

WIKIPEDIA

NBC

The **National Broadcasting Company** (**NBC**) is an American English-language commercial terrestrial television network that is a flagship property of NBCUniversal, a subsidiary of Comcast. The network is headquartered at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in New York City, with additional major offices near Los Angeles (at 10 Universal City Plaza), Chicago (at the NBC Tower) and Philadelphia (at the Comcast Technology Center). The network is one of the Big Three television networks. NBC is sometimes referred to as the "**Peacock Network**", in reference to its stylized peacock logo, introduced in 1956 to promote the company's innovations in early color broadcasting. It became the network's official emblem in 1979.

Founded in 1926 by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), NBC is the oldest major broadcast network in the United States. At that time the parent company of RCA was General Electric (GE). In 1930, GE was forced to sell the companies as a result of antitrust charges.

In 1986, control of NBC passed back to General Electric (GE) through its \$6.4 billion purchase of RCA. (GE later liquidated RCA but kept NBC.) Following the acquisition by GE, Bob Wright served as chief executive officer of NBC, remaining in that position until his retirement in 2007, when he was succeeded by Jeff Zucker.

In 2003, French media company Vivendi merged its entertainment assets with GE, forming NBC Universal. Comcast purchased a controlling interest in the company in 2011, and acquired General Electric's remaining stake in 2013.^[1] Following the Comcast merger, Zucker left NBCUniversal and was replaced as CEO by Comcast executive Steve Burke.

NBC has thirteen owned-and-operated stations and nearly 200 affiliates throughout the United States and its territories, some of which are also available in Canada and/or Mexico via pay-television providers or in border areas over-the-air; NBC also maintains brand licensing agreements for international channels in South Korea and Germany.^[2]

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National Broadcasting Company



Type	Terrestrial television network (1939–present) Radio network (1926–1993, 2012–2014, 2016–present) Sports radio network (2012–present)
Branding	NBC
Country	United States
Availability	National and Worldwide
Founded	June 19, 1926 by Radio Corporation of America (RCA), General Electric (GE) and Westinghouse
Slogan	<i>America's #1 Network</i>
Headquarters	30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, New York
Owner	Comcast

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References

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Parent	NBCUniversal
Key people	Bob Greenblatt (Chairman, NBC Entertainment)
Launch date	Radio: November 15, 1926 Television: April 30, 1939
Picture format	1080i (HDTV) (downscaled to letterboxed 480i for SDTVs; experimentally broadcasting at 1080p through NBC affiliate WRAL-TV)
Affiliates	Lists: By state or Details
Official website	nbc.com (http://nbc.com)
Language	English
Replaced	NBC Radio Network

History

Radio

Earliest stations: WEAF and WJZ

During a period of early broadcast business consolidation, radio manufacturer Radio Corporation of America (RCA) acquired New York City radio station WEAF from American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T).^[3] Westinghouse, a shareholder in RCA, had a competing outlet in Newark, New Jersey pioneer station WJZ^[4] (no relation to the radio and television station in Baltimore currently using those call letters), which also served as the flagship for a loosely structured network. This station was transferred from Westinghouse to RCA in 1923, and moved to New York City.^[5]

WEAF acted as a laboratory for AT&T's manufacturing and supply outlet Western Electric, whose products included transmitters and antennas. The Bell System, AT&T's telephone utility, was developing technologies to transmit voice- and music-grade audio over short and long distances, using both wireless and wired methods. The 1922 creation of WEAF offered a research-and-development center for those activities. WEAF maintained a regular schedule of radio programs, including some of the first commercially sponsored programs, and was an immediate success. In an early example of "chain" or "networking" broadcasting, the station linked with Outlet Company-owned WJAR in Providence, Rhode Island; and with AT&T's station in Washington, D.C., WCAP.

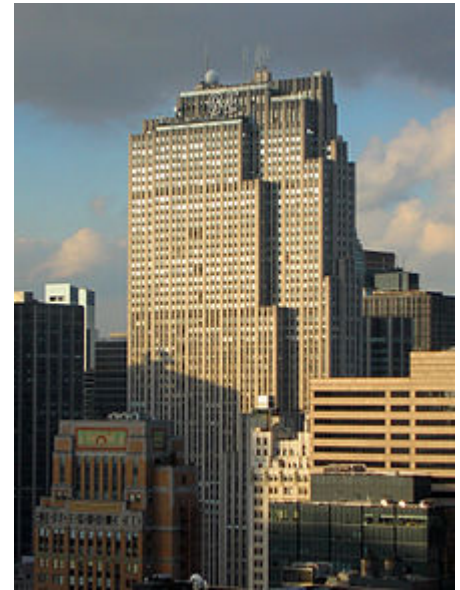
New parent RCA saw an advantage in sharing programming, and after getting a license for radio station WRC in Washington, D.C., in 1923, attempted to transmit audio between cities via low-quality telegraph lines. AT&T refused outside companies access to its high-quality phone lines. The early effort fared poorly, since the uninsulated telegraph lines were susceptible to atmospheric and other electrical interference.

In 1925, AT&T decided that WEAF and its embryonic network were incompatible with the company's primary goal of providing a telephone service. AT&T offered to sell the station to RCA in a deal that included the right to lease AT&T's phone lines for network transmission.^[6]

Red and Blue Networks

RCA spent \$1 million to purchase WEAF and Washington sister station WCAP, shut down the latter station, and merged its facilities with surviving station WRC; in late 1926, it subsequently announced the creation of a new division known as the National Broadcasting Company.^[7] The division's ownership was split among RCA (a majority partner at 50%), its founding corporate parent General Electric (which owned 30%) and Westinghouse (which owned the remaining 20%). NBC officially started broadcasting on November 15, 1926.

WEAF and WJZ, the flagships of the two earlier networks, were operated side-by-side for about a year as part of the new NBC. On January 1, 1927, NBC formally divided their respective marketing strategies: the "Red Network" offered commercially sponsored entertainment and music programming; the "Blue Network" mostly carried sustaining – or non-



The Comcast Building in New York City (or the GE Building, originally the RCA Building) serves as the headquarters of NBC

sponsored – broadcasts, especially news and cultural programs. Various histories of NBC suggest the color designations for the two networks came from the color of the pushpins NBC engineers used to designate affiliate stations of WEAJ (red) and WJZ (blue), or from the use of double-ended red and blue colored pencils.

On April 5, 1927, NBC expanded to the West Coast with the launch of the NBC Orange Network, also known as the Pacific Coast Network. This was followed by the debut of the NBC Gold Network, also known as the Pacific Gold Network, on October 18, 1931. The Orange Network carried Red Network programming, and the Gold Network carried programming from the Blue Network. Initially, the Orange Network recreated Eastern Red Network programming for West Coast stations at KPO in San Francisco. In 1936, the Orange Network affiliate stations became part of the Red Network, and at the same time the Gold Network became part of the Blue Network.

In the 1930s, NBC also developed a network for shortwave radio stations, called the NBC White Network.

In 1927, NBC moved its operations to 711 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, occupying the upper floors of a building designed by architect Floyd Brown.^[8] The space that NBC occupied was designed by Raymond Hood, who based the appearance of its multiple studio facilities on "a Gothic church, the Roman forum, a Louis XIV room and, in a space devoted to jazz, something 'wildly futuristic, with plenty of color in bizarre designs.'"^[8] NBC outgrew the Fifth Avenue facilities in 1933.^[8]

In 1930, General Electric was charged with antitrust violations, resulting in the company's decision to divest itself of RCA. The newly separate company signed leases to move its corporate headquarters into the new Rockefeller Center in 1931. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., founder and financier of Rockefeller Center, arranged the deal with GE chairman Owen D. Young and RCA president David Sarnoff. When it moved into the complex in 1933, RCA became the lead tenant at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, known as the "RCA Building" (later the GE Building, now the Comcast Building), which housed NBC's production studios as well as theaters for RCA-owned RKO Pictures.^[9]

Chimes

The iconic three-note NBC chimes came about after several years of development. The three-note sequence, G-E'-C', was first heard over Red Network affiliate WSB in Atlanta,^[10] with a second inversion C-major triad as its outline. An executive at NBC's New York headquarters heard the WSB version of the notes during the networked broadcast of a Georgia Tech football game and asked permission to use it on the national network. NBC started to use the chimes sequence in 1931, and it eventually became the first audio trademark to be accepted by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.^{[11][12]}

A variant sequence with an additional note, G-E'-C'-G, known as "the fourth chime", was used during significant events of extreme urgency (including during World War II, especially in the wake of the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor; on D-Day and during disasters). The NBC chimes were mechanized in 1932 by Rangertone founder Richard H. Ranger; their purpose was to send a low-level signal of constant amplitude that would be heard by the various switching stations manned by NBC and AT&T engineers, and to be used as a system cue for switching individual stations between the Red and Blue network feeds. Contrary to popular legend, the G-E'-C' notes were not originally intended to reference to the General Electric Company



Radio City West was located at Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street in Los Angeles until it was replaced by a bank in the mid-1960s.



Entrance at the Comcast Building.

(an early shareholder in NBC's founding parent RCA and whose Schenectady, New York radio station, WGY, was an early affiliate of NBC Red). The three-note sequence remains in use by the NBC television network, most notably incorporated into the John Williams-composed theme music used by NBC News, "The Mission" (first composed in 1985 for NBC Nightly News).

New beginnings: The Blue Network becomes ABC



NBC Tower in Chicago.

In 1934, the Mutual Broadcasting System filed a complaint to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), following the government agency's creation, claiming it ran into difficulties trying to establish new radio stations in a market largely controlled by NBC and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). In 1938, the FCC began a series of investigations into the monopolistic effects of network broadcasting. A report published by the Commission in 1939 found that NBC's two networks and its owned-and-operated stations dominated audiences, affiliates and advertising in American radio; this led the Commission to file an order to RCA to divest itself of either NBC Red or NBC Blue.

