



# The weather moves fast, but AI is faster

WKRN-TV swiftly pushes vital information to its audiences across digital platforms using Max Engage with Watson

by Brittany King

5-minute read

The demand for instant results is seeping into every aspect of our lives, and it's not slowing down. Internet speeds are at all-time highs, same-day deliveries are increasingly common, limitless access to information rests in our device-wielding hands, and we want our news yesterday.

Gone are the days when weather broadcasting was accessible only on television and radio. Now, viewers repeatedly refresh their mobile applications and social media feeds for up-to-the-minute information. With consumers having multiple options to choose from, broadcast stations and meteorologists need to engage audiences with innovative on-air



segments and speedy digital content—or risk getting left behind.

“Broadcast stations need to put an extreme emphasis on digital because if you’re not multiplatform in this day and age, you’re antiquated,” says Danielle

Breezy, Chief Meteorologist at WKRN-TV in Nashville, Tennessee. “All our viewers are multiplatform; every single one of them, even the oldest viewer we have, is multiplatform in some way. So, we wanted to put a big focus on our digital team.”

Upon arriving at WKRN in 2016, Breezy's big concern as a meteorologist was making sure she could get on air quickly and concentrate on the television aspect without worrying about covering the station's digital platforms simultaneously, but distractions were unavoidable at times. It became especially tough to juggle all the forms of communication during bouts of extended coverage. As a result, WKRN's meteorologists relied heavily on the network's small digital team to get content onto social media, mobile apps and websites. That roadblock aside, the station's mobile weather app also needed to be revamped to garner more app downloads and engagements.

"I would describe our previous weather app as just plain," adds Breezy. "While we did get a lot of loyalty along the way with audience downloads, it was on cruise control and not very exciting. We were ready to go to the next level."

