channel's holding company changed its name from The Weather Channel Companies to The Weather Company.^[6] On March 10, 2015 Verizon Fios dropped the weather channel and WeatherScan for their rival, AccuWeather. It is unknown if this will be permanent.

International versions

Over the years, attempts to broadcast international versions of TWC – apart from Canada's The Weather Network/MétéoMédia and the Australian version of The Weather Channel (now Sky News Weather Channel) – have failed. TWC also operates websites that provide localized forecasts in Brazil, France, Germany, India, Latin America and the United Kingdom, but some of these sites apparently have not been developed further since 2003. The Weather Channel also shares radar imagery and forecasts with The Weather Network, particularly for The Weather Channel's Canadian forecasts.

- A U.K. version of The Weather Channel operated from September 1, 1996 to January 30, 1998, when it was shut down due to low viewership. It shared channel space with Sky Movies Gold/Sky Box Office 2, The Racing Channel and Galavision, airing for five hours a day. It was designed for cable as it had local weather information for specific regions; in some areas, it was carried on cable providers

- 24 hours a day.
- TWC also operated The Weather Channel Latin America, a Spanish language network serving Mexico, Puerto Rico and South America. This network launched in 1996 and existed until December 20, 2002, when it ceased operations due to budget cuts. The channel's three original on-camera weather presenters were Paola Elorza, Sal Morales and Mari Carmen Ramos; all three left the channel within a year of its launch and respectively went on to work for Univision in Miami, Telemundo in Los Angeles, and CNN International. In 1998, a Portuguese version was launched in Brazil, which ceased operations on the same date due to low ratings.

Local on the 8s

Since its inception, The Weather Channel has broadcast segments providing local weather observations and forecasts generated by WeatherStar systems ("STAR" being an acronym for Satellite Transponder Addressable Receiver), proprietary computer units that are installed at the headends of individual cable providers. Until 1995, the forecast segments aired at various times each hour, but are currently shown at times ending in "8" – as such, in 1996 (although it would not be used full-time until 2002), the channel adopted "Local on the 8s" as the title for the segments (though local forecast segments aired on the channel are reduced to once per half-hour whenever non-forecast programs air). With the introduction of the IntelliStar system (the sixth-generation STAR system, which was introduced in 2002), traffic information was also generated that provided roadway flow, construction and accident information for metropolitan areas where traffic.com (via its TrafficPulse service) provides traffic data; however, this feature was eliminated from the IntelliStar's programmed "flavors" (the arrangements of specialized segments played during individual local forecasts) when traffic.com ended its content agreement with TWC in 2010.

The WeatherStar systems also utilize a Lower Display Line (LDL) that appears at the bottom of the screen during all programming (until November 2013, it had been limited to only local forecasts and national programming, while being removed from the screen during commercial breaks), providing current conditions for a specific location and two or three towns within 15 miles, almanac data and forecasts on cable headends using the IntelliStar system, and only current conditions and forecasts on cable headends using STAR models from WeatherStar XL and older. WeatherStar units also allow cable providers to scroll text messages when in use, including the capability to broadcast severe weather advisories and warnings in effect for the jurisdiction in which the WeatherStar system's cable headend is located and its immediate surrounding area.

Related services

Television

Service	Description
	The Weather Channel launched a high definition simulcast feed – which broadcasts in the 1080i resolution format – on September 26, 2007, initially available on DirecTV. As of 2014, all of the network's programming is currently produced in high definition (with the exception of <i>It Could Happen Tomorrow</i> , <i>Full Force Nature</i> and older