After Mutual's appeals were rejected by the FCC, RCA filed its own appeal to overturn the divestiture order. However, in 1941, the company decided to sell NBC Blue in the event its appeal was denied. The Blue Network was formally named NBC Blue Network, Inc. and NBC Red became NBC Red Network, Inc. for corporate purposes. Both networks formally divorced their operations on January 8, 1942,^[13] with the Blue Network being referred to on-air as either "Blue" or "Blue Network", and Blue Network Company, Inc. serving as its official corporate name. NBC Red, meanwhile, became known on-air as simply "NBC".^[14] Investment firm Dillon, Read & Co. placed a \$7.5 million bid for NBC Blue, an offer that was rejected by NBC executive Mark Woods and RCA president David Sarnoff.

After losing on final appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court in May 1943, RCA sold Blue Network Company, Inc., for \$8 million to the American Broadcasting System, a recently founded company owned by Life Savers magnate Edward J. Noble. After the sale was completed on October 12, 1943,^[15] Noble acquired the rights to the Blue Network name, leases on landlines, the New York studios, two-and-a-half radio stations (WJZ in Newark/New York City; KGO in San Francisco and WENR in Chicago, which shared a frequency with Prairie Farmer station WLS); contracts with actors; and agreements with around 60 affiliates. In turn, to comply with FCC radio station ownership limits of the time, Noble sold off his existing New York City radio station WMCA. Noble, who wanted a better name for the network, acquired the branding rights to the "American Broadcasting Company" name from George B. Storer in 1944. The Blue Network became ABC officially on June 15, 1945, after the sale was completed.^{[6][16][17]}

Defining radio's golden age

NBC became home to many of the most popular performers and programs on the air. Bing Crosby, Al Jolson, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Bob Hope, Fred Allen, and Burns and Allen called NBC home, as did Arturo Toscanini's NBC Symphony Orchestra, which the network helped him create. Other programs featured on the network included *Vic and Sade*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *The Great Gildersleeve* (arguably broadcasting's first spin-off program, from *Fibber McGee*), *One Man's Family*, *Ma Perkins* and *Death Valley Days*. NBC stations were often the most powerful, and some occupied unique clear-channel national frequencies, reaching hundreds or thousands of miles at night.

In the late 1940s, rival CBS gained ground by allowing radio stars to use their own production companies to produce programs, which became a profitable move for much of its talent. In the early years of radio, stars and programs commonly hopped between networks when their short-term contracts expired. During 1948 and 1949, beginning with the

nation's top radio star, Jack Benny, many NBC performers – including Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Burns and Allen and Frank Sinatra – jumped to CBS.

In addition, NBC stars began migrating to television, including comedian Milton Berle, whose *Texaco Star Theater* on the network became television's first major hit. Conductor Arturo Toscanini conducted the NBC Symphony Orchestra in ten television concerts on NBC between 1948 and 1952. The concerts were broadcast on both television and radio, in what perhaps was the first such instance of simulcasting. Two of the concerts were historic firsts – the first complete telecast of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, and the first complete telecast of Verdi's Aida (starring Herva Nelli and Richard Tucker), performed in concert rather than with scenery and costumes.

Aiming to keep classic radio alive as television matured, and to challenge CBS's Sunday night radio lineup, which featured much of the programs and talent that had moved to that network following the defection of Jack Benny to CBS, NBC launched *The Big Show* in November 1950. This 90-minute variety show updated radio's earliest musical variety style with sophisticated comedy and dramatic presentations. Featuring stage legend Tallulah Bankhead as hostess, it lured prestigious entertainers, including Fred Allen, Groucho Marx, Lauritz Melchior, Ethel Barrymore, Louis Armstrong, Ethel Merman, Bob Hope, Danny Thomas, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Ella Fitzgerald. However, *The Big Show's* initial success did not last despite critical praise, as most of its potential listeners were increasingly becoming television viewers. The show lasted two years, with NBC losing around \$1 million on the project (the network was only able to sell advertising time during the middle half-hour of the program each week).

NBC's last major radio programming push, beginning on June 12, 1955, was *Monitor*, a creation of NBC President Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, who also created the innovative programs *Today*, *The Tonight Show* and *Home* for the companion television network. *Monitor* was a continuous all-weekend mixture of music, news, interviews and features, with a variety of hosts including well-known television personalities Dave Garroway, Hugh Downs, Ed McMahon, Joe Garagiola and Gene Rayburn. The potpourri show tried to keep vintage radio alive by featuring segments from Jim and Marian Jordan (in character as Fibber McGee and Molly); Peg Lynch's dialog comedy *Ethel and Albert* (with Alan Bunce); and iconoclastic satirist Henry Morgan. *Monitor* was a success for a number of years, but after the mid-1960s, local stations, especially those in larger markets, were reluctant to break from their established formats to run non-conforming network programming. One exception was *Toscanini: The Man Behind the Legend*, a weekly series commemorating the great conductor's NBC broadcasts and recordings which ran for several years beginning in 1963.^[18] After *Monitor* ended its 20-year run on January 26, 1975, little remained of NBC network radio beyond hourly newscasts and news features, and Sunday morning religious program *The Eternal Light*.

Decline

On June 18, 1975, NBC launched the NBC News and Information Service (NIS), which provided up to 55 minutes of news per hour around the clock to local stations that wanted to adopt an all-news radio format. NBC carried the service on WRC in Washington, and on its owned-and-operated FM stations in New York City, Chicago and San Francisco. NIS attracted several dozen subscribing stations, but by the fall of 1976, NBC determined that it could not project that the service would ever become profitable and gave its affiliates six months' notice that it would be discontinued. NIS ended operations on May 29, 1977. In 1979, NBC launched *The Source*, a modestly successful secondary network providing news and short features to FM rock stations.^[6]



The front entrance of the NBC Tower at 454 N. Columbus Drive in Chicago.

The NBC Radio Network also pioneered personal advice call-in national talk radio with a satellite-distributed evening talk show, TalkNet; the program featured Bruce Williams (providing personal financial advice), Bernard Meltzer (personal and financial advice) and Sally Jessy Raphael (personal and romantic advice). While never much of a ratings success, TalkNet nonetheless helped further the national talk radio format. For affiliates, many of them struggling AM stations, TalkNet helped fill evening time slots with free programming, allowing the stations to sell local advertising in a dynamic format without the cost associated with producing local programming. Some in the industry feared this trend would lead to increasing control of radio content by networks and syndicators.

General Electric acquired RCA in 1986, and with it NBC, signaling the beginning of the end of NBC Radio. Three factors led to the radio division's demise: GE decided that radio did not fit its strategy, while the radio division had not been profitable for many years. In addition, FCC ownership rules at the time prevented companies acquiring broadcast properties from owning both a radio and television division. In the summer of 1987, GE sold NBC Radio's network operations to Westwood One, and sold off the NBC-owned stations to various buyers. By 1990, the NBC Radio Network as an independent programming service was pretty much dissolved, becoming a brand name for content produced by Westwood One, and ultimately by CBS Radio. The Mutual Broadcasting System, which Westwood One had acquired two years earlier, met the same fate, and essentially merged with NBC Radio.

GE's divestiture of NBC's entire radio division was the first cannon shot of what would play out in the national broadcast media, as each of the Big Three broadcast networks were soon acquired by other corporate entities. NBC was a particularly noteworthy case in that it was the first to be acquired – and was bought by a conglomerate *outside* the broadcast industry as GE otherwise primarily served as a manufacturing company. Prior to the GE acquisition, NBC operated its radio division partly out of tradition, and partly to meet its then-FCC-mandated requirement to distribute programming for the public good (the broadcast airwaves are owned by the public; as that broadcast spectrum is limited and only so many broadcast stations existed, this served as the basis for government regulation requiring broadcasters to provide certain content that meets the needs of the public). Syndicators such as Westwood One were not subject to such rules as they did not own any stations. GE's divestiture of NBC Radio – known as "America's First Network" – in many ways marked the "beginning of the end" of the old era of regulated broadcasting and the ushering in of the new, largely unregulated industry that is present today.

By the late 1990s, Westwood One was producing NBC Radio-branded newscasts on weekday mornings. These were discontinued in 1999 (along with Mutual branded newscasts), and the few remaining NBC Radio Network affiliates became affiliates of CNN Radio, carrying the Westwood-owned service's hourly newscasts 24 hours a day. In 2003, Westwood One began distributing NBC News Radio, a new service featuring minute-long news updates read by television anchors and reporters from NBC News and MSNBC, with content written by Westwood One employees.

Restoration

On March 1, 2012, Dial Global announced that it would discontinue CNN Radio, and replace it with an expansion of NBC News Radio on April 1, 2012. This marked the first time since Westwood One's purchase of NBC Radio and its properties that NBC would have a 24-hour presence on radio. A previous program, *First Light*, placed new emphasis on the NBC brand after diminishing it over the years. With the change, NBC News Radio expanded its offerings from 60-second news updates airing only on weekdays to feature two hourly full-length newscasts 24 hours a day. Subsequently, on September 4, 2012, Dial Global launched a sports-talk radio service, NBC Sports Radio.

