

# Coronavirus Impact on National TV Viewership: July 20-26



By [Kaitlin Sumner](#), Supervisor, Research and Business Development, [Lockard & Wechsler Direct](#)

Among the top 50 Nielsen-rated cable networks, here are the stations that experienced the highest increases and decreases in week-over-week (WoW) TV household viewership:

Week of July 20, 2020	
TOP FIVE	
ESPN	113%
VH1	16%
National Geographic	14%
Lifetime	13%
Syfy	9%

Week of July 20, 2020	
BOTTOM FIVE	
FX	-17%
Paramount	-13%
TBS	-13%
CNN	-8%
Adult Swim	-8%

Source: The Nielsen Co.

During the week of July 20, ESPN saw major gains thanks to MLB’s Opening Day. After the scarcity of live sports in recent months, the return of baseball allowed ESPN ratings to leap 113 percent WoW.

VH1 increased 16 percent this week, with largest gains seen across Saturday and Sunday. Airings of *Cheaters* and *R&R Picture Shows* saw average program ratings increase of more than 20 percent.

National Geographic began its five-week long SharkFest summer series on July 19, in which programming will now focus on all things sharks. The shift in programming seemed to pay off for the network, with TVHH viewership up 14 percent.

Lifetime increased 13 percent this

week. The network gained on weekly movies and saw increased audience levels on reruns of *Rizzoli & Isles* and *Married at First Sight*.

Syfy increased 9 percent to round out the top five this week. The network gained viewership on weekly movies and standard reruns. Top-rated movies included *Guardians of the Galaxy 2*, *Doctor Strange*, and *The Bourne Ultimatum*.

FX was this week’s biggest loser, with ratings declining 17 percent. Wednesday (14 percent), Thursday (34 percent) and Sunday (22 percent) saw the largest WoW declines in viewership. As is typical for FX, shifts in viewership were dictated by movie selections.

Paramount and TBS both declined 13 percent this week. Paramount saw average ratings for *Bar Rescue* drop 17 percent and weekly movie ratings declined 23 percent. TBS saw a downtick in ratings across nearly all weekly programs. The MLB regular season and a new episode of *Lost Resort* helped combat this decline.

CNN and Adult Swim each saw an 8-percent decline in viewership this week. CNN lost ratings on *Erin Burnett Outfront*, *Cuomo Prime Time*, and *Anderson Cooper 360*. Adult Swim increased the number of reruns for *Robot Chicken*, *Aqua Teen Hungerforce*, *Squidbillies*, and *Loiter Squad*, which did not result in a gain in impressions.

# Media Spend by Category on Top/Bottom 5 Nets: July 20-26



TOP FIVE	Short-Form Products			Lead-Generation			Long-Form			Brand/DR (with phone number)			Brand/DR (web, mobile, SMS)		
	Units	Spend	WoW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change
1. ESPN	26	\$500,672	-29%	169	\$740,487	-35%				174	\$843,647	-18%	1,947	\$6,456,062	4%
2. VH1	19	\$82,285	70%	239	\$242,662	-2%				269	\$343,927	-26%	2,739	\$1,902,125	-5%
3. National Geographic	5	\$2,612	100%	158	\$58,784	-45%	40	\$59,952	0%	361	\$281,201	33%	1,705	\$748,804	-11%
4. Lifetime	35	\$68,655	-52%	148	\$101,524	17%	52	\$257,862	-6%	342	\$912,924	-20%	2,282	\$2,509,643	0%
5. Syfy	98	\$87,979	15%	255	\$144,604	16%	15	\$9,298	0%	414	\$606,228	16%	2,335	\$1,687,700	-12%

BOTTOM FIVE	Short-Form Products			Lead-Generation			Long-Form			Brand/DR (with phone number)			Brand/DR (web, mobile, SMS)		
	Units	Spend	WoW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change	Units	Spend	WOW % Change
1. FX	23	\$43,206	-62%	158	\$231,300	-8%	40	\$24,254	-2%	225	\$457,500	53%	2,037	\$2,642,485	-4%
2. Paramount	53	\$81,927	7%	340	\$113,561	155%	51	\$50,187	-4%	514	\$651,541	18%	2,383	\$1,853,682	-4%
3. TBS	11	\$9,358	123%	177	\$299,154	112%				658	\$1,942,052	20%	2,899	\$4,680,910	-2%
4. CNN	122	\$541,686	-3%	820	\$2,601,028	9%				477	\$1,251,012	-12%	2,977	\$5,684,499	-7%
5. Adult Swim			-100%	49	\$66,722	29%				81	\$402,854	45%	1,062	\$3,690,178	3%

Copyright 2020, DRMetrix LLC. DRMetrix's charts show the ad units and estimated spend on the selected networks for different classifications of the direct-to-consumer television industry as follows. **Traditional Direct Response (DR) Campaigns** (campaigns using differing phone, web, or SMS codes in order to better track consumer results back to specific networks, dayparts, and TV creatives) include: **Short-Form Products:** Traditional call-to-order \$19.95 types of campaigns; **Lead-Generation:** Campaigns that don't advertise the full price of the product or service (i.e.: "call for free information"); **Long-Form:** Traditional 28.5-minute late-night advertisements. **Brand/Direct Campaigns** (Campaigns using a single vanity phone or URL which makes it more challenging to measure the immediate impact of television) include: **Vanity 800:** Campaigns using a vanity 800-number call-to-action; **Web/Mobile/SMS:** Campaigns that use a vanity web, mobile app, or SMS call-to-action. To learn more about these classifications, and historical trends over the past five years, please download DRMetrix's latest [industry study](#). You can also find DRMetrix's daily tracker of the effects of the coronavirus on the industry by [clicking here](#).