The Weather Channel HD	episodes of <i>Storm Stories</i>), which is presented on the standard definition channel in a modified letterboxed format that fills space that would usually be filled by black bars with weather information provided by the Lower Display Line at the bottom of the screen. The Weather Channel HD is carried on most major cable and satellite providers (such as Comcast Xfinity, Time Warner Cable, Cox Communications, Cablevision, Verizon FiOS, AT&T U-verse, Charter Communications, DirecTV and Dish Network), many of which added the HD feed throughout the fourth quarter of 2007 and the first quarter of 2008. When the HD feed was launched, none of the channel's programming was actually presented in high definition, outside of a national "satellite" version of the "Local on the 8s" segment; <i>Epic Conditions</i> and <i>WeatherVentures</i> became the channel's first two programs to be presented in HD, when they premiered on October 1, 2007. TWC began broadcasting studio programming in high definition on June 2, 2008, with the introduction of a new studio that features various environmentally friendly technologies. The IntelliStar 2, the seventh-generation STAR system and the first to generate graphical weather data in HD, was officially released in July 2010 (although similar to previous recent STAR systems, among its modifications include an animated Lower Display Line and a Vocal Local narration track recorded by TWC meteorologist Jim Cantore). The system was gradually rolled out to major U.S. cable providers strictly for use on the HD feed, and will not replace existing operational STAR units from IntelliStar and older used on TWC's standard definition feed or Weatherscan, making it one of the few channels which by necessity does not have an "autotune to HD" version for providers that utilize set-top boxes allowing HD tuning to standard definition channel positions, unless the HD version has local forecast capabilities. DirecTV began carrying the "Local on the 8s" segment in HD via an app on set-top boxes on September 29, 2009.^[20]
The Weather Channel on Demand	The Weather Channel on Demand is the channel's video-on-demand service, offering a selection of episodes of its original series and original specials to digital cable and IPTV providers. Unlike the linear television channel and its sister website, the service does not provide national or local weather forecasts.
Weatherscan	Weatherscan (originally called Weatherscan Local until 2003) is a companion digital cable and satellite channel that was launched in 1999, which maintains a format consisting of local weather forecasts in a continuous loop uninterrupted by commercials. Available in fewer markets than The Weather Channel, it is primarily available on the digital tiers of some cable providers (however, certain systems carry Weatherscan on a basic tier, where The Weather Channel is traditionally carried); a separate feed for satellite subscribers launched on Dish Network in the summer of 2010. Weatherscan's forecast products are generated by an IntelliStar unit at the cable provider's headend, which is

configured differently than those systems used by The Weather Channel; the systems feature different graphics and include additional weather products. Weatherscan displays an "L"-bar (similar to that used by the now-defunct NBC Weather Plus) that provides current conditions and weather forecasts for a particular location and its surrounding area at all times during programming, with weather information also being shown on the top right two-thirds of the screen.

Radio and newspaper presence

The Weather Channel provides forecasts for satellite radio provider Sirius XM Radio in the United States. Both services run regional forecasts on a single station, and operate several individual stations providing combined local weather and traffic information for major metropolitan areas.

TWC also maintains content partnerships with a number of local U.S. radio stations to provide local forecasts, using announcers separate from the meteorologists seen on the television channel. For some affiliates, The Weather Channel provides a limited amount of live coverage during local severe weather events (with the Georgia-based announcers connected via ISDN). Distribution of TWC radio content is currently handled by Westwood One.

Similarly, The Weather Channel also provides weather reports for a number of newspapers around the United States. This included a half-page national forecast for *USA Today*, which TWC provided content for until September 2012, when rival AccuWeather replaced The Weather Channel as the paper's forecast provider^[21] with TWC's forecasts being replaced with AccuWeather's on the USAToday.com website one month later.

Online services

TWC provides numerous customized forecasts for online users through its website, weather.com, including home and garden, and event planning forecasts. It also provides WAP access for mobile phone users, desktop widgets for quick reference by computer users, and customized weather feeds for individual websites. Cell phone customers can also receive local forecasts from TWC sent to their mobile handsets via SMS by sending a text message with their ZIP code to 42278 (which spells "4cast"). The Weather Channel also provides weather forecasts for other online services including Yahoo!.^[22]

In addition, The Weather Channel maintains apps for the iPhone, iPad, Android, Apple TV, Kindle Fire, and Windows mobile and tablet platforms. TWC formerly maintained two versions of its mobile applications: a free version that incorporates advertising and a pay version called "TWC Max" that does not feature advertising, the latter was discontinued in favor of an all ad-supported model on January 6, 2014 (<http://feedback.weather.com/knowledgebase/articles/279577-end-of-life-cancellation-notice-desktop-max>). Aside from location-based weather forecast information, the apps provide radar maps, and tropical and seasonal updates, as well as social media related functions that track weather-related Twitter messages and allow users to send Facebook friends severe weather alerts. The channel also disseminates severe weather information, and photos and videos submitted by meteorologists and viewers, on its Twitter feed (@TWCBreaking (<http://www.twitter.com/twcbreaking>), which also serves as a hashtag usable for posts).