NBC News Radio has been distributed by iHeartMedia and its TTWN Networks since July 2016. It is provided to the network's 24/7 News Source affiliates and includes a top of the hour newscast along with other audio content which is heard on over 1000 radio stations.^[19]

Television

For many years, NBC was closely identified with David Sarnoff, who used it as a vehicle to sell consumer electronics. RCA and Sarnoff had captured the spotlight by introducing all-electronic television to the public at the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, simultaneously initiating a regular schedule of programs on the NBC-RCA television station in New York City. President Franklin D. Roosevelt appeared at the fair before the NBC camera, becoming the first U.S. president to appear on television on April 30, 1939 (an actual, off-the-monitor photograph (http://www.dauidsarnoff.org/gallery-tv-bw/FDR_TV-WF_39.html) of the FDR telecast is available at the David Sarnoff Library). The broadcast was transmitted by NBC's New York television station W2XBS Channel 1 (later WNBC-TV; now WNBC, channel 4) and was seen by about 1,000 viewers within the station's roughly 40-mile (64 km) coverage area from its transmitter at the Empire State Building.

The following day (May 1), four models of RCA television sets went on sale to the general public in various department stores around New York City, which were promoted in a series of splashy newspaper ads.^[20] DuMont Laboratories (and others) had actually offered the first home sets in 1938 in anticipation of NBC's announced April 1939 television launch. Later in 1939, NBC took its cameras to professional football and baseball games in the New York City area, establishing many "firsts" in television broadcasting.

Reportedly, the first NBC Television "network" program was broadcast on January 12, 1940, when a play titled *Meet The Wife* was originated at the W2XBS studios at Rockefeller Center and rebroadcast by W2XB/W2XAF (now WRGB) in Schenectady, which received the New York station directly off-air from a tower atop a mountain and relayed the live signal to the Capital District. About this time, occasional special events were also broadcast in Philadelphia (over W3XE, later called WPTZ, now known as KYW-TV) as well as Schenectady. The most ambitious NBC television "network" program of the pre-war era was the telecast of the Republican National Convention held in Philadelphia in the summer of 1940, which was fed live to the New York City and Schenectady stations.^[21] However, despite major promotion by RCA, television sales in New York during 1939 and 1940 were disappointing, primarily due to the high cost of the sets, and the lack of compelling regularly scheduled programming. Most sets were sold to bars, hotels and other public places, where the general public viewed special sports and news events. One special event was Franklin D. Roosevelt's second and final appearance on live television, when his speech at Madison Square Garden on October 28, 1940, was telecast over W2XBS to receivers in the New York City area.^[22]

Television's experimental period ended, as the FCC allowed full-fledged commercial television broadcasts to begin on July 1, 1941. NBC station W2XBS in New York City received the first commercial license, adopting the call letters WNBT. The first official, paid television advertisement broadcast by any U.S. station was for watch manufacturer Bulova, which aired that day, just before the start of a Brooklyn Dodgers baseball telecast on WNBT. The ad consisted of test pattern, featuring the newly assigned WNBT call letters, which was modified to resemble a clock – complete with functioning hands – with the Bulova logo (featuring the phrase "Bulova Watch Time") in the lower right-hand quadrant of the test pattern (a photograph of the NBC camera setting up the test pattern-advertisement for that ad can be seen at [this page](http://www.earlytelevision.org/image/s/rca_bulova_ad-1.jpg) (http://www.earlytelevision.org/image/s/rca_bulova_ad-1.jpg)). Among the programs that aired during the first



High frequency tubes in the tube room. They were used for the NBC television transmitter, 1936. NBC kept 220 tubes in reserve for their transmitter.



30 Rockefeller Center, also known as the GE Building, is the world headquarters of NBC.

week of WNBT's new, commercial schedule was *The Sunoco News*, a simulcast of the Sun Oil-sponsored NBC Radio program anchored by Lowell Thomas; amateur boxing at Jamaica Arena; the Eastern Clay Courts tennis championships; programming from the USO; the spelling bee-type game show *Words on the Wing*; a few feature films; and a one-time-only, test broadcast of the game show *Truth or Consequences*, sponsored by Lever Brothers.^[23]

Prior to the first commercial television broadcasts and paid advertisements on WNBT, non-paid television advertising existed on an experimental basis dating back to 1930. NBC's earliest non-paid television commercials may have been those seen during the first Major League Baseball game ever telecast, between the Brooklyn Dodgers and Cincinnati Reds, on August 26, 1939 over W2XBS. In order to secure the rights to televise the game, NBC allowed each of the Dodgers' regular radio sponsors at the time to have one commercial during the telecast. The ads were conducted by Dodgers announcer Red Barber: for Ivory Soap, he held up a bar of the product; for Mobilgas he put on a filling station attendant's cap while giving his spiel; and for Wheaties he poured a bowl of the product, added milk and bananas, and took a big spoonful.^[24] Limited, commercial programming continued until the U.S. entered World War II. Telecasts were curtailed in the early years of the war, then expanded as NBC began to prepare for full-time service upon the end of the war. Even before the war concluded, a few programs were sent from New York City to affiliated stations in Philadelphia (WPTZ) and Albany/Schenectady (WRGB) on a regular weekly schedule beginning in 1944, the first of which is generally considered to be the pioneering special interest/documentary show *The Voice of Firestone Televues*, a television offshoot of *The Voice of Firestone*, a mainstay on NBC radio since 1928, which was transmitted from New York City to Philadelphia and Schenectady on a regular, weekly basis beginning on April 10, 1944.^[25] The series is considered to be the NBC television network's first regularly scheduled program.

On V-E Day, May 8, 1945, WNBT broadcast several hours of news coverage, and remotes from around New York City. This event was promoted in advance by NBC with a direct-mail card sent to television set owners in the New York area.^[26] At one point, a WNBT camera placed atop the marquee of the Hotel Astor panned the crowd below celebrating the end of the war in Europe.^[27] The vivid coverage was a prelude to television's rapid growth after the war ended.

The NBC television network grew from its initial post-war lineup of four stations. The 1947 World Series featured two New York City area teams (the Yankees and the Dodgers), and television sales boomed locally, since the games were being telecast in the New York market. Additional stations along the East Coast and in the Midwest were connected by coaxial cable through the late 1940s, and in September 1951 the first transcontinental telecasts took place.

The post-war 1940s and early 1950s brought success for NBC in the new medium. Television's first major star, Milton Berle, whose *Texaco Star Theatre* began in June 1948, drew the first large audiences to NBC Television. Under its innovative president, Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, the network launched *Today* and *The Tonight Show*, which would bookend the broadcast day for over 50 years, and which still lead their competitors. Weaver, who also launched the genre of periodic 90-minute network "spectaculars", network-produced motion pictures and the live 90-minute Sunday afternoon series *Wide Wide World*, left the network in 1955 in a dispute with its chairman David Sarnoff, who subsequently named his son Robert Sarnoff as president.

In 1951, NBC commissioned Italian-American composer Gian Carlo Menotti to compose the first opera ever written for television; Menotti came up with *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, a 45-minute work for which he wrote both music and libretto, about a disabled shepherd boy who meets the Three Wise Men and is miraculously cured when he offers his



Grace Brandt and Eddie Albert in an early NBC television program *The Honeymooners-Grace and Eddie Show*.

crutch to the newborn Christ Child. It was such a stunning success that it was repeated every year on NBC from 1951 to 1966, when a dispute between Menotti and NBC ended the broadcasts. However, by 1978, Menotti and NBC had patched things up, and an all-new production of the opera, filmed partly on location in the Middle East, was telecast that year.

Color television

While rival CBS broadcast the first color television programs in the United States, their system was incompatible with the millions of black and white sets in use at the time. After a series of limited, incompatible color broadcasts (mostly scheduled during the day), CBS abandoned the system and broadcasts. This opened the door for the RCA compatible color system to be adopted as the U.S. standard. RCA convinced the FCC to approve its color system in December 1953. NBC was ready with color programming within days of the Commission's decision. NBC began the transition with a few shows in 1954, and broadcast its first program to air all episodes in color beginning that summer, *The Marriage*.

In 1955, NBC broadcast a live production in color of *Peter Pan*, a new Broadway musical adaptation of J. M. Barrie's beloved play, on the *Producers' Showcase* anthology series, The first such telecast of its kind, the broadcast starred the musical's entire original cast, led by Mary Martin as Peter and Cyril Ritchard in a dual role as Mr. Darling and Captain Hook. The broadcast drew the highest ratings for a television program for that period. It was so successful that NBC restaged it as a live broadcast a mere ten months later; in 1960, long after *Producers' Showcase* had ended its run, *Peter Pan*, with most of the 1955 cast, was restaged again, this time as a standalone special, and was videotaped so that it would no longer have to be performed live on television.

In 1956, NBC started a subsidiary, California National Productions (CNP), for merchandising, syndication and NBC opera company operations with the production of **Silent Services**.^[28] By 1957, NBC planned to remove the opera company from CNP and^[28] CNP was in discussion with MGM Television about handling syndication distribution for MGM series.^[28]

During a National Association of Broadcasters meeting in Chicago in 1956, NBC announced that its owned-and-operated station in that market, WNBQ (now WMAQ-TV), had become the first television station in the country to broadcast its programming in color (airing at least six hours of color broadcasts each day). In 1959, NBC premiered a televised version of the radio program *The Bell Telephone Hour*, which aired in color from its debut; the program would continue on the NBC television network for nine more years until it ended in 1968.

In 1961, NBC approached Walt Disney about acquiring the rights to his anthology series, offering to produce the program in color. Disney was in the midst of negotiating a new contract to keep the program (then known as *Walt Disney Presents*) on ABC, however ABC president Leonard Goldenson said that it could not counter the offer, as the network did not have the technical and financial resources to carry the program in color. Disney subsequently struck a deal with NBC, which began airing the anthology series in the format in September 1961 (as *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*). As many of the Disney programs that aired in black-and-white on ABC were actually filmed in color, they could easily be re-aired in the format on the NBC broadcasts. In January 1962, NBC's telecast of the Rose Bowl became the first college football game ever to be telecast in color.



Title card used by NBC in the 1950s, promoting their color broadcasts on NBC.

