

Coronavirus Impact on National TV Viewership: April 27-May 3



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

As the weather warms up and quarantined Americans try to spend more time outdoors, we saw fewer networks showing positive weekly changes during the week of April 27. Increases on top growth networks were also less significant compared to what we saw in earlier weeks of the pandemic. In fact, the majority of national cable stations showed weekly impressions declining from April 27-May 3.

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

Week of April 27, 2020	
TOP FIVE	
Network	% Change vs. Prior Week
SyFy	17%
Oxygen	11%
Hallmark Movies & Mysteries	7%
Discovery	6%
Comedy Central	4%

Source: The Nielsen Co.

Week of April 27, 2020	
BOTTOM FIVE	
Network	% Change vs. Prior Week
ESPN	-68%
Nick Jr.	-19%
TBS	-14%
Lifetime Movie Network	-14%
Paramount	-14%

SyFy made a comeback from last week's biggest loser status, gaining 17 percent in weekly TVHH viewership. The network added back movie occurrences, which had been limited the week prior. *The Fifth Element*, *The Hitman's Bodyguard*, and *Journey 2: Mysterious Island* drew in some of the biggest audiences of the week.

Seeing the next highest percentage growth in weekly ratings was Oxygen. Adding reruns of *NCIS*, *Dateline: Secrets Uncovered*, and *Accident, Suicide, Murder*, Oxygen increased 11 percent WoW.

Hallmark Movies & Mysteries also did well during the week of April 27, increasing 7 percent. The network aired its 12-movie collection of *The Good Witch*, which seemed to attract higher than average audience numbers.

Discovery Channel increased 6 percent week-over-week. Weekly programming has remained consistent as the station continues to air new episodes of popular shows like *Gold Rush*, *Deadliest Catch*, and *Naked and Afraid*.

Comedy Central enjoyed a 4-percent uptick in weekly viewership. Programming has continuously consisted of reruns of *South Park*, *The Office*, and *Parks and Recreation*. Comedy Central did seem to gain on its weekend movies, drawing the largest audiences from the *Men in Black* trilogy.

Unsurprisingly, ESPN saw the biggest loss in viewers this week, coming off of last week's high from the NFL Draft. Meanwhile, Nick Jr. keeps weekly programming consistent for its children-under-age-six audience. However, the station dropped 19 percent this week, losing ratings

across all regularly occurring programs.

Another network with little variation to weekly programming is TBS. Despite its consistent lineup, weekly ratings dropped 14 percent. Regular episode reruns showed milder declines compared to new content, which declined about 22 percent.

Lifetime Movie Network delivered its lowest-rated week since the announcement of the pandemic. Impressions on the network showed the greatest declines on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Paramount network saw weekly ratings increase Monday through Wednesday but then took a dive during the back half of the week. Saturday, specifically, showed average impressions 46 percent lower than the previous week.

Media Spend by Category on Top/Bottom 5 Nets: April 27-May 3



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. SyFy	55	\$74,032	5%	305	\$103,341	-5%	19	\$11,686	14%	463	\$897,064	-16%	2,509	\$2,468,720	19%
2. Oxygen	80	\$47,571	53%	342	\$109,271	-14%				530	\$557,803	-7%	2,380	\$1,539,153	10%
3. Hallmark Movies & Mysteries	171	\$325,591	-25%	286	\$269,210	-13%				746	\$1,186,914	-2%	1,553	\$1,230,056	-7%
4. Discovery	80	\$425,498	-40%	409	\$1,607,504	-2%				396	\$997,869	-21%	2,475	\$6,131,875	4%
5. Comedy Central	49	\$237,984	48%	379	\$166,656	-28%	28	\$28,084	0%	327	\$590,596	-11%	2,862	\$2,909,426	-5%

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. ESPN	79	\$1,129,421	58%	351	\$1,967,448	-7%				205	\$1,143,689	-20%	2,355	\$10,068,812	4%
2. Nick Jr.	56	\$96,387	76%	62	\$54,644	-49%				113	\$48,219	11%	703	\$285,996	3%
3. TBS	36	\$12,529	-25%	172	\$307,883	-25%				556	\$1,917,132	4%	2,715	\$5,931,374	-7%
4. Lifetime Movie Network	137	\$545,492	44%	513	\$720,889	25%	26	\$38,271	0%	466	\$616,972	-31%	1,894	\$1,318,032	5%
5. Paramount	71	\$111,209	-8%	277	\$127,590	-47%	50	\$47,170	-6%	575	\$889,380	-10%	2,580	\$2,631,028	16%

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](#).