In July 2012, The Weather Channel purchased competing weather website Weather Underground. While TWC already had success with its own mobile apps, it plans to use Weather Underground's large network of digital forecasting and tracking websites to bolster its digital growth. Weather Underground operates separately from The Weather Channel and continues to provide its own forecasts, though its website incorporates some weather news and video content from TWC.^[23]

Programming

Weather forecast programming made up TWC's entire schedule prior to its incorporation of weather-related original programming – referred in network promotional materials and press releases as "long-form programming" – in 2000 (with few breakaways from its forecast programs prior to then, outside of educational program *The Weather Classroom*, an original program produced as part of the cable television industry's Cable in the Classroom initiative). The number of hours devoted to TWC's in-studio forecast programs have steadily eroded since then. Currently, its live studio programs air regularly from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time on weekdays and 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time on weekends. *Wake Up with Al* and *America's Morning Headquarters (AMHQ)* air weekday mornings between 5:00 and 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time; On weekends, *America's Morning Headquarters* is aired from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. while *Weekend Recharge* airs weekends from 9:00 am to 12:00 p.m. *Weekend Recharge* first aired on March 14th, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. and took the time slot *Weather Center Live* previously aired on weekends. The Weather Channel's flagship show *Weather Center Live* currently airs from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays only.

The Weather Channel also broadcasts original weather-related documentary/entertainment series and specials. These programs run from 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Eastern Time on weekdays and 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Eastern Time on weekends (*The Weather Classroom* airs at 5:00 a.m. on weekend mornings). During severe weather events affecting portions of the United States, The Weather Channel may preempt original programming in favor of airing special extended editions of *Weather Center Live* to provide long-form coverage and analysis; pre-emptions vary between local (isolated to viewers in the region affected by a particular weather event) and nationwide, depending upon the impact of the weather phenomenon/story and if a local provider utilizes a later model WeatherStar unit that allows the use of dual feeds that can substitute programming with long-form weather coverage in a given area.

Movies

In a move that caused controversy with many longtime viewers, The Weather Channel began airing weather-related movies on Friday nights on October 30, 2009. The first feature to be broadcast by the channel was the 1998 film *The Perfect Storm*.^[24]

After December 2009, these weekly movies were discontinued for the time being in favor of running *Weather Center*, which already aired throughout primetime during the rest of the work week. Despite the controversy, the Friday night film block resumed on March 26, 2010 under the title "Flick and a Forecast," co-hosted by The Weather Channel meteorologist Jen Carfagno and MSNBC contributor Touré, with the documentary *Into Thin Air: Deaths on Everest*. During the broadcasts, the Lower Display Line that normally appears on TWC shows to provide local weather information (with breakaways during forecast and most long-form programs only for commercial breaks) was removed, appearing only a few times each hour during the film as a substitute for the standard "Local on the 8s" segments, with a translucent TWC logo bug appearing at other times during the film when the LDL was not on-screen.

While the films shown within the "Flick and a Forecast" block were weather-related in some form, some films featured (such as *Misery* and *Deep Blue Sea*) had only a minimal tie to weather. On May 31, 2010, *NewsBlues* (<http://www.newsblues.com>) reported The Weather Channel's decision to cancel the movie block, due in part to viewer criticism of movies being shown on what is intended as a news and information channel, as well as a snafu that occurred during an April 2010 tornado outbreak that led to a scheduled movie being aired instead of wall-to-wall severe weather coverage. The "Flick and a Forecast" presentations were then replaced by an additional hour of *Weather Center* and a two-hour block of long-form original programs.

Notable current personalities

On-camera meteorologists

- Stephanie Abrams – *Wake Up With Al* (2003–present)
- Mike Bettes – Meteorologist and lead tornado tracker (2003–present)
- Vivian Brown – *Weather Center Live* (1989–present)
- Paul Goodloe – *Weekend Recharge* (1999–present)
- Maria LaRosa – *Weekend Recharge* (2010–present)
- Alex Wilson – *Weather Center Live* (2013–present)
- Reynolds Wolf – *AMHQ Weekend* (2012–present)

Hosts

- Sam Champion – *AMHQ* co-anchor (2013–present)
- Anaridis Rodriguez – *AMHQ* co-anchor (2014–present)
- Al Roker – *Wake Up With Al* (2009–present)

Specialists

- Jim Cantore – Storm specialist, *AMHQ* co-anchor (1986–present)
- Greg Forbes – Severe Weather specialist (1999–present)
- Bryan Norcross – Tropical Weather specialist (2010–present)

Reporters

- Dave Malkoff – Field/Feature reporter (2012–present)
- Mike Seidel – Field reporter (1992–present)