By 1963, much of NBC's prime time schedule was presented in color, although some popular series (such as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, which premiered in late 1964) were broadcast in black-and-white for their entire first season. In the fall of 1965, NBC was broadcasting 95% of its prime time schedule in color (with the exceptions of *I Dream of Jeannie* and *Convoy*), and began billing itself as "The Full Color Network." Without television sets to sell, rival networks followed more slowly, finally committing to an all-color lineup in prime time in the 1966–67 season. *Days of Our Lives* became the first soap opera to premiere in color, when it debuted in November 1965.

NBC contracted with Universal Studios in 1964 to produce the first feature-length film produced for television, *See How They Run*, which first aired on October 17, 1964; its second television movie, *The Hanged Man*, aired six weeks later on November 28. Even while the presentations performed well in the ratings, NBC did not broadcast another made-for-TV film for two years.^[29]

In 1967, NBC reached a deal with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) to acquire the broadcast rights to the classic 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. CBS, which had televised the film annually since 1956, refused to meet MGM's increased fee to renew its television rights. *Oz* had been, up to then, one of the few programs that CBS had telecast in color. However, by 1967, color broadcasts had become standard on television, and the film simply became another title in the list of specials that NBC telecast in the format. The film's showings on NBC were distinctive as it televised *The Wizard of Oz* without a hosted introduction, as CBS had long done; it was also slightly edited for time in order to make room to air more commercials. Despite the cuts, however, it continued to score excellent television ratings in those pre-VCR days, as audiences were generally unable to see the film any other way at that time. NBC aired *The Wizard of Oz* each year from 1968 to 1976, when CBS, realizing that they may have committed a colossal blunder by letting a huge ratings success like *Oz* go to another network, agreed to pay MGM more money to re-acquire the rights to show the film.

The late 1960s brought big changes in the programming practices of the major television networks. As baby boomers reached adulthood, NBC, CBS and ABC began to realize that much of their existing programming had not only been running for years, but had audiences that skewed older. In order to attract the large youth population that was highly attractive to advertisers, the networks moved to clean house of a number of veteran shows. In NBC's case, this included programs like *The Bell Telephone Hour* and *Sing Along With Mitch*, which both had an average viewer age of 50. During this period, the networks came to define adults between the ages of 18 and 49 as their main target audience, although depending on the show, this could be subdivided into other age demos: 35–45, 18–25 or 18–35. Regardless of the exact target demographic, the general idea was to appeal to viewers who were not close to retirement age and to modernize television programming, which the networks felt overall was stuck in a 1950s mentality, to closely resemble contemporary American society.

1970s doldrums

The 1970s started strongly for NBC thanks to hits like *Adam-12*, *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, *Ironside*, *The Dean Martin Show* and *The Flip Wilson Show*. However, despite the success of such new shows as the *NBC Mystery Movie*, *Sanford and Son*, *Chico and the Man*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Midnight Special*, *The Rockford Files*, *Police Woman* and *Emergency!*, as well as continued success from veterans like *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* and *The Wonderful World of Disney*, the network entered a slump in the middle of the decade. *Disney*, in particular, saw its ratings nosedive once CBS put *60 Minutes* up against the program in the Sunday 7:00 p.m. time slot in the 1975–76 season.

In 1974, under new president Herb Schlosser, the network tried to attract younger viewers with a series of costly movies, miniseries and specials. This failed to attract the desirable 18–34 demographic, and simultaneously alienated older viewers.^[30] None of the new prime-time shows that NBC introduced in the fall of 1975 earned a second season renewal, all failing in the face of established competition. The network's lone breakout success that season was the groundbreaking

late-night comedy/variety show, *NBC's Saturday Night* – which would be renamed *Saturday Night Live* in 1976, after the cancellation of a Howard Cosell-hosted program of the same title on ABC – which replaced reruns of *The Tonight Show* that previously aired in its Saturday time slot.

In 1978, Schlosser was promoted to executive vice president at RCA,^[31] and a desperate NBC lured Fred Silverman away from top-rated ABC to turn its fortunes around. With the notable exceptions of *CHiPs*, *Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters*, *Diff'rent Strokes* and its spin-off *The Facts of Life*, *Real People* and the miniseries *Shōgun*, Silverman was unable to pull out a hit. Failures accumulated rapidly under his watch (such as *Hello, Larry*, *Supertrain*, *Pink Lady and Jeff*, *The Krofft Superstar Hour*, season six of *Saturday Night Live*, and *The Waverly Wonders*). Many of them were beaten in the ratings by shows that Silverman had greenlit during his previous tenures at CBS and ABC.

During this time, several longtime affiliates also defected from NBC in markets such as Atlanta (WSB-TV), Baltimore (WBAL-TV), Baton Rouge (WBRZ-TV), Charlotte (WSOC-TV), Dayton (WDTN), Indianapolis (WRTV), Jacksonville (WTLV), Minneapolis-St. Paul (KSTP-TV), San Diego (KGTV), Schenectady (WRGB) and Wheeling (WTRF-TV). Most were wooed away by ABC, which had lifted out of last place to become the #1 network during the late 1970s and early 1980s, while WBAL-TV, WRGB and WTRF-TV went to CBS; WBAL-TV was originally to go to ABC, but the station decided against it because ABC's evening newscasts had attracted ratings too dismal for them to consider doing so.^{[32][33]} In the case of WSB-TV and WSOC-TV, which have both since become ABC affiliates, both stations were (and remain) under common ownership with Cox Enterprises, with its other NBC affiliate at the time, WIIC-TV in Pittsburgh (which would become WPXI in 1981 and also remains owned by Cox), only staying with the network because WIIC-TV itself was a distant third to CBS-affiliated powerhouse KDKA-TV and ABC affiliate WTAE-TV (KDKA-TV, owned at the time by Group W and now owned by CBS, infamously passed up affiliating with NBC after Westinghouse bought the station from DuMont in 1954, leading to an acrimonious relationship between NBC and Westinghouse that lasted for years afterward). In markets such as San Diego, Charlotte and Jacksonville, NBC had little choice but to affiliate with a UHF station, with the San Diego station (KNSD) eventually becoming an NBC O&O. In Wheeling, NBC ultimately upgraded its affiliation when it partnered with WTOV-TV in nearby Steubenville, Ohio, overtaking former affiliate WTRF-TV in the ratings by a large margin. Other smaller television markets like Yuma, Arizona waited many years to get another local NBC affiliate (first with KIVA, and later KYMA). The stations in Baltimore, Dayton and Jacksonville, however, have since rejoined the network.

After President Jimmy Carter pulled the U.S. team out of the 1980 Summer Olympics, NBC canceled a planned 150 hours of coverage (which had cost \$87 million for the broadcast rights), placing the network's future in doubt. It had been counting on the broadcasts to help promote its new fall shows, and had been estimated to pull in \$170 million in advertising revenue.^[34]

The press was merciless towards Silverman, but the two most savage attacks on his leadership came from within the network. The company that composed the promotional theme for NBC's "Proud as a Peacock" image campaign created a parody song called "Loud as a Peacock," which was broadcast on Don Imus' program on WNBC radio in New York. Its lyrics blamed Silverman for the network's problems ("The Peacock's dead, so thank you, Fred"). An angered Silverman ordered all remaining copies of the spoof destroyed, although some copies remain in circulation. *Saturday Night Live* writer and occasional performer Al Franken satirized Silverman in a sketch on the program titled "A Limo For A Lame-O", where he presented a chart with the top-10 rated programs for that season and commented that there was "not one N" on the list. Silverman later admitted he "never liked Al Franken to begin with", and the sketch ruined Franken's chance of succeeding Lorne Michaels as executive producer of *SNL* following his 1980 departure (with the position going to Jean Doumanian, who was fired after one season following declining ratings and negative critical reviews. Michaels would later return to the show in 1985).^[35]

Tartikoff's turnaround

Fred Silverman resigned as entertainment president in the summer of 1981. Grant Tinker, a highly regarded producer who co-founded MTM Enterprises with then-wife Mary Tyler Moore, became president of the network and Brandon Tartikoff became president of the entertainment division. Tartikoff inherited a schedule full of aging dramas and very few sitcoms, but showed patience with promising programs. One such show was the critically acclaimed *Hill Street Blues*, which suffered from poor ratings during its first season. Rather than canceling the show, he moved the Emmy Award-winning police drama from Steven Bochco to Thursdays, where its ratings improved dramatically. He used the same tactics with *St. Elsewhere* and *Cheers*. Shows like these were able to get the same ad revenue as their higher-rated competition because of their desirable demographics, upscale adults ages 18–34.^[36] While the network claimed moderate successes with *Gimme a Break!*, *Silver Spoons*, *Knight Rider* and *Remington Steele*, its biggest hit during this period was *The A-Team*, which, at 10th place, was the network's only program to rank in the Nielsen Top-20 for the 1982–83 season, and ascended to fourth place the following year. These shows helped NBC through the disastrous 1983–84 season, which saw none of its nine new fall shows gaining a second year.^[37]

In February 1982, NBC canceled Tom Snyder's *The Tomorrow Show* and gave the 12:35 a.m. time slot to 34-year-old comedian David Letterman. Though Letterman was unsuccessful with his weekday morning talk show effort for the network (which debuted on June 23, 1980), *Late Night with David Letterman* proved much more successful, lasting for 11 years and serving as the launching pad for another late-night talk franchise that continues to this day.

