

Russia Today Most Popular Foreign News Channel in Key U.S. Cities

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RT says it reaches over 430 million people globally in at least 100 countries.

RT, the Kremlin-backed English-language TV channel formerly known as Russia Today, cranked up its U.S. viewership to become the most-watched foreign news channel in five key U.S. markets in 2011, a media analysis report said.

Viewership in New York alone nearly tripled, while the channel also made significant advances in Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, the report by media analysis company Nielsen said, RIA-Novosti reported Tuesday.

"The growth of our audiences in major U.S. cities, including New York and Washington, proves that we have become firmly established as an international channel that gives an alternative to the American mainstream," RT editor Margarita Simonyan said, Itar-Tass reported.

"More and more people in the U.S. need new viewpoints and new approaches to presenting information, which they get from our broadcasts," she said.

Currently, 85 million people in the U.S. have access to the channel, according to Itar-Tass. The channel got a boost in 2011 as it began to be carried by cable networks in San Francisco, Chicago, and Philadelphia, also joining the lineup for satellite provider Dish Network. RT says it reaches over 430 million people globally in at least 100 countries.

The report said RT beat out EU's Euronews, France 24, Germany's Deutsche Welle, the Middle East's Al Jazeera English, Japan's NHK World and China's CCTV News in the five cities in the report, though the BBC was not included in the analysis. In New York, RT's weekly audience was nine times that of NHK World, and in Chicago, daily viewership was three times higher than Al Jazeera's.

The report also said RT's typical viewers were men between the ages of 35 and 49 who have college degrees. Twenty percent of viewers have master's or doctorate degrees, and most viewers are business owners, entrepreneurs, managers, or government officials, the report said.

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