Former personalities

- John Coleman – co-founder of The Weather Channel; retired

Branding

Logos

The Weather Channel's original and most recognized logo was a blue rectangular box with rounded edges that debuted with TWC's first broadcast on May 2, 1982. This logo was revised in 1996, with the corners becoming less rounded and the logo becoming slightly flat. The *weather.com* URL text was permanently added underneath the logo in 2000. On August 15, 2005, the logo was overhauled again; the logo became a straight-edged square with no white trim on the edge and "The Weather Channel" text became oriented in title-case and left-justified, similar to its Canadian sister channel The Weather Network. A 25th anniversary logo used in 2007 featured a white square edged in blue connected to the current logo with the text "25 YEARS" inside it in blue.

Since NBCUniversal became a co-owner of the network in 2008, the network has participated in the "Green is Universal" campaign, which occurs twice a year, usually during April and November. The network's logo changes to a shade of green as part of the campaign promoting environmental conservation.



May 2, 1982–October 1996



October 1996–August 15, 2005



August 15, 2005–present



Green is Universal/Earth Week
logo



The Weather Channel HD logo,
2008–present

Controversies and criticism

2007 global warming controversy

In 2006, the Washington, D.C.-based website *Capital Weather* conducted an interview with Brian van de Graaff, meteorologist at ABC affiliate WJLA-TV,^[25] in which he stated:

The subject of global warming definitely makes headlines in the media and is a topic of much debate. I try to read up on the subject to have a better understanding, but it is complex. Often, it is so politicized and those on both sides don't always appear to have their facts straight. History

has taught us that weather patterns are cyclical and although we have noticed a warming pattern in recent time, I don't know what generalizations can be made from this with the lack of long-term scientific data. That's all I will say about this.

On December 21, 2006, Dr. Heidi Cullen reacted to this in a blog post titled "Junk Controversy not Junk Science" on The Weather Channel's website:^[25]

If a meteorologist has an American Meteorological Society Seal of Approval which is used to confer legitimacy to TV meteorologists, then meteorologists have a responsibility to truly educate themselves on the science of global warming.... If a meteorologist can't speak to the fundamental science of climate change, then maybe the AMS shouldn't give them a Seal of Approval. Clearly, the AMS doesn't agree that global warming can be blamed on cyclical weather patterns. It's like allowing a meteorologist to go on-air and say that hurricanes rotate clockwise.... It's not a political statement... it's just an incorrect statement.

Global warming was voted #1 in The Weather Channel special *100 Biggest Weather Moments*.

In 2014, David Kenny, CEO of The Weather Channel's parent The Weather Company, distanced the company from comments made by the channel's co-founder John Coleman denying climate change, calling it "bad bad science". In a communication to employees, Kenny said "we appreciate the contributions he made more than 30 years ago. However, we want to be clear: John Coleman is no longer affiliated with our company, and his opinions do not represent The Weather Company". Kenny reiterated the company's position of support for scientific consensus on the subject and pointed to their position statement (<http://www.weather.com/news/science/environment/global-warming-weather-channel-position-statement-20141029>) as a reference.^[26]

Programming controversies

The channel's original format was akin to that of a news and information cable network. Since the creation of the series *Atmospheres* in 2000 and *Storm Stories* in 2003, The Weather Channel has seen a gradual transition toward a mix of weather forecast programming and weather-related entertainment programming that paralleled the launch of sister network Weatherscan, the evolution of the always-on "L" bar/weather ticker, the development of weather.com and popular branded mobile phone applications, and the increased viewing and interest in documentary programs on the topic of weather. Currently, The Weather Channel broadcasts a large proportion of its non-forecast/news content on weekends with sixteen hours of the channel's weekend lineup consisting of these programs, along with eight hours of non-forecast programming each weekday. The decision to show movie and series content related to weather has caused criticism from many viewers and media analysts, who have blasted The Weather Channel for deviating from its format of running weather information 24 hours a day to run more infotainment programming.

The controversy further escalated on April 30, 2010, when The Weather Channel chose to go ahead with its scheduled airing of the 1992 film *Wind* (a film about yachting that had little to do with weather, contrary to its name) even though a tornado outbreak was ongoing in Missouri and Arkansas. Meteorologist Jim Cantore publicly stated on his Twitter profile that he was "severely misled" into believing the channel would cancel the movie's telecast in favor of running wall-to-wall tornado coverage and issued a public

apology for the incident.^[27] TWC had opted to instead transmit special "dual-feed" updates to Intellistar units in the affected areas rather than provide coverage to national viewers, however much of the affected area was rural, and many viewers in these areas either subscribed to cable providers that utilized legacy STAR systems (WeatherSTAR Jr.'s, 4000s or XLs) or satellite providers that did not support the dual-feed feature.