In 1984, the huge success of *The Cosby Show* led to a renewed interest in sitcoms, while *Family Ties* and *Cheers*, both of which premiered in 1982 to mediocre ratings (the latter ranking at near dead last among all network shows during the 1982–83 season), saw their viewership increase from having *Cosby* as a lead-in. The network rose from third place to second in the ratings during the 1984–85 season and reached first place in 1985–86, with hits *The Golden Girls*, *Miami Vice*, *227*, *Night Court*, *Highway to Heaven* and *Hunter*. The network's upswing continued late into the decade with *ALF*, *Amen*, *Matlock*, *L.A. Law*, *The Hogan Family*, *A Different World*, *Empty Nest*, *Unsolved Mysteries* and *In the Heat of the Night*. In 1986, Bob Wright was appointed as chairman of NBC.

In the fall of 1987, NBC conceived a syndication package for its owned-and-operated stations, under the brand "Prime Time Begins at 7:30", consisting of five sitcoms that each aired once a week, and were produced by various production companies contracted by NBC. The series included *Marblehead Manor* (from Paramount Television, airing Mondays), centering on a mansion owner and the people who live with him;^[38] *She's the Sheriff* (from Lorimar-Telepictures and airing Tuesdays), a comeback vehicle for Suzanne Somers which cast her as a widowed county sheriff;^[38] a series adapted from the George S. Kaufman play *You Can't Take It with You* (airing Wednesdays), starring Harry Morgan; *Out of This World* (from MCA Television and airing Thursdays), which starred Maureen Flannigan as a teenager born to an alien father and human mother that develops supernatural abilities on her 15th birthday;^[39] and a revival of the short-lived 1983 NBC series *We Got It Made* (produced by Fred Silverman for MGM Television and closing out the week on Fridays), as part of an ongoing trend at the time in which former network series were revived in first-run syndication.^[39]

The package was aimed at attracting viewers to NBC stations in the half-hour preceding prime time (8:00 p.m. in the Eastern and Pacific Time Zone, 7:00 p.m. elsewhere),^{[39][40]} and was conceived as a result of the FCC's loosening of the Prime Time Access Rule, legislation passed in 1971 that required networks to turn over the 7:30 p.m. (Eastern) time slot to local stations to program local or syndicated content; and the relaxation of the Financial Interest and Syndication Rules, which had prevented networks from producing content from their own syndication units to fill the void.^[40] The shows that were part of the package were regularly outrated in many markets by such syndicated game shows as *Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy!* and *Hollywood Squares*. *Marblehead Manor*, *We Got It Made* and *You Can't Take It With You* were

cancelled at the end of the 1987–88 season, with *She's the Sheriff* lasting one more season in weekend syndication before its cancellation. *Out of This World* ran for three additional seasons, airing mainly on weekends, and was the most successful of the five series.

NBC aired the first of eight consecutive Summer Olympic Games broadcasts when it covered the 1988 Games in Seoul, South Korea. The 1988–89 season saw NBC have an astonishing 18 series in Nielsen's year-end Top 30 most-watched network programs; it also ranked at first place in the weekly ratings for more than 12 months, an unprecedented achievement that has not been duplicated since. The network continued its hot streak into the early 1990s with new hits such as *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, *Blossom* and *Law & Order*.

"Must See TV"

In 1991, Tartikoff left his role as NBC's President of Entertainment to take an executive position at Paramount Pictures. In the course of a decade, he had taken control of a network with no shows in the Nielsen Top 10 and left it with five. Tartikoff was succeeded by Warren Littlefield, whose first years as entertainment president proved shaky as a result of most of the Tartikoff-era hits ending their runs. Some blamed Littlefield for losing David Letterman to CBS after naming Jay Leno as the successor to Johnny Carson on *The Tonight Show*, following the latter's retirement as host in May 1992. Things turned around with the launches of new hit series such as *Mad About You*, *Wings*, *Sisters*, *Frasier*, *Friends*, *ER* and *Will & Grace*.

One of Tartikoff's late acquisitions, *Seinfeld* initially struggled from its debut in 1989 as a summer series, but grew to become one of NBC's top-rated shows after it was moved to Thursdays in the time slot following *Cheers*. *Seinfeld* ended its run in 1998, becoming the latest overall television program in the U.S. to end its final season as the leader in the Nielsen ratings for a single television season. Consequently, *Friends* emerged as NBC's biggest television show after the 1998 *Seinfeld* final broadcast. It dominated the ratings, never leaving the top five watched shows of the year from its second through tenth seasons and landing on the number-one spot during season eight in the 2001–02 season as the latest sitcom in the U.S. to lead the annual Nielsen primetime television ratings. *Cheers* spinoff *Frasier* became a critical and commercial success, usually landing in the Nielsen Top 20 – although its ratings were overshadowed to a minor extent by *Friends* – and went on to win numerous Emmy Awards (eventually setting a record for a sitcom that lasted until it was overtaken by *Modern Family* in 2014). In 1994, the network began branding its strong Thursday night lineup, mainly in reference to the comedies airing in the first two hours, under the "Must See TV" tagline (which during the mid- and late 1990s, was also applied to NBC's comedy blocks on other nights, particularly on Tuesdays).

By the mid-1990s, NBC's sports division, headed by Dick Ebersol, had rights to three of the four major professional sports leagues (the NFL, Major League Baseball and the NBA), the Olympics, and the national powerhouse Notre Dame Fighting Irish football team. The *NBA on NBC* enjoyed great success in the 1990s due in large part to the Chicago Bulls' run of six championships at the hands of superstar Michael Jordan. However, NBC Sports would suffer a major blow in 1998, when it lost the rights to the American Football Conference (AFC) to CBS, which itself had lost rights to the National Football Conference (NFC) to Fox four years earlier;^[41] the deal stripped NBC of National Football League (NFL) game telecasts after 59 years and AFC games after 36 years (dating back to its existence as the American Football League prior to its 1970 merger with the NFL).

Littlefield left NBC in 1998 to pursue a career as a television and film producer,^[42] with the network subsequently going through three entertainment presidents in three years. Littlefield was replaced as president of NBC Entertainment by Scott Sassa, who oversaw the development of such shows as *The West Wing*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and *Fear Factor*. After Sassa was reassigned to NBC's West Coast Division, Garth Ancier was named as his replacement in 1999.^[43] Jeff Zucker then succeeded Ancier as president of NBC Entertainment in 2000.^[44]

New century, new problems

At the start of the 2000s, NBC's fortunes started to take a rapid turn for the worse. That year, NBC's longstanding ratings lead ended as CBS (which had languished in the ratings after losing the NFL) overtook it for first place. In 2001, CBS chose to move its hit reality series *Survivor* to serve as the anchor of its Thursday night lineup. Its success was taken as a suggestion that NBC's nearly two decades of dominance on Thursday nights could be broken; even so, the strength of *Friends*, *Will & Grace*, *ER* and *Just Shoot Me!* (the latter of which saw its highest viewership following its move to that night in the 2000–01 season) helped the network continue to lead the Thursday ratings. Overall, NBC retook its first place lead that year, and spent much of the next four years (with the exception of the 2002–03 season, when it was briefly jumped again by CBS for first) in the top spot.

On the other hand, NBC was stripped of the broadcast rights to two other major sports leagues: it lost Major League Baseball to Fox after the 2000 season (by that point, NBC only had alternating rights to the All-Star Game, League Championship Series and World Series), and, later, the NBA to ABC after the 2001–02 season. After losing the NBA rights, NBC's major sports offerings were reduced to the Olympics (which in 2002, expanded to include rights to the Winter Olympics, as part of a contract that gave it the U.S. television rights to both the Summer and Winter Olympics through 2012), PGA Tour golf events and a floundering Notre Dame football program (however, it would eventually acquire the rights to the National Hockey League in May 2004).

In October 2001, NBC acquired Spanish-language network Telemundo from Liberty Media and Sony Pictures Entertainment for \$2.7 billion, beating out other bidders including CBS/Viacom. The deal was finalized in 2002.^{[45][46]}

In 2003, French entertainment conglomerate Vivendi Universal sold 80% of its film and television subsidiary, Vivendi Universal Entertainment, to NBC's parent company, General Electric, integrating the network with Vivendi Universal's various properties (Universal Pictures film studio, Canal+ television networks, & Universal Parks & Resorts theme & amusement parks & resorts) upon completion of the merger of the two companies under the combined NBC Universal brand.^[47] NBC Universal was then owned 80% by General Electric and 20% by Vivendi. In 2004, Zucker was promoted to the newly created position of president of NBC Universal Television Group. Kevin Reilly became the new president of NBC Entertainment.^[48]

In 2004, NBC experienced a Three on a match scenario (*Friends* and *Frasier* ended their runs; Jerry Orbach, who had played one of the most popular characters of its hit *Law & Order*, died suddenly later that year), and shortly afterward was left with several moderately rated shows and few true hits.^[49] In particular, *Friends* spin-off *Joey*, despite a relatively strong start, started to falter in the ratings during its second season. The 2004–05 season saw NBC become the first major network to air select dramas in letterbox over its analog broadcast feed; the move was done in the hopes of attracting new viewers, although the network saw only a slight boost.

In December 2005, NBC began its first week-long primetime game show event, *Deal or No Deal*; the series garnered high ratings, and returning as a weekly series in March 2006. Otherwise, the 2005–06 season was one of the worst for NBC in three decades, with only one fall series, the sitcom *My Name Is Earl*, surviving for a second season; the sole remaining anchor of the "Must See TV" lineup, *Will & Grace* also saw its ratings decline. That season, NBC's ratings freefallen to fourth place, behind a resurgent ABC, Fox (which would eventually become the most-watched U.S. broadcast network in the 2007–08 season) and top-rated CBS (which led for much of the remainder of the decade). During this time, all of the networks faced audience erosion from increased competition by cable television, home video, video games and the Internet, with NBC being the hardest hit.

