

WJLA: TELLING A BETTER VISUAL WEATHER STORY WITH HYPERLOCAL DATA AND IMAGERY



WJLA is the local ABC affiliate for the metropolitan Washington, DC region and parts of West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Broadcasting as ABC7, this designated market area (DMA) has 2,476,680 TV Households representing over 2% of the TV Households in the United States. WJLA started as WTVM on October 3rd, 1947 and is currently a part of the Sinclair Broadcast Group. From their studios in Arlington, Virginia, ABC7 covers national and local news, sports, weather, traffic, entertainment, and culture.

THEIR SOLUTION WASN'T CUTTING IT

WJLA wanted to increase viewership and create stronger relationships with their audience. To do this, WJLA knew they needed to get into local neighborhoods and report on the weather. This was a problem because TV stations typically use airports for local weather data. However, these airports are sometimes very far away from the places that viewers live. WJLA needed validated hyperlocal weather information to engage viewers.

In addition, the station noticed that weather cameras increased weather segment viewership for one of their local competitors. WJLA started playing around with the idea of placing weather cameras and stations at schools to help increase community engagement. Maybe if students, teachers, parents, or even the local community saw the weather station at their local schools it would make them feel recognized and tune into the weather segment on ABC7.

VALIDATED HYPERLOCAL WEATHER DATA AND CAMERAS

In 2008, WJLA began using Earth Networks new HD weather cameras and stations for broadcast weather segments. Alex Liggitt, WJLA Meteorologist commented "Since we've got it, we've loved it." After introducing the technology, it's easier to query data at schools and iconic locations within their DMA. This is a key engagement initiative that drives a lot of viewers to the channel. Now, WJLA tries to use live camera shots in almost every single weather report. The station also uses background shots from the cameras for other sections of the news. WJLA appreciates the many live feeds Earth Networks camera network provides because the viewers love feeling connected and visually engaged with the videos. WJLA has also found their new weather segment to be quite lucrative and attractive to paying sponsors.

WHY IT MATTERS

In today's digital age, people aren't captivated by much besides video. Being able to go to an area where there has been a storm or heavy rain is key for broadcast stations. WJLA and other Earth Networks station partners can broadcast weather observations from iconic local sites due to Earth Networks weather station and camera network. This helps them provide warnings for flash flooding, high winds, and other potential dangerous weather conditions. WJLA is local to Earth Networks Headquarters, so they use the weather cameras on top of the Earth Networks building in their broadcast to show traffic and accidents on busy I-270. They also utilized other cameras in the network to showcase different events, such as the Cherry Blossom Festival.

"The Earth Networks HD Axis Cameras are leaps and bounds better than other HD cameras and SD cameras. The platform is great to have to see how one storm is performing rather than just what the National Weather Service is saying. It's great to use even off air."

- Alex Liggitt, WJLA Meteorologist

WJLA BRINGS THEIR WEATHER SEGMENT TO LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS

OVERVIEW

WJLA is the local ABC affiliate of the greater Washington DC area. They broadcast in the 7th largest DMA in the nation, which includes 2,476,680 TV households.

CHALLENGES

WJLA noticed that the weather at the nearest airport differed greatly from the weather viewers noticed in their backyards. They needed hyperlocal weather data and cameras to engage viewers and provide them with validated weather data.

SOLUTION

WJLA started using Earth Networks HD weather cameras and weather stations in 2008 and hasn't looked back. The weather and camera networks give WJLA access to live videos and real-time hyperlocal weather data that engages viewers and keeps them coming back.

RESULTS

WJLA uses live feeds from Earth Networks weather camera network as often as they can. They increase audience engagement by showing live views of severe weather, traffic, and local events from iconic locations across their DMA.