

# WDRB

Bringing weather broadcasts to life with augmented reality and omni-channel storytelling



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## Overview

### Business Challenge

Weather broadcasting isn't just part of the news—it's an opportunity to attract viewers, boost audience share, and increase ad revenue. To differentiate its weather coverage, WDRB needed an edge.

### Transformation

WDRB uses technology from The Weather Company to help it deliver some of the most innovative weather coverage in the state, and help its meteorologists connect with viewers both on-air and online.

### Results

**Enhances** broadcasts with new visualizations designed to attract viewers and advertisers

**Reaches** out to a wider audience by combining broadcast, web, mobile and social channels

**Supports** more compelling weather storytelling to help win viewers' loyalty

For WDRB, Kentucky's largest Fox affiliate, weather is one of the most important items on the schedule. WDRB's meteorologists take pride in providing the most accurate forecasts to help keep viewers safe—and to bring those forecasts to life, the station relies on innovative technology from The Weather Company®, an IBM Business.

## Business challenge story

### Tuning into viewers' needs

The Louisville area of Kentucky can be an eventful place, from a weather perspective. With hot, humid summers and cold, wet winters, conditions can range from heavy snowfall to occasional drought—not to mention the [seven major tornadoes \(and dozens of minor ones\)](#) that have hit the region in the past 10 years.

As a result, it's no surprise that all year round, weather is an important topic of conversation for Louisville citizens—or that the region's TV stations regard weather broadcasting as a key part of their schedule. As Barry Fulmer, Director of News at WDRB, Kentucky's largest Fox affiliate, comments: "There's nothing more important to a news station than weather."

He elaborates: "We see weather as a public service; it's about keeping people safe. We don't sensationalize our weather coverage, because it's important that people trust our forecasts—if we cry wolf, then viewers might start ignoring our advice, which potentially puts them at risk when the real bad weather hits. So, we hire very talented meteorologists, we do our own forecasting in-house, and we take pride in the accuracy of the weather information we provide."

At the same time, WDRB's weather broadcasts need to be more than just informative—to get their message across to the largest number of Louisville citizens, they need to be engaging too. The station's commitment to accurate and responsible weather reporting means that sensationalism is not an option, so it needs to find more creative methods to attract and retain audience share.

Barry Fulmer says: "The way we compete is through constant innovation—we're always looking for ways to become better storytellers and help our viewers engage with those stories in new ways, whether on-air or online. Technology plays a leading role in our quest for innovation, and that's why we work with The Weather Company."

**"Max Reality lets us build and display 3D visualizations around the meteorologist, even if they are outside the studio."**

—Barry Fulmer, Director of News, WDRB

## Solution components

### Software

The Weather Company: [Max Mobile](#)

The Weather Company: [Max Reality](#)

The Weather Company: [Max Sky](#)

The Weather Company: [Max Social](#)

The Weather Company: [Max Traffic](#)

The Weather Company: [Max Web](#)

“The Weather Company helps us innovate. The ability to make weather forecasting more visually engaging helps to keep viewers interested without resorting to sensationalism.”

—Barry Fulmer, Director of News, WDRB

## Transformation story

### Technology and teamwork

WDRB has been working with The Weather Company for many years. As Barry Fulmer explains: “Since the beginning of our relationship, we’ve always believed that The Weather Company offered very high-quality, reliable software, and they constantly innovate, which is vital for our weather strategy.”

The station uses almost the full suite of Max Weather products to support both its on-air weather coverage and its digital presence on web, mobile and social media. In recent months, the WDRB weather team has particularly enjoyed introducing its viewers to the augmented reality experience provided by Max Reality.

Barry Fulmer notes: “The age-old problem in weather broadcasting is that if you want to show graphics, you either need to stand your meteorologist in front of a green screen, or you need to cut away from them to show the graphics. That’s a big problem when you want to do a live broadcast from the field, instead of filming in the studio.