The 2006–07 season was a mixed bag for the network, with *Deal or No Deal* remaining strong and *Heroes* becoming a surprise hit on Monday nights, while the highly touted *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip* (from *West Wing* creator Aaron Sorkin) lost a third of its premiere-night viewers by Week 6 and was eventually cancelled; two critically acclaimed sitcoms,

The Office and *30 Rock*, also pulled in modest successes and went on to win the Emmy Award for Outstanding Comedy Series for four consecutive years. The network also regained the rights to the NFL after eight years that season when it acquired the *Sunday Night Football* package from ESPN (as part of a deal that also saw *Monday Night Football* move to ESPN from ABC). However, despite this, NBC remained at a very distant fourth place, barely ranking ahead of The CW.

However, NBC did experience success with its summer schedule, despite its declining ratings during the main broadcast season. *America's Got Talent*, a reality talent competition series that premiered in 2006, earned a 4.6 rating in the 18–49 demographic, higher than that earned by the 2002 premiere of Fox's *American Idol*. *Got Talent* (which is the flagship of an international talent competition franchise) would continue to garner unusually high ratings throughout its summer run. However, NBC decided not to place it in the spring season, and instead use it as a platform to promote their upcoming fall shows. Originally hosted by Regis Philbin, as of 2018 the series is currently hosted by Tyra Banks, and continues to garner strong ratings throughout its summer seasons. In March 2007, NBC announced that it would begin offering full-length episodes of its prime time series for streaming on mobile devices, becoming the first U.S. broadcast network to offer on-demand mobile episode content, as the market began shifting away from traditional television.^[50]

Following the unexpected termination of Kevin Reilly, in 2007, Ben Silverman was appointed president of NBC Entertainment,^[51] while Jeff Zucker was promoted to succeed Bob Wright as CEO of NBC. The network failed to generate any new primetime hits during the 2008–09 season (despite the rare good fortune of having the rights to both the Super Bowl and the Summer Olympics in which to promote their new programming slate), the sitcom *Parks and Recreation* survived for a second season after a six-episode first season, while *Heroes* and *Deal or No Deal* both collapsed in the ratings and were later cancelled (with a revamped *Deal or No Deal* being revived for one additional season in syndication). In a March 2009 interview, Zucker had stated that he no longer believed it would be possible for NBC to become #1 in prime time.^[52] Ben Silverman left the network in 2009, with Jeff Gaspin replacing him as president of NBC Entertainment.

Comcast era (2011–present)

On December 3, 2009, Comcast announced they would purchase a 51% controlling stake in NBC Universal from General Electric (which would retain the remaining 49%) for \$6.5 billion in cash and \$9.1 billion in raised debt.^[53] GE used \$5.8 billion from the deal to buy out Vivendi's 20% interest in NBC Universal.^[53]

NBC's broadcast of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, in February of that year, generated a ratings increase of 21% over its broadcast of the 2006 Winter Games in Torino. The network was criticized for repeatedly showing footage of a crash occurring during practice for an Olympic luge competition that killed Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili. NBC News president Steve Capus ordered the footage not to be shown without his permission and Olympics prime time host Bob Costas promised on-air that the video would not be shown again during the Games.^{[54][55]} NBC Universal was on track to lose \$250 million in advertising revenue on that year's Winter Olympics, failing to make up the \$820 million it paid for the U.S. television rights.^[56] Even so, with its continuing position in fourth place (although it virtually tied with ABC in many demographics on the strength of NBC's sports broadcasts that year^[57]), the 2009–10 season ended with only two scripted shows – *Community* and *Parenthood*, as well as three unscripted shows – *The Marriage Ref*, *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Minute to Win It* – being renewed for second seasons, while other series such as *Heroes* and veteran crime drama *Law & Order* (the latter of which ended after 20 seasons, tying it with *Gunsmoke* as the longest-running prime time drama in U.S. television history) were cancelled.

After Conan O'Brien succeeded Jay Leno as host of *The Tonight Show* in 2009, the network gave Leno a new prime time talk show, committing to air it every weeknight at 10:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific as an inexpensive comedic alternative to the police procedurals and other hour-long dramas typically aired in that time slot.^[58] In doing so, NBC became the first major U.S. broadcast network in decades,^[59] if ever,^[60] to broadcast the same program in a weekly prime time strip.

Its executives called the decision "a transformational moment in the history of broadcasting" and "in effect, launching five shows."^[59] Conversely, industry executives criticized the network for abandoning a history of airing quality dramas in the 10:00 hour, and expressed concern that it would hurt NBC by undermining a reputation built on successful scripted series.^[61] Citing complaints from many affiliates, which saw their late-evening newscasts drop significantly in the local ratings during *The Jay Leno Show*'s run, NBC announced on January 10, 2010 that it would drop Leno's show from the 10:00 p.m. slot –^[62] with Zucker announcing plans to shift the program (which would have been reduced to a half-hour) into the 11:35 p.m. slot and shift its existing late night lineup (including *The Tonight Show*) by 30 minutes. The removal of *The Jay Leno Show* from its prime time schedule had almost no impact on the network's ratings. The increases NBC experienced in the 2010–11 season compared to 2009–10 were almost entirely attributable to the rising viewership of *NBC Sunday Night Football*.^[63] By 2012, the shows that occupied the 10:00 p.m. time slot drew lower numbers than *The Jay Leno Show* did when it aired in that hour two years before.^[64] In the spring of 2010, cable provider and multimedia firm Comcast announced it would acquire a majority interest in NBC Universal from General Electric, which would retain a minority stake in the company in the interim.



Supporters of Conan O'Brien's hosting duties at *The Tonight Show* stage a protest outside Universal Studios in Los Angeles.

On September 24, 2010, Jeff Zucker announced that he would step down as NBC Universal's CEO once the company's merger with Comcast was completed at the end of the year.^{[65][66]} After the deal was finalized, Steve Burke was named CEO of NBCUniversal^[67] and Robert Greenblatt replaced Jeff Gaspin as chairman of NBC Entertainment.^[68] In 2011, NBC was finally able to find a breakout hit in the midseason reality singing competition series *The Voice*. Otherwise, NBC had another tough season, with every single new fall program getting cancelled by season's end – the third time this has happened to the network after the fall of 1975, and the fall of 1983 – and the midseason legal drama *Harry's Law* being its only freshman scripted series to be renewed for the 2011–12 season. The network nearly completed its full conversion to an all-HD schedule (outside of the Saturday morning time slot leased by the Qubo consortium, which NBCUniversal would rescind its stake in the following year) on September 20, 2011, when *Last Call with Carson Daly* converted to the format with the premiere of its 11th season.

The 2011–12 season was another tough season for NBC. On the upside, the network's broadcast of Super Bowl XLVI was the most-watched program in U.S. television history at the time, and the network's Monday night midseason lineup of *The Voice* and musical-drama *Smash* was very successful. The network managed to lift itself into third place in the 18–49 demographic in the 2011–12 season, primarily on the strength of those three programs (SNF, *The Voice*, and *Smash*), breaking the network's eight-year streak in fourth place. Four shows survived for a second season, but three of them were cancelled in the following year, none were unqualified ratings successes, and the network remained a distant fourth place in total viewership.

In the fall of 2012, NBC greatly expanded its sitcom roster, with eight comedy series airing on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. NBC bounced back to first place network in adults 18–49 that fall, boosted by the new season of *The Voice*, the initial success of freshman drama *Revolution* and sitcom *Go On*, and the continued strength of *Sunday Night Football*. However, withholding the new season of *The Voice* and benching *Revolution* until late March, the network's midseason ratings suffered, falling to fifth place behind Spanish-language network Univision during the February sweeps period.^[69] The 2012–13 season ended with NBC finishing in third place overall,^{[70][71]} albeit by a narrow margin, with only three new shows, all dramas, surviving for a second season (*Revolution*, *Chicago Fire* and *Hannibal*).

In 2013, NBC Sports migrated its business and production operations (including NBCSN) to new facilities in Stamford, Connecticut.^[72] Production of the network's NFL pre-game show *Football Night in America* remained at the NBC Studios at Rockefeller Center (with production operations based in Studio 8G, while the program itself was broadcast in Studio 8H, the longtime home of *Saturday Night Live*), until it migrated to the Stamford facility in September 2014. Despite the failure of another highly advertised game show event, *The Million Second Quiz*, the 2013–14 season was mostly successful for NBC due to the continued success of *The Voice*, *Chicago Fire*, *Revolution*, *Sunday Night Football* and *Grimm*. Along with new hits including *The Blacklist*, *Hannibal* and *Chicago PD* and a significant ratings boost from its broadcast of the 2014 Winter Olympics, NBC became the #1 network in the coveted 18–49 demographic that season for the first time since 2003–04, when *Friends* ended. NBC also improved considerably in total viewership, finishing behind long-dominant CBS in second place for the season.^[73]

The 2014–15 season was something of a mixed bag for NBC, but still successful. NBC launched eight new series that year, with only one, comedy-drama police procedural *The Mysteries of Laura*, being renewed for a second season. Nevertheless, the network continued to experience success with most of its returning series, especially *The Blacklist* (despite a modest decline in viewership following its move to Thursdays midway through the season, due partly to an initial weak lead-in from miniseries *The Slap*). Combined with the record number of viewers tuning in to Super Bowl XLIX, NBC again finished #1 in the 18–49 demographic and in second place overall.^[74]

The 2015–16 season was successful for NBC, with the successful launch of the new drama *Blindspot* premiering after *The Voice*, then subsequently being renewed for a second season in November 2015.^[75] NBC also continued with the success with the *Chicago* franchise with launching its second spin-off *Chicago Med*, which also received an early second season pick up in February 2016.^[76] Thursday nights continues to be a struggle for NBC, with continued success with the third season of *The Blacklist* brought the failed launch of *Heroes Reborn* which was cancelled in January 2016,^[77] and thriller *The Player*, however NBC found success with police procedural *Shades of Blue* which improved the 10pm time slot and was renewed for a second season in February 2016.^[78] On the comedy side, NBC surprisingly found success in the new workplace sitcom *Superstore* which premiered as a "preview" after *The Voice* in November 2015, and officially launched in January 2016 which brought decent ratings for a new comedy without *The Voice* as a lead-in and which was subsequently renewed for a second season in February 2016.^[79]

The 2016–17 season brought more success for NBC with new Comedy-drama *This Is Us* which was well received by critics and ratings and was renewed for two additional seasons in January 2017.^[80] *The Blacklist* continued to bring in modest ratings however, it brought the failed launch of its spinoff *The Blacklist: Redemption*. NBC continued to grow the *Chicago* franchise with a third spinoff titled *Chicago Justice*. On the comedy side, workplace sitcom *Superstore* continued success in its second season. The network launched new fantasy sitcom *The Good Place* following *The Voice* and brought in modest ratings and was renewed for a second season in January 2017.^[81]

Programming

As of 2013, NBC provides 87 hours of regularly scheduled network programming each week. The network provides 22 hours of prime time programming to affiliated stations Monday through Saturdays from 8:00–11:00 p.m. (7:00–10:00 p.m. in all other U.S. time zones) and Sundays from 7:00–11:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific Time (6:00–10:00 p.m. in all other time zones).