Mobile weather  
app traffic  
increased

80%

and downloads rose 6.5X

The station's  
webpage views  
more than

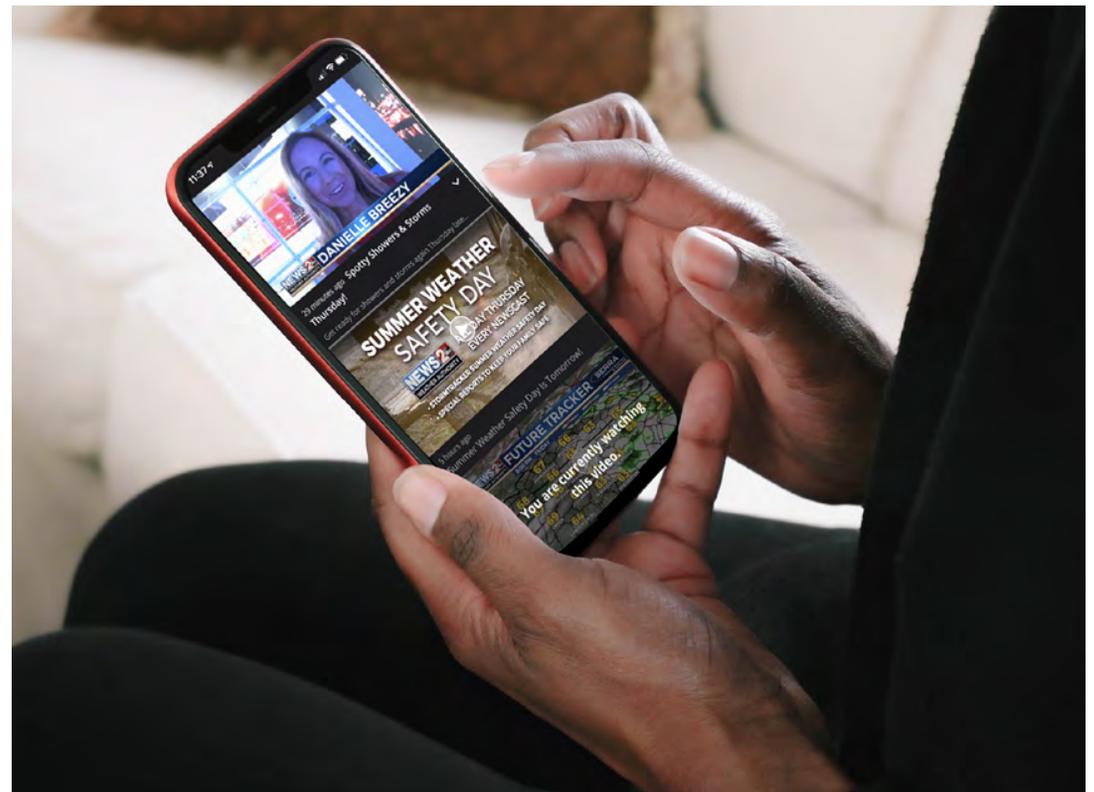
doubled

and unique visitors quadrupled

# Life-saving coverage at all times

The station opted to expand its longtime relationship with IBM by integrating [Max Engage with Watson®](#) and [Max Social from The Weather Company®](#), an IBM Business, into its platforms to broaden its digital capabilities and aid meteorologists with on-air broadcasts. The AI tool helps WKRN meteorologists automatically produce, distribute and monetize compelling, relevant weather content across their platforms throughout the day, easing their workflow, improving viewer engagement and driving revenue.

“As a meteorologist, I can concentrate on the television aspect, and Max



Engage is taking care of everything else,” adds Breezy. “I say it all the time, when I’m by myself and I’m in the middle of a tornado warning, it’s such a useful tool because it’s populating and doing everything.”

Such an event came just after midnight on the morning of March 3, 2020. A tornado warning was issued as a funnel quickly descended into the area. Breezy recalls that she and her team were on television for almost 24 hours straight. Yet, with the help of Max Engage’s automated cross-platform messaging solution, the station was able to send new warnings out both to its weather

app and to its social media pages. The Max solution also kept Breezy alert while on television, letting her know when a new warning was issued, and it helped WKRN deliver real-time data to market quickly and accurately, in turn saving so many lives.

The station’s weather app alone began growing in leaps and bounds with a new layout that incorporated Max Engage features. WKRN’s sales team capitalized on the growth and collaborated with meteorologists on monetizing opportunities. Not wanting their viewers to get bogged down with endless and unrelatable ads,

the WKRN team decided on a 3 – 5 second client-sponsored billboard for short weather videos. It then rolls seamlessly into the footage, acting as a promo-styled ad that brands the client’s name with the news.

“Weather is very important to people; they don’t want to sit through a 30-second commercial before hearing the forecast,” explains Kimberly Hood, Digital Sales Director at WKRN. “So, it took a little bit of trial and error and thoughtfulness as to when and where to place an advertising message to videos, but we found our sweet spot.”

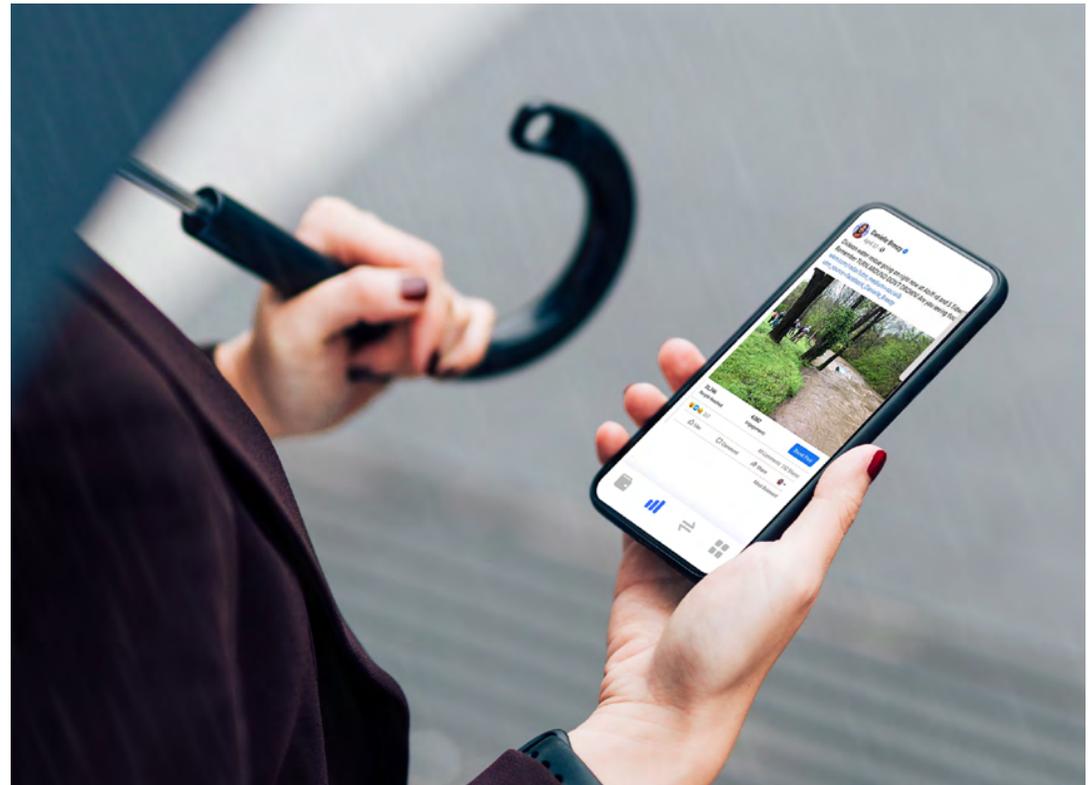
“It’s so important to save the meteorologist time in their workflow during major severe weather events. TV is my first priority, and I can’t concentrate if I’m worried about manually getting content out across all our platforms.”