“Max Reality solves the problem by letting us build and display 3D visualizations around the meteorologist, even if they are outside the studio. It gives us a lot more flexibility to design visually interesting weather segments with graphics that really set our show apart from the competition. As far as we’re aware, there are only around 15 stations in the whole of the United States who are currently using Max Reality, so we definitely feel that we are ahead of the curve.”

As well as improving weather visualizations, Max Reality also integrates with Max Traffic to give viewers clearer insight into traffic conditions across the Louisville metropolitan area. Once again, the augmented reality technology helps to build visualizations that keep the presenter on screen instead of cutting away and potentially disrupting the flow of the storytelling.

To extend its innovative weather coverage beyond broadcasting, WDRB also uses Max Web, Max Mobile and Max Social. Combining these solutions provides an omni-channel experience that helps WDRB engage viewers via whichever medium suits them best.

Barry Fulmer comments: “Mobile is so important nowadays: people want to be able to check the weather and traffic conditions while they’re on the move, instead of waiting for the weather and traffic bulletins. It’s also important to have a coherent experience across broadcast, online and mobile platforms, and The Weather Company’s solutions help us achieve that.”

The omni-channel approach also gives WDRB more options for monetizing its weather services. For example, the company’s mobile app doubles as an advertising delivery platform, providing a new revenue stream and a new opportunity for the station’s advertisers to reach out to viewers.

## Results story

### Driving innovation in weather coverage

Barry Fulmer sums up the advantages of WDRB's relationship with The Weather Company as follows: "Firstly, and most importantly for a broadcaster, The Weather Company gets the basics right: we find the software to be very stable and the technical support to be good. We can't afford to have our systems break down or behave unpredictably: if a tornado or a blizzard is incoming, we need to be able to communicate the threat so that our viewers can keep themselves and their families safe.

"Secondly, The Weather Company helps us innovate. The ability to make weather forecasting more visually engaging helps to keep viewers interested without resorting to sensationalism and scare-mongering. And the ability to communicate a consistent message across all channels, so that viewers can consume our forecast whenever, wherever, and on whichever device they choose, also supports our mission of reaching as wide an audience as we can."

From the feedback that WDRB's news team has received on social media, the station's focus on innovative weather coverage is paying dividends.

Barry Fulmer concludes: "In the end, the technology is just an enabler: it gives us new tools to help us become better storytellers. If we can make our broadcasts more compelling for viewers through a combination of informative graphics and the talents of our weather team, we can appeal to a wider audience and ultimately help to keep citizens safe when severe weather hits."

## About WDRB

[WDRB](#) is Kentucky's largest Fox-affiliated television station. In addition to carrying the entire Fox programming schedule and a number of syndicated programs, WDRB also broadcasts over 50 hours of locally produced news programming every week, including regular weather and traffic bulletins.

For more, visit [theweathercompany.com](http://theweathercompany.com)  
[View more client stories](#) or [learn more about IBM Analytics](#)

## About The Weather Company, an IBM Business

The Weather Company, an IBM Business, helps people make informed decisions and take action in the face of weather. The company offers the most accurate forecasts globally with personalized and actionable weather data and insights to millions of consumers, as well as thousands of marketers and businesses via Weather's API, its business solutions division, and its own digital products from The Weather Channel ([weather.com](http://weather.com)) and Weather Underground ([wunderground.com](http://wunderground.com)).

The company delivers around 25 billion forecasts daily. It's products include the world's most downloaded weather app, a network of 250,000 personal weather stations, a top-20 U.S. website, one of the world's largest IoT data platforms, and industry-leading business solutions.

Weather Means Business™. The world's biggest brands in aviation, energy, insurance, media, and government rely on The Weather Company for data, technology platforms and services to help improve decision-making and respond to weather's impact on business.

For more, visit [theweathercompany.com](http://theweathercompany.com)



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Produced in the United States of America  
October 2017

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