Daytime programming is also provided weekdays between 12:00 and 3:00 p.m. in the form of the one-hour weekday soap opera *Days of Our Lives* (the scheduling of the program varies depending on the station, although it is initially fed to affiliates at 1:00 p.m. Eastern). NBC News programming includes the morning news/interview program *Today* from 7:00–11:00 a.m. weekdays, 7:00–9:00 on Saturdays and 7:00–8:00 on Sundays; nightly editions of *NBC Nightly News* (whose weekend editions are occasionally subject to abbreviation or preemption due to sports telecasts overrunning into

the program's time slot), the Sunday political talk show *Meet the Press*, weekday early-morning news program *Early Today* and newsmagazine *Dateline NBC*. Late nights feature the weeknight talk shows *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *Late Night with Seth Meyers* and *Last Call with Carson Daly*, weeknight replays of the fourth hour of *Today* and CNBC program *Mad Money*, and the sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live*, and the LXTV-produced *1st Look* and *Open House NYC* on Saturdays (replays of the previous week's *1st Look* also air on Friday late nights on most stations).

The network's Saturday morning children's programming time slot is programmed by Litton Entertainment under a time-lease agreement. The three-hour block of programming designed for 14–16 year-old teenage viewers is under the umbrella branding of *The More You Know*, based on the network's long-time strand of internally-produced public service announcements of the same name. It premiered on October 8, 2016, giving Litton control of all but Fox's Saturday morning E/I programming among the five major broadcast networks.

Sports programming is also provided weekend afternoons at any time between 12:00 and 6:00 p.m. (9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., or tape-delayed in the Pacific Time Zone). Due to the unpredictable length of sporting events, NBC will occasionally preempt scheduled programs (more common with the weekend editions of *NBC Nightly News*, and local and syndicated programs carried by its owned-and-operated stations and affiliates). NBC has also held the American broadcasting rights to the Summer Olympic Games since the 1988 games and the rights to the Winter Olympic Games since the 2002 games. Coverage of the Olympics on NBC have included pre-empting regularly scheduled programs during daytime, primetime, and late night.

NBC News

News coverage has long been an important part of NBC's operations and public image, dating to the network's radio days. Notable NBC News productions past and present include *Today*, *NBC Nightly News* (and its immediate predecessor, the *Huntley-Brinkley Report*), *Meet the Press* (which has the distinction of the longest continuously running program in the history of American television), *Dateline NBC*, *Early Today*, *NBC News at Sunrise*, *NBC Nightside* and *Rock Center with Brian Williams*.

In 1989, the news division began its expansion to cable with the launch of business news channel CNBC. The company eventually formed other cable news services including MSNBC (created in 1996 originally as a joint venture with Microsoft, which now features a mix of general news and political discussion programs with a liberal stance),^{[82][83]} and the 2008 acquisition of The Weather Channel in conjunction with Blackstone Group and Bain Capital. In addition, NBCSN (operated as part of the NBC Sports Group, and which became an NBC property through Comcast's acquisition of NBCUniversal) carries sports news content alongside sports event telecasts. Key anchors from NBC News are also used during NBC Sports coverage of the Olympic Games.

Daytime programming

NBC is currently the home to only one daytime program, the hour-long soap opera *Days of Our Lives*, which has been broadcast on the network since 1965. Since NBC turned back an hour of its then two-hour daytime schedule to its affiliates as a result of the September 2007 expansion of *Today* to four hours, the network currently ties with The CW for the fewest daytime programming hours of any major broadcast television network.

Long-running daytime dramas seen on NBC in the past include *The Doctors* (1963–1982), *Another World* (1964–1999), *Santa Barbara* (1984–1993), and *Passions* (1999–2007). NBC also aired the final 4½ years of *Search for Tomorrow* (1982–1986) after that series was initially cancelled by CBS, although many NBC affiliates did not clear the show during its tenure on the network. NBC has also aired numerous short-lived soap operas, including *Generations* (1989–1991), *Sunset Beach* (1997–1999), and the two *Another World* spin-offs, *Somerset* (1970–1976) and *Texas* (1980–1982).

Notable daytime game shows that once aired on NBC include *The Price Is Right* (1956–1963), *Concentration* (1958–1973 and 1987–1991 as *Classic Concentration*), *The Match Game* (1962–1969), *Let's Make a Deal* (1963–1968 and 1990–1991, as well as a short-lived prime-time revival in 2003), *Jeopardy!* (1964–1975 and 1978–1979), *The Hollywood Squares* (1966–1980), *Wheel of Fortune* (1975–1989 and 1991), *Password Plus/Super Password* (1979–1982 and 1984–1989), *Sale of the Century* (1969–1973 and 1983–1989) and *Scrabble* (1984–1990 and 1993). The last game show ever to air as part of NBC's daytime schedule was the short-lived *Caesars Challenge*, which ended in January 1994.

Notable past daytime talk shows that have aired on NBC have included *Home* (1954–1957), *The Ernie Kovacs Show* (1955–1956), *The Merv Griffin Show* (1962–1963), *Leeza* (1994–1999) and *Later Today* (1999–2000).

Children's programming

Children's programming has played a part in NBC's programming since its initial roots in television. NBC's first major children's series, *Howdy Doody*, debuted in 1947 and was one of the era's first breakthrough television shows. From the mid-1960s until 1992, the bulk of NBC's children's programming was composed of mainly animated programming including classic *Looney Tunes* and *Woody Woodpecker* shorts; reruns of primetime animated sitcoms such as *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons*; foreign acquisitions like *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion*; animated adaptations of *Punky Brewster*, *ALF* and *Star Trek* as well as animated vehicles for Gary Coleman and Mr. T; live-action programs like *The Banana Splits*, *The Bugaloos* and *H.R. Pufnstuf*; and the original broadcasts of *Gumby*, *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, *Underdog*, *The Smurfs*, *Alvin and the Chipmunks* and *Disney's Adventures of the Gummi Bears*. From 1984 to 1989, the network aired a series of public service announcements called *One to Grow On*, which aired after the end credits of every program or every other children's program.^[84]

In 1989, NBC premiered *Saved by the Bell*, a live-action teen sitcom which originated on The Disney Channel the previous year as *Good Morning, Miss Bliss* (which served as a starring vehicle for Hayley Mills; four cast members from that show were cast in the NBC series as the characters they originally played on *Miss Bliss*). *Saved by the Bell*, despite being given bad reviews from television critics, would become one of the most popular teen series in television history as well as the top-rated series on Saturday mornings, dethroning ABC's *The Bugs Bunny and Tweety Show* in its first season.

The success of *Saved by the Bell* led NBC to remove animated series from its Saturday morning lineup in August 1992 in favor of additional live-action series as part of a new block called TNBC, along with the debut of a Saturday edition of *Today*. Most of the series featured on the TNBC lineup were executive produced by Peter Engel (such as *City Guys*, *Hang Time*, *California Dreams*, *One World* and the *Saved by the Bell* sequel, *Saved by the Bell: The New Class*), with the lineup being designed from the start to meet the earliest form of the FCC's educational programming guidelines under the Children's Television Act.^[85] *NBA Inside Stuff*, an analysis and interview program aimed at teens that was hosted for most of its run by Ahmad Rashād, was also a part of the TNBC lineup during the NBA season until 2002 (when the program moved to ABC as a result of that network taking the NBA rights from NBC).

In 2002, NBC entered into an agreement with Discovery Communications to carry educational children's programs from the *Discovery Kids* cable channel.^[85] Debuting that September, the *Discovery Kids on NBC* block originally consisted exclusively of live-action series, including reality series *Trading Spaces: Boys vs. Girls* (a kid-themed version of the TLC series *Trading Spaces*); the Emmy-nominated reality game show *Endurance*, hosted and produced by J. D. Roth (whose production company, 3-Ball Productions, would also produce reality series *The Biggest Loser* for NBC beginning in 2003); and scripted series such as *Strange Days at Blake Holsey High* and *Scout's Safari*. The block later expanded to include some animated series such as *Kenny the Shark*, *Tutenstein* and *Time Warp Trio*.

