Why weather on FAST?

Automated, customized and localized weather content better engages the connected TV viewer.

The
Weather
Company

Next 7 Days Waterloo

Free ad-supported streaming TV (FAST) channels are growing in number in the U.S. and across the world, opening up new ways for content to be delivered and consumed on connected TVs. Global FAST revenue has been on the rise for some time and is expected to hit $17 billion by 2029, up from $8 billion in 2023.[1] Despite FAST growth, weather segments on FAST channels remain largely unexplored.

Broadcast station groups who view weather as a one-size-fits-all offering are missing out on viewer and advertising opportunities. Integrating automated, digital weather content into FAST channels is an untapped avenue for engaging viewers by offering targeted, local (including hyperlocal), and adaptive videos at scale based on the forecast, day of the week, and time, while also providing the ability to fill unsold ad inventory and unlock new revenue opportunities for broadcasters and digital operators.

"Broadcasters have historically been limited in their ability to create personalized or localized content based on technical limitations. Now, FAST channels have new technological advances that allow weather content to be delivered in new ways," says Justin Tuggle, digital sales executive at The Weather Company, which offers ReelSphere, an AI tool that automatically generates local and hyperlocal weather videos *(see sidebar on page 4)*. The Weather Company's technology suite is designed to streamline meteorologists' tasks and increase viewer engagement.

WEATHER STORIES ENGAGE VIEWERS
FAST enables the delivery of multiple, short, weather stories that are locally relevant to a connected TV viewer. "We see this as an opportunity to provide very localized, relevant weather content that's right for every FAST viewer," says James McClamroch, Jr., strategy & partnerships executive at The Weather Company. This integration leverages cutting-edge technology to deliver precise, pertinent forecasts.

> "ReelSphere can scale to both location and time, providing forecasts for any geographic area and time frame."
>
> **Scott Eliot**,
> The Weather Company

To meet the growing consumer demand for lifestyle and local weather stories, broadcasters and digital operators should embrace advanced technological solutions to deliver tailored weather updates that are both engaging and accessible. These innovations aim to align weather information with viewer expectations, filling programming gaps with relevant content. Advances in production technology allow multiple geotargeted video reels to be simultaneously produced.

The Weather Company's ReelSphere features adaptive technology that makes the production of viewer-desired weather content easier. "ReelSphere can scale to both location and time, providing forecasts for any geographic area and time frame," explains product manager Scott Eliot.

AI-driven technology automatically converts weather data into voice-over audio, producing weather videos that can be easily adapted to multiple languages. ReelSphere's AI voice-overs can mimic the voice of local meteorologists viewers have come to trust. According to a 2024 ReelSphere Research Study from SmithGeiger on behalf of The Weather Company, 76% trust a weather forecast created and presented by their favorite local meteorologist, with 65% of viewer respondents saying they trust an AI voice-over from their favorite meteorologist.[2]

"ReelSphere is capable of providing sub-DMA localized forecasts that resonate with viewers. A synthetic audio track makes the video more informative and relatable," says James Politis, product manager at The Weather Company.

SMART WEATHER FEATURES
Six in 10 viewers report high interest in geographically specific forecasts, per SmithGeiger survey findings. Modern weather platforms can dynamically adjust content based on real-time conditions and viewer preferences to meet these demands.

For instance, radar maps are shown only when precipitation is expected, and forecasts automatically shift focus to the weekend as Thursday and Friday approach. These smart features enhance viewer satisfaction and serve as an effective slate replacement strategy, providing engaging content during potential drop-off points
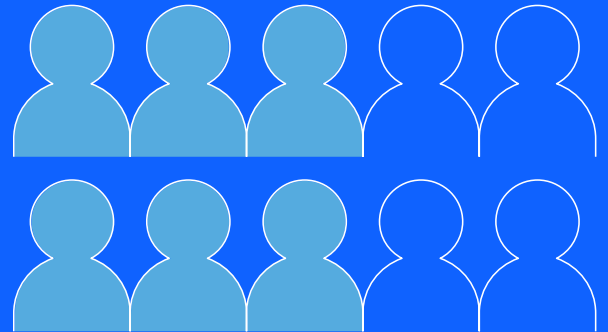
Six in ten viewers report high interest in geographically specific forecasts.[2]

while ensuring that even unsold ad slots are filled with engaging, monetizable content that retains viewer attention.

