

## UP AHEAD

- **May 24-26:** [Caribbean Cable Telecom Association Conference](#), St. Kitts
- **May 29:** WICT DC/Baltimore: [The Art of Asking](#), Virtual
- **June 1-3:** [Oregon Broadband Association Conference](#), Seaside, OR
- **June 1-5:** CableLabs [Interop Labs](#) - Low Latency, Low Loss, Scalable Throughput, Louisville, CO
- **June 4:** [Synopsis Sports Awards](#), NYC

## CNN HEADLINES REIMAGINES FAST NEWS

When **CNN** relaunched its FAST channel last summer, the network didn't pitch it as a revenue play or a hedge against cord-cutting. Instead, **CNN Headlines** was viewed as more experimental and a space where the news outlet could test strategies that might ultimately reshape how it programs everything else—all while tapping into new audience demographics and figuring out how the “C” could stand for “Complementary” to CNN's plethora of offerings.

CNN Headlines was reborn nearly one year ago, a few months before the network rolled out a refreshed DTC subscription option in All Access. In its first run, the FAST channel was mainly an aggregation of clips that weren't sorted or aired in a particular way, but CNN SVP, Programming *Nima Ahmed* and her team saw an opportunity to turn CNN Headlines into a meaningful engagement tool, considering the steady stream of consumers that have been migrating toward FAST platforms.

That led to CNN Headlines' relaunch in July, which was accompanied by a programming lineup helmed by anchor *Brad Smith*, who leads the morning show “CNN Headline Express.” Other shows include “ICYMI,” a program Ahmed described as “the best of CNN, but it's a way to introduce these viewers who aren't necessarily cable viewers to what we do on cable.” The channel also utilizes the nearly 1,000 CNN affiliates throughout the U.S. for the afternoon and nightcap “American Pulse.”

The new-look lineup has paid off so far. CNN Headlines had a 158% jump YOY in time spent on the platform during 1Q26, a notable feat for a channel still in its infancy. But while the metrics are positive, the nature of CNN Headlines is to deliver the news in a slightly different way than one might experience through its linear and DTC options.

“Linear does a fantastic job with big breaking news. They do in-depth coverage, we're on it for hours but for our FAST audience, it's kind of the way you look at social,” Ahmed said on the [CFX Download podcast](#). “You want to know what's happening. You want to know what's going on. You might not want to watch it for 30 minutes... if you're like, ‘Just give me the top lines and this is what I want,’ then you get it [with CNN Headlines] in sort of a different way.”

CNN Headlines is meant for fast updates (pun intended) accompanied by a laid-back feel. The exploratory posture helps shape the FAST offering in ways that further distinguish it from CNN's other offerings. Ahmed noted that the company is “pushing the boundaries a little bit” with technology, and it'll continue to play around with shows to see how the CNN Headlines audience interacts.

“It is a fun place to test out some wild theories, and I think our team sometimes look at us like, ‘You want to try what?’ and ‘How are we going to create that?’”

Ahmed said. “But I think it’s a fun time, and I guess we get to define what this is going to be, which is fun because no one really has answered quite yet.”

Ahmed and Co. are still gathering all the audience data they can get, but CNN Headlines’ audience follows the FAST trend toward skewing younger. “We think it skews a little bit more male, which is interesting,” she said, adding that she hopes to see more data pertaining to how long people are watching and which device they’re using soon.

CNN’s FAST approach addresses the challenge of finding ways to grow an audience without disrupting the revenue model that sustains the network’s core businesses. It’s particularly relevant for a pay TV environment in eternal transition, but Ahmed has seen the disruption cycle before. She pointed to the death of *Michael Jackson* in 2009 as the moment she understood traditional media’s grip on breaking news was slipping—because *TMZ* broke the news and the industry had to reckon with what it meant.

“I think we’re in a similar moment again,” she said. “We’re looking at how the landscape is shifting yet again, and streaming is sort of breaking everything and we’re all trying to figure that out.”

## CFX DOWNLOAD DIVES INTO CNN’S FAST STRATEGY

Want to go deeper on **CNN Headlines**? CNN SVP, Programming *Nima Ahmed* joined **CFX Download** to talk all about the network’s FAST strategy and what differentiates its programming from CNN linear and DTC. Ahmed also looked back on the most memorable story she has worked on in her career. You can tune into the new episode on [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#) now!