In November 2013, the channel introduced a new initiative of "weather all the time" in response to the criticism; all original programming – which was rebranded under the tagline *Natural Drama* – will now have direct relevance to weather-related subjects, and the network reemphasized its promise to interrupt original programming either regionally or nationally during major weather events; in addition, The Weather Channel extended the display of its Lower Display Line (which also experienced a design revamp as part of the introduction of a new graphics package) to commercial breaks and through entire broadcasts of its original programs.^[28]

Cable and satellite carriage disputes

Dish Network carriage dispute

On May 20, 2010, Dish Network announced that it was dropping The Weather Channel at 12:00 a.m. Eastern Time that day in favor of its own similar weather information channel, The Weather Cast. The carriage dispute was over the rates that The Weather Channel asked Dish Network to pay: from 11¢ per subscriber per month^[29] to 12¢,^[30] a 9% increase, totaling \$140,000 per month. The dispute was also over The Weather Channel's programming format shifting from an information-based channel to an entertainment-based service.^[31] The Weather Channel said in a statement, "Dish has chosen to be the first distributor to drop The Weather Channel rather than pay the standard industry rates others in the industry have already agreed to pay",^[30] and encouraged Dish Network customers to switch to other pay television providers. Dave Shull, senior vice president for programming for Dish Network said The Weather Channel's fees were harder for the satellite provider to justify paying as more people receive weather information through the internet and mobile services: "They're looking for bid increases when I feel like there's a real migration to the Web, and it's difficult to really justify those rate increases at this time."^[32]

On May 24, 2010, The Weather Channel announced that it had reached a new multi-year carriage agreement with Dish Network,^[33] the financial terms of which were not disclosed. Despite the earlier announcement that The Weather Channel would be dropped, the channel was never officially removed from Dish Network. The Weather Cast ceased operations in anticipation of the launch of a Weatherscan-based service announced as part of the agreement that would provide local weather information for Dish Network customers. The proposed movie scheduled for the Friday after the deal was struck (May 28), *Gorillas in the Mist*, was dropped in favor of a six-hour marathon of *Tornado Road*.

DirecTV carriage dispute

DirecTV removed The Weather Channel from its lineup at 12:00 a.m. Eastern Time on January 14, 2014, after the two parties were unable to come to terms on a new carriage agreement;^[34] as a result, DirecTV became the first major pay television provider to drop the channel in its history.^[35] Two weeks before the channel's carriage agreement was set to expire on December 31 (after which the deadline for a new carriage deal was extended by two weeks), the satellite provider began carrying WeatherNation TV (the successor to

The Weather Cast and owned by WeatherNation, LLC) on channel 361 on December 16, 2013 – placing the channel next to The Weather Channel's slot on channel 362;^[36] WeatherNation replaced The Weather Channel on channel 362 – while still being carried on channel 361 – when TWC was pulled.^{[35][37]}

The Weather Channel's chief executive officer David Kenny stated that it offered DirecTV the best rate for its programming (according to SNL Kagan, The Weather Channel's average carriage fee at the time was 13¢ per subscriber), and blasted the satellite provider's removal of the channel by stating that it was putting profits ahead of public safety.^[34] Representatives for DirecTV stated that it added WeatherNation TV in response to subscriber complaints regarding the number of reality programs on The Weather Channel, which it estimated had amounted to 40% of its daily schedule^{[35][37]} (WeatherNation TV, which outside of its carriage by DirecTV is primarily carried on broadcast television stations as a main channel affiliation or a digital multicast service, does not run programming outside of forecasts with the only interruption in its weather coverage coming from affiliates that carry children's programs to fulfill FCC educational programming requirements; however WeatherNation has been criticized for its absence of live programming, which TWC does provide, especially during significant weather events^[38]). DirecTV stated that weather information is also available through broadcast television stations carried as part of its local channel tier, as well as the provider's designated emergency channels.^[37] The Weather Channel fought back by airing commercials encouraging people to not subscribe to DirecTV by parodying the provider's popular "When You..." ad campaign.

