

## WHAT IS BAD NEWS FOR THE REST, IS GOOD NEWS FOR MEDIA: HURRICANE SANDY SEES SURGE IN TV RATINGS AND AD REVENUE



Nobody wants a natural disaster, especially one of the volume and size of Sandy. However, the latest disaster to hit the US has been lucrative for the TV news business as it has seen an unforeseen surge in viewers and their ratings have soared, with people following the storms every inch of the storm's grisly path. Heavy rains, strong winds, was not the only thing that Sandy brought in her wake, she also brought millions of stranded viewers stuck in their homes, glued to their TV screens for news about her. News about the storm dominated every media avenue, be it broadcast, digital or print. Most pushed aside other news stories and broadcast the storms news throughout the day and night. TV channels had a sudden escalation in their viewership. Fox News was the most watched channel bringing in the most number of viewers. In the younger category, of viewers between 25 and 54 years of age, CNN garnered the most viewers, for both day and primetime viewing. The former had a total of 2.28 million viewers whilst the latter had around 1.4 million viewers. Viewers searching for the latest updates as the Hurricane approached the US east Coast on Sunday opted for The Weather Channel, making it the most viewed cable news channel in the US on Sunday. According to data provided by Nielsen upwards of 1.4 million people watched the network. The channel's digital side, weather.com recorded 300 million page views on Monday. David Kenny, chairman and CEO of the networks parent company expressed his appreciation saying that "People had an immediate need for information about Sandy. We were happy they to us for it." Curt Hect, the chief global revenue officer for the networks parent company compared its surge in viewership to a smaller version of the Super Bowl. He said that in a time like this everybody has contributed to the effort, "There are three or four or five days when nobody's sleeping, when we need to be at our best," he said. MSNBC claimed that its coverage of the storm attracted many viewers and that it has 170,000 viewers. ABC cancelled its popular "Private Practice" and instead aired a special edition of the "20/20" anchored together by Diane Sawyer and Chris Cuomo. Other programs that the channel lined up were a, "A Special Edition of 20/20: The Perfect Storm" that showed stories of grit and determination of the people caught in the storm's way. It also aired a special one-hour edition of "World News With Diane Sawyer." It is not as if the hurricane has improved only national TV ratings. It has also been a boost for regional television, even as far away as Chicago, which is almost 800 miles away from the storm's epicenter. WLS-Channel 7, owned by ABC reported a 25 percent increase. Its news director Jennifer Graves attributed the interests of the Chicagoans in the storm to the fact that they have friends and family on the east coast. Similarly NBC owned WMAQ- Channel 5 confirmed that they had a 30 percent boost in their viewership. Its renowned Vice President Frank Whittaker said that the storm is being widely viewed as the result of climate change and they are concerned about what it is going to do to the weather. Even the print media, though quite a few failed to come out, reserved most of its space for dramatic pictures and news of the storm. The increase in viewership has an automatic upshot – additional advertisement revenue. Networks abandoned regular TV commercials and opted for those that were hurricane specific. The Weather Channel had a banner ad sponsored by State Farm running along the bottom of the screen over a weather map. Other companies like The Travelers Companies Inc. and The Procter & Gamble Co's Duracell are paying for ads on the weather network, bringing information to people, which of their Facebook friends are potentially in harm's way. There are many other ads that are offering free service and guidance. Duracell is planning to distribute free batteries and permit them to charge their cellphones for free. Pay sites removed restrictions and allowed viewers to view them for free. Want to see which Advertising Media jobs are available near you? [Click here](#) to see.