## FCC TAKING COMMENTS ON ‘THE VIEW’

Got an opinion on whether **ABC’s** “The View” qualifies as a bona fide news interview program? The **FCC** wants to know—or does it? “Let’s not pretend this FCC hasn’t already made up its mind. All they want is for their pro-censorship partisan allies to nod in agreement,” FCC Commissioner *Anna Gomez* said after Friday’s Media Bureau notice opening a proceeding to solicit comments on the matter. She’s accused the agency of embarking on a campaign of censorship and urged ABC parent **Disney** to fight back. News programs are exempt from the Communications Act’s equal opportunities (aka equal time) rule that generally requires broadcasters to provide comparable time and placement to opposing legally qualified political candidates. This all stems from the FCC’s investigation into whether a segment on The View with Texas U.S. Senate candidate *James Talarico* violated the equal-time rule. Separately, the FCC Media Bureau ordered Disney to file early broadcast license renewals for its eight owned-and-operated stations by May 28 as part of the agency’s investigation into the company’s diversity and inclusion policies. Comments are due to the FCC on June 22, with replies due July 6. The questions asked go beyond the status of the daytime talk show, with the Bureau probing whether the federal equal opportunities statute would survive First Amendment scrutiny (ABC claims no). It also asks whether The View makes decisions, including on format and participants, that are based on newsworthiness or on an “attempt to oppose or support” particular candidates.

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## GROUPS WARN AGAINST SINGLING OUT LGBTQ CONTENT IN RATINGS

It'll be after Memorial Day before all the comments filed in the FCC's [ratings proceeding](#) are public, but there were already some passionate responses in the docket Friday. "Content warnings that specifically single out LGBTQ+ people, including transgender and nonbinary people, or mentions of gender identity on screen are unnecessary, unhelpful and discriminatory. They do not serve to inform parents or guardians; they serve to further a strategic political agenda that has targeted a minority for exclusion from public view," reads a joint filing from a coalition of 44 groups, including GLAAD, the **National Hispanic Media Coalition** and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network. Late last month, the FCC issued a notice seeking comment on the transparency of the process for the voluntary TV ratings system, citing concerns that shows with transgender and gender non-binary content are rated as appropriate for children and young children without providing that info to parents. The Commission also wants more details on the composition and practices of the TV Oversight Management Board, the industry mechanism overseeing the ratings system for children. Chairmanship of TVOMB rotates among **NAB**, **NCTA** and the **Motion Picture Association**, with NCTA CEO *Cory Gardner* serving as the current chair. Christian movie review org **MovieGuide** is among those who believe the ratings system needs updating. It told the FCC that it thinks content with "controversial 'transgender,' homosexual, 'gender identity,' and 'non-binary' characters (including pre-teen characters) and references" deserves TV-14, TV-MA, PG-13 and R ratings as well as content flags.

## RATINGS

*Stephen Colbert* said farewell to **CBS** and "The Late Show" on Thursday night, and he went out with a bang. Preliminary data from **Nielsen** indicates 6.74 million L+SD viewers tuned in, making it the program's largest weeknight audience ever. Colbert's final season ended with an average of 2.69 million viewers. His best episode came a decade ago when 20.55 million watched after Super Bowl 50. -- The weekly primetime and total-day cable ratings resembled one another once again. **Fox News** swept both categories, posting 2.28 million in prime and 1.47 million in total day. **ESPN** followed with 1.64 million and 741,000, respectively, while **MS Now** trailed with 903,000 and 581,000. **HGTV** came fourth in prime with 699,000 viewers and **CNN** fifth at 661,000. The two **WBD**—or possibly, soon-to-be **Paramount Skydance**—nets traded spots in total day as CNN recorded 447,000 and HGTV 345,000.

## FIBER FRENZY

**WOW!** will expand its fiber network to more than 10,000 additional homes and businesses in Greenville County, South Carolina. This expansion will bring the total number of connected addresses across the county to over 20,000 by fall 2026. The operator offers upload and download speeds up to 5 Gigs. – Mount Dora, Florida, is now connected to **Wire 3's** symmetrical, multi-gig fiber network. Offering up to 10 Gig speeds, Wire 3 is investing \$150 million to expand its footprint across Lake County. – **Charter** is expanding the Spectrum network to more than 4,800 homes and businesses in the Indiana counties of Wayne, Blackford and Delaware. Internet speeds range from 500 Mbps to 1 Gig. -- **ImOn Communications** marked one year since launching fiber internet in Southeast Iowa. The five-month project comprises 150 miles of fiber cables, or 795,000 linear feet, and connects nearly 14,000 homes and businesses in the Greater Burlington area.

## PROGRAMMING

Today marks 15 years since the deadliest tornado in modern U.S. history ripped through Joplin, Missouri. **The Weather Channel** is revisiting the events in a one-hour special "Joplin: 15 Years Later" that premiered Thursday and airs throughout the weekend. TWC meteorologist *Mike Bettles* conducts interviews with survivors and tell stories of the community rallying together. The special will also feature an immersive mixed reality segment that places viewers inside the tornado's path.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**CFX Daily** will not publish Monday in observance of Memorial Day.