**Danielle Breezy**, Chief Meteorologist, WKRN-TV

# Trial and error yields huge wins

As Nashville continues to be a hotspot for newcomers, with an estimated 100 people moving to the music city a day, locking in loyal viewers the second they drop their moving boxes is critical, and WKRN has done just that. Max Engage and Max Social helped yield substantial growth for the station's website, social platforms and mobile app. WKRN has seen a significant jump in sales by embedding ads within the content.

"We saw a big difference in the quality of the app itself. You could tell the audience saw it too because they stayed longer," says Hood. "We got more impressions for our ads where we



added video of our trustworthy weather people, and loyalty went up—that’s huge. Viewers really appreciated the new features.”

WKRN’s efforts, with support from Max Engage features, have resulted in several measurable benefits:

- The station’s overall webpage views across desktop, mobile and all of their apps have more than doubled, and

unique visitors have quadrupled

- Mobile app traffic has increased 80%, and downloads have increased 6.5X; video views have increased 2.7X
- The WKRN Facebook page has accumulated 6,000 new fans

“It’s such an effective tool with features like geo-targeting, especially if you’re in an active weather market. I feel as if we are the first in our market,

always the first one on and the first ones to get the newest stuff,” says Breezy. “Whether you want to be first or not with this tool, at the end of the day, being consistent, reliable and being there for your viewers is most important. There are so many apps to choose from, but it’s the personalization and tailoring that this product takes care of that matters most.”

“Max is the product that’s going to get you on the air and social media first. You’re going to be the first one to get your viewers their weather, and it will be tailored to them; that’s so important.”

**Danielle Breezy**, Chief Meteorologist, WKRN-TV



### About WKRN-TV

Nexstar Media Group's [WKRN](#) (external link) is an ABC affiliate and is heavily invested in local news, producing 38 hours a week of local programming. WKRN has served the residents of middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky for over 60 years. The station has been recognized for its news coverage with numerous awards and honors, including Midsouth Emmys, Peabody Awards, Edward R. Murrow Awards and many more.

### Solution components

- Max Engage with Watson®
- Max Social®

### 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 powerful combination of IBM's advanced AI and cloud capabilities with The Weather Company's high volume of weather data helps people, businesses and communities around the world prepare for and mitigate the cost of weather. The world's [most accurate](#) (external link) forecaster globally, the company offers more than 25 billion forecasts daily with personalized and actionable weather data and insights. The Weather Company is committed to trust and transparency, and its digital properties from [The Weather Channel](#) (external link) and [Weather Underground](#) (external link) are trusted by hundreds of millions of people to provide accurate, timely forecasts that help them make critical decisions every day – and has even been named one of the [most trusted](#) (external link) brands.