LIFESTYLE WEATHER VIDEOS
Lifestyle weather videos effectively engage viewers by providing tailored forecasts for specific activities such as hiking, biking, fishing, or dog walking. These videos offer viewers specific information so they can plan their day effectively. Additionally, these videos can be customized to reflect operator logos and branding for differentiation.
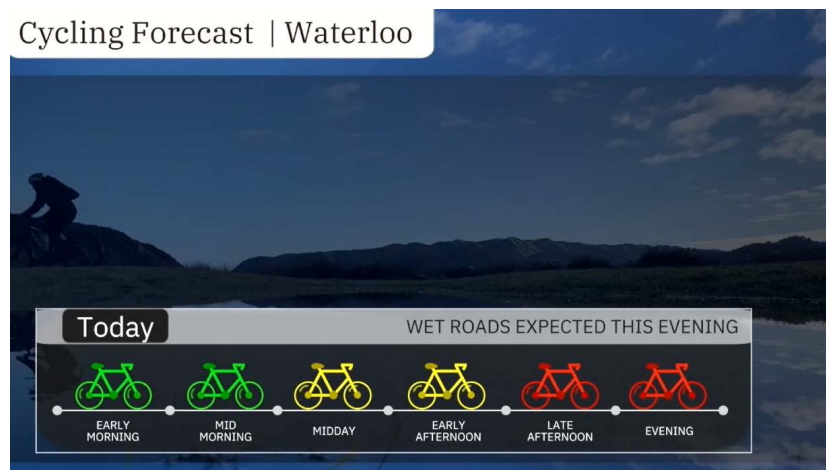
ReelSphere delivers on-demand, weather streaming content

ReelSphere addresses the evolving needs of both broadcasters and digital operators within the FAST channel landscape. This product from The Weather Company seamlessly integrates weather content into FAST channels. ReelSphere not only fills a critical gap in the market but also offers a unique solution for slate replacement, ensuring that every moment of airtime is maximized.

ReelSphere delivers:

AI-driven voice-overs

It enables the addition of AI voice-overs that mimic the sound of local meteorologists. This feature ensures that viewers receive weather updates in a familiar and trusted tone, increasing the likelihood of their attention and retention. By maintaining the recognizable voice of local weather personalities, a stronger connection with their current audience can be fostered and scaled to reach new audiences. Platform providers have access to trusted Weather Channel branding and voice-overs if desired.

Automated content creation

It automates the creation of weather videos, ensuring that content is always up-to-date with the latest forecasts. This automation reduces meteorologists' workload and allows for consistent and timely weather updates, ensuring viewers can access the most current information.

Lifestyle weather videos

The tool enables the creation of lifestyle weather videos that cater to specific viewer interests. For instance, the tool can create videos focused on outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, or gardening. These videos provide tailored forecasts that include detailed information on conditions like trail readiness, optimal biking weather, or the best times for gardening based on weather patterns. These videos are easily monetized through sponsorships and are just the type of content advertisers love to sponsor.

Multilingual updates

AI text-to-voice technology facilitates the creation of multilingual weather updates, making it easy to produce video segments in any language. This feature is particularly beneficial for global audiences, ensuring accessibility and engagement across different regions and languages. Platforms, streaming channels, and TV broadcasters can effortlessly deliver accurate and timely weather information to a diverse viewership.

