

Weather Scores Big On Solar Eclipse-Streaming Video

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Commentary

by Tobi Elkin , Staff Writer @tobielkin, August 29, 2017

Last week's solar eclipse proved to be a major event for streaming video -- and of course, social media. Facebook said its eclipse-related social engagement numbers exceeded those for the 2017 Super Bowl: Facebook Live logged more than 129,000 broadcasts from users and publishers. Plus, eclipse-related videos -- both live and non-live -- were viewed more than 365 million times.

In fact, Recode reported that the eclipse was a bigger "event" for Facebook than any of the last four Super Bowls, with Facebook saying 66 million people worldwide created 240 million interactions revolving around the eclipse. That includes "Likes," posts, comments, and reactions to other peoples' posts.

While not eclipsing Facebook, The Weather Channel -- which is part of The Weather Company (an IBM Company) -- teamed up with Twitter on Aug. 21 for joint live streaming coverage dubbed "Chasing Eclipse 2017" and boasted some impressive data:

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The Weather Channel's digital properties (The Weather Channel mobile apps and weather.com), racked up 12 million total eclipse views, including 8 million via video-on-demand, and 4 million on Chasing Eclipse 2017."

In addition, Weather said:

-- 6.6 million people (33% of its total audience) watched 24 million videos on Weather's digital properties on August 21.

-- The live stream was watched over 4 million times, with peak concurrent usage of 160,000 viewers on The Weather Channel's digital properties.

--The "Chasing Eclipse 2017" live stream on Twitter reached 7.1 million total unique viewers.

Weather said it had the most video views in a single hour in history -- exceeding Hurricane Matthew, with 3.3 million video attempts at 1 p.m., which is more than 1 million additional video attempts than Hurricane Matthew's best video engagement hour.

Viewers watched on average almost five minutes of Weather's digital coverage, and its most engaged users spent 30 minutes watching the live stream. Hurricane Matthew, on October 2, 2016, was live-streamed for 24 hours. The average time spent on a Matthew video was 27.6 minutes.

Notably, Weather saw its highest click-through rates on video content in the home screen of its app, exceeding 19+% on iPhone at various points; it said the average is around 1%.

Neil Katz, head of global content and editor-in-chief, The Weather Company, put some context around the solar eclipse viewing data compared to the live streaming engagement achieved via other weather-driven events. "We achieved 700,000 live stream views during Winter Storm Nemo, 1 million live stream views during Hurricane Matthew, which was a Category 5 hurricane in 2016, and 4 million live streams of our 'Chasing Eclipse 2017' coverage. Those two previous events generated some of our biggest audiences ever, and our eclipse coverage surpasses both of them," Katz told *Video Insider*.

"Usually, our biggest days for video and page views relate to severe weather. It was nice to have so many eyes on our properties for something fun and exciting," he added. All of Weather's eclipse-related coverage was ad-supported.