On April 8, 2014, The Weather Channel and DirecTV both settled on a new agreement (TWC decided to alter its programming lineup by trimming the amount of reality programming on weekdays in half, restricting them to its nighttime schedule, in response to complaints from DirecTV subscribers), with the provider restoring the channel on channel 362 the following day. Access to local weather content using the red button feature did not return until May 2, 2014.^[39]

Loss of Verizon FiOS carriage

Verizon FiOS has dropped The Weather Channel and its sister network Weatherscan from its lineup at 12:00 a.m. Eastern Time on March 10, 2015 after the two parties were unable to come to terms on a new carriage agreement. The services has been replaced by the new AccuWeather Network and the local WeatherBug "widget" respectively. No public announcement has been made regarding this issue until over 12 hours after the discontinuation.^[40] Verizon said that its reason was because many customers turn to the internet and mobile apps for weather any time of day.^[41]

Winter storm naming

In the fall of 2012, The Weather Channel began to assign names to major winter storm systems. The channel's management stated the decision to start naming notable winter storms came as a way to more easily spread knowledge and raise awareness. By naming winter storms, TWC stated that the public would find it easier to follow storm information, social media will be able to refer to and discuss the storm, and people will have an easier time referring to the storm after it occurs.^[42] Most independent sources identify the use of winter storm names by The Weather Channel as a form of SEO-friendly branding.^[43]

The first winter storm to be named by TWC was a nor'easter that hit the East Coast of the United States in November 2012, which it named after the Greek goddess Athena. During the 2012–13 season, The Weather Channel named 27 winter storms (Athena, Brutus, Caesar, Draco, Euclid, Freyr, Gandolf, Helen, Iago, Jove, Khan, Luna, Magnus, Nemo, Orko, Plato, Q, Rocky, Saturn, Triton, Ukko, Virgil, Walda, Xerxes, Yogi, Zeus and Achilles).^[44] Multiple factors are taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to name a winter storm. This includes, but is not limited to, predicted snowfall and other precipitation, wind speeds, and the timing of the storm.^[42]

The Weather Channel has provided the reasoning behind their decision to name certain storms, in particular Athena,^[45] Brutus,^[46] Gandolf,^[47] Iago,^[48] Khan,^[49] Luna,^[50] Magnus,^[51] Nemo,^[52] Saturn,^[53] and Virgil.^[54]

In response, the National Weather Service announced on November 7, 2012, that it would not recognize The Weather Channel's names for winter storms, stating in a press release that it "does not use the name of winter storms in its products."^{[55][56][57]} Similarly, references to the names are generally limited on TWC-provided forecasts seen on NBC's news programs.

In popular culture

- The film *Back to the Future Part II* has a futuristic version of The Weather Channel that looks similar to the present day logo in the year 2015 (but centered and without the blue box and with the planet Earth).^[58]
- In the film *The Day After Tomorrow*, The Weather Channel shows a tornado warning for Los Angeles.
- In the Season 9 finale of the sitcom *Friends*, Rachel Green (played by Jennifer Aniston) tunes into The Weather Channel in her hotel room in Barbados, as TWC on-camera meteorologist Alexandra Steele says it is sunny in New York City (the regular setting for the series); Rachel, as a result, frustratedly calls her a "weather bitch".
- The Weather Channel was featured in the film *Sharknado 2: The Second One*, which aired on sister property (through NBCUniversal) Syfy.

See also

- Weather media in the United States
- The Weather Network – A Canadian Category A cable and satellite channel devoted to weather forecasts, which is owned by Pelmorex (which owns 70%) and The Weather Company (which owns the remaining 30% interest). It uses proprietary headend units to provide local weather data known as PMX, which are similar to the WeatherStar systems (which TWN used prior to 1997).
- WeatherStar – A series of proprietary computer units installed at the headend of cable television providers that disseminate weather data.

- Weather Underground (weather service) – A website owned by TWC parent The Weather Company that launched in 1995.

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External links

- [Weather.com \(http://www.weather.com/\)](http://www.weather.com/) – Official website
- Interactive tour of TWC's HD studio (2008) powered by Cisco



Wikimedia Commons has media related to ***The Weather Channel***.

Systems (<http://www.weather.com/studio>)

- Local forecast music (<http://www.weather.com/tv/music/?from=secondarynav>)
- Weather location codes for The Weather Channel widgets (<http://iannuttall.co.uk/weather-location-codes/>)

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