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MEETING VIEWER DEMANDS

Demand for accurate and relevant weather information is rising. According to Magid's research, 84% of viewers want outdoor weather planning forecasts on a streaming weather service.[3] This includes precise temperature, precipitation, wind speed, and UV index information.

By integrating such granular insights into FAST channels, broadcasters can provide highly targeted weather stories. The specificity and relevance of hyperlocal forecasts make them valuable for viewers planning outdoor activities, solidifying their loyalty, and increasing the service's overall value.

DRIVING REVENUE GROWTH

FAST channels provide a fertile ground for attracting advertisers, given that FAST channels are the fastest-growing streaming tier in mature markets, with some 47% of U.S. households engaging weekly.[4]

From an advertiser perspective, weather is brand-safe. Ninety-eight percent of advertisers said they would be interested in sponsoring FAST channel content.[5] Videos featuring weather stories can be presented as part of a channel schedule or placed in the ad breaks to cover unsold inventory. For differentiation, videos can be branded with their corporate design.

"The goal is to keep people watching," McClamroch explains. "When viewers see blank screens or 'we'll be right back' messaging, it creates a poor user experience. Running personalized weather can help networks keep people viewing, meaning more engagement and ad revenue." This highlights the content's commercial appeal and potential to attract advertisers.
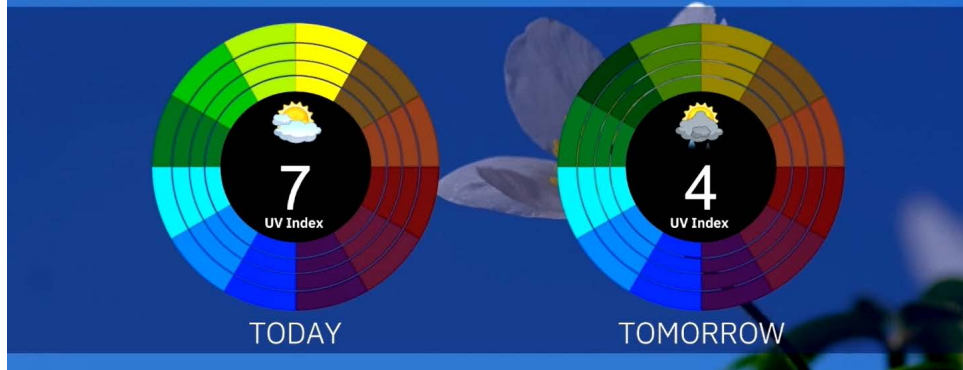
"Running personalized weather can help networks keep people viewing, meaning more engagement and ad revenue."

James McClamroch, Jr.,
The Weather Company

While all the weather content can be sponsored, if there is no sponsor, there is also value in using these weather video reels to help avoid churn.

CONCLUSION

By embracing technologies like those offered by The Weather Company's ReelSphere, broadcasters, streaming channels, and digital operators can deliver personalized, multilingual weather updates and lifestyle-focused content that resonate with diverse audiences. These innovations enhance the viewer experience, help retain audiences, and create new avenues for monetization, making weather content an essential component of any FAST channel strategy.

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The Weather Company

About The Weather Company

For nearly 50 years, The Weather Company has focused on delivering the most accurate, personalized, and actionable weather and traffic data and visualizations to keep audiences safe and build a loyal viewer base. Beyond data, The Weather Company innovates with solutions like ReelSphere, an AI-powered weather video creation tool that empowers broadcasters and digital operators to deliver engaging and personalized experiences. For more information or to request a ReelSphere product demonstration, visit the website.

References:

1. *Nielsen, "FAST has made linear TV cool again; personalization will make it cooler," April 2024.*
2. *SmithGeiger, ReelSphere Research Study, First Quarter 2024.*
3. *Magid, The Weather Company, June 2022.*
4. *Mathias Guille, Olivier Karra, Broadpeak, March 25, 2024.*
5. *Magid/The Weather Company, "Why do advertisers want to sponsor streaming weather?", 2023.*