In May 2006, NBC announced plans to launch a new Saturday morning children's block under the Qubo brand in September 2006.^[86] An endeavor originally operated as a joint venture between NBCUniversal, Ion Media Networks, Scholastic Press, Classic Media and Corus Entertainment's Nelvana unit (Ion acquired the other partners' shares in 2013), the Qubo venture also encompassed weekly blocks on Telemundo and Ion Television, a 24-hour digital multicast network on Ion's owned-and-operated and affiliated stations, as well as video on demand services and a branded website. Qubo launched on NBC on September 9, 2006 with six programs (*VeggieTales*, *Dragon*, *VeggieTales Presents: 3-2-1 Penguins!*, *Babar*, *Jane and the Dragon* and *Jacob Two-Two*).

On March 28, 2012, it was announced that NBC would launch a new Saturday morning preschool block programmed by Sprout (originally jointly owned by NBCUniversal, PBS, Sesame Workshop and Apax Partners, with the former acquiring the other's interests later that year). The block, NBC Kids, premiered on July 7, 2012, replacing the "Qubo on NBC" block.^{[87][88][89][90]}

Specials

NBC holds the broadcast rights to several annual specials and award show telecasts including the Golden Globe Awards and the Emmy Awards (which is rotated across all four major networks each year). Since 1952, NBC has served as the official U.S. broadcaster of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. CBS also carries unauthorized coverage of the Macy's parade as part of *The Thanksgiving Day Parade on CBS*; However, as NBC holds rights to the parade, it has exclusivity over the broadcast of Broadway and music performances appearing in the parade (CBS airs live performances separate from those seen in the parade as a result), and Macy's chose to reroute the parade in 2012 out of the view of CBS' cameras, although it continues to cover the parade. NBC began airing a same-day rebroadcast of the parade telecast in 2009 (replacing its annual Thanksgiving afternoon airing of *Miracle on 34th Street*). In 2007, NBC acquired the rights to the National Dog Show, which airs following the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade each year.

The network also broadcasts several live-action and animated specials during the Christmas holiday season, including the 2014 debuts *How Murray Saved Christmas* (an animated musical adaptation of the children's book of the same name) and *Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas* (a stop-motion animated special based on the 2003 live-action film *Elf*).

Since 2013, the network has aired live musical adaptations with major stars in lead roles. Originally dismissed as a gimmick, they have proven to be ratings successes, as well as a nostalgic tribute to the early days of television. Past adaptations include:

- *The Sound of Music* in 2013 (starring Carrie Underwood as Maria Von Trapp)
- *Peter Pan* in 2014 (starring Allison Williams in the titular role and Christopher Walken as Captain Hook)
- *The Wiz* in 2015 (starring Queen Latifah as the Wiz, Mary J. Blige as the Wicked Witch and Uzo Aduba as the Good Witch)
- *Hairspray* in 2016 (starring Ariana Grande as Penny Pingleton, Jennifer Hudson as Motormouth Maybelle, Kristin Chenoweth as Velma von Tussle and Harvey Fierstein as Edna Turnblad, reprising his role in the original Broadway production)
- *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 2018 (starring John Legend as Jesus Christ, Sara Bareilles as Mary Magdalene and Alice Cooper as King Herod)^[91]

From 2003 to 2014, NBC also held rights to two of the three pageants organized by the Miss Universe Organization: the Miss Universe and Miss USA pageants (NBC also held rights to the Miss Teen USA pageant from 2003, when NBC also assumed rights to the Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants as part of a deal brokered by Miss Universe Organization owner Donald Trump that gave the network half-ownership of the pageants,^[92] until 2007, when NBC declined to renew its contract to carry Miss Teen USA, effectively discontinuing televised broadcasts of that event). NBCUniversal relinquished the rights to Miss Universe and Miss USA on June 29, 2015, as part of its decision to cut business ties with

Donald Trump and the Miss Universe Organization (which was half-owned by corporate parent NBCUniversal) in response to controversial remarks about Mexican immigrants made by Trump during the launch of his 2016 campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination.^{[93][94]}

Programming library

Through the years, NBC has produced many in-house programs, in addition to airing content from other producers such as Revue Studios and its successor Universal Television. Notable in-house productions by NBC have included *Get Smart*, *Bonanza*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Las Vegas* and *Crossing Jordan*.

NBC sold the distribution rights to programs it produced prior to that year to National Telefilm Associates in 1973; those rights are currently owned by CBS Paramount Television through Republic Pictures and Spelling Entertainment Group, although NBC still owns the copyrights to the episodes. As a result, NBC, in a way, now owns several other series aired on the network prior to 1973, such as *Wagon Train*. NBC continues to own its entire library of programs produced after 1973, through corporate sister NBCUniversal Television Group (the successor to Universal Television).

Stations

As of June 2018, NBC has eleven owned-and-operated stations and current and pending affiliation agreements with 226 additional television stations encompassing 49 states, the District of Columbia, six U.S. possessions and two non-U.S. territories (Aruba and Bermuda).^{[95][96]} The network has a national reach of 90.05% of all households in the United States (or 281,372,474 Americans with at least one television set).

Currently, New Jersey is the only U.S. state where NBC does not have a locally licensed affiliate. New Jersey is served by New York City O&O WNBC-TV and Philadelphia O&O WCAU; New Jersey formerly had an in-state affiliate in Atlantic City-based WMGM-TV, which was affiliated with the network from 1955 to 2014. NBC maintains affiliations with low-power stations (broadcasting either in analog or digital) in a few smaller markets, such as Binghamton, New York (WBGH-CD), Jackson, Tennessee (WNBj-LD) and Juneau, Alaska (KATH-LD), that do not have enough full-power stations to support a standalone affiliate. In some markets, these stations also maintain digital simulcasts on a subchannel of a co-owned/co-managed full-power television station.

As mentioned with New Hampshire and Boston, NBC operates a low-powered station in Boston, WBTS-LD, which aims to serve as its station in that market while using a network of additional full-power stations to cover the market in full (including Merrimack, New Hampshire-licensed Telemundo station WNEU, which transmits WBTS on a second subchannel. A WBTS translator, WYCN-CD, is licensed to Nashua, New Hampshire and was purchased by NBC in early 2018 after the FCC spectrum auction, but transmits a full-power signal under a channel share with the WGBH Educational Foundation and its secondary Boston station WGBX-TV from Needham, Massachusetts.

Currently outside of the NBC Owned Television Stations-operated O&O group, Tegna Media is the largest operator of NBC stations in terms of overall market reach, owning or providing services to 20 NBC affiliates (including those in larger markets such as Denver, St. Louis, Seattle and Cleveland); Gray Television is the largest operator of NBC stations by numerical total, owning 23 NBC-affiliated stations.

Related services

Video-on-demand services

NBC provides video on demand access for delayed viewing of the network's programming through various means, including via its website at NBC.com, a traditional VOD service called NBC on Demand available on most traditional cable and IPTV providers,^[97] and through content deals with Hulu and Netflix (the latter of which carries only cataloged episodes of NBC programs, after losing the right to carry newer episodes of its programs during their current seasons in July 2011). NBCUniversal is a part-owner of Hulu (as part of a consortium that includes, among other parties, the respective parent companies of ABC and Fox, The Walt Disney Company and 21st Century Fox), and has offered full-length episodes of most of NBC's programming through the streaming service (which are available for viewing on Hulu's website and mobile app) since Hulu launched in private beta testing on October 29, 2007.^{[98][99][100][101]}

The most recent episodes of the network's shows are usually made available on NBC.com and Hulu the day after their original broadcast. In addition, NBC.com and certain other partner websites (including Hulu) provide complete back catalogs of most of its current series as well as a limited selection of episodes of classic series from the NBCUniversal Television Distribution program library – including shows not broadcast by NBC during their original runs (including the complete or partial episode catalogs of shows like *30 Rock*, *The A-Team*, *Charles in Charge*, *Emergency!*, *Knight Rider* (both the original series and the short-lived 2008 reboot), *Kojak*, *Miami Vice*, *The Office*, *Quantum Leap* and *Simon & Simon*).^{[102][103][104]}

On February 18, 2015, NBC began providing live programming streams of local NBC stations in select markets, which are only available to authenticated subscribers of participating pay television providers. All eleven NBC owned-and-operated stations owned by NBCUniversal Owned Television Stations' were the first stations to offer streams of their programming on NBC's website and mobile app, with intentions to reach agreements with other station groups to provide streams of NBC-affiliated stations in other markets. Due to restrictions imposed by the league, the network's NFL game telecasts are not permitted to be streamed on the service.^{[105][106][107][108]}

NBC HD

NBC's master feed is transmitted in 1080i high definition, the native resolution format for NBCUniversal's television properties. However, 19 of its affiliates transmit the network's programming in 720p HD, while four others carry the network feed in 480i standard definition^[95] either due to technical considerations for affiliates of other major networks that carry NBC programming on a digital subchannel, or because a primary feed NBC affiliate has not yet upgraded their transmission equipment to allow content to be presented in HD.

WRAL-TV in Raleigh, North Carolina (a station that re-joined NBC in February 2016) is currently testing the upcoming ATSC 3.0 television standard, which will allow the transmission of 2160p ultra-high-definition television (UHD), through a secondary experimental station (WRAL-EX); it has transmitted limited NBC programming in UHD through a secondary subchannel, and is currently the only station overall which transmits NBC's schedule in 1080p on its main subchannel.

Meet the Press was the first regular series on a major television network to produce a high-definition broadcast on February 2, 1997, which aired in the format over WHD-TV in Washington, D.C., an experimental television station owned by a consortium of industry groups and stations which launched to allow testing of HD broadcasts and operated until 2002 (the program itself continued to be transmitted in 480i standard definition over the NBC network until May 2, 2010, when it became the last NBC News program to convert to HD).^{[109][110]} NBC officially began its conversion to high definition with the launch of its simulcast feed, NBC HD, on April 26, 1999, when *The Tonight Show* became the first HD program to air on the NBC network as well as the first regularly scheduled American network program to be produced and transmitted in high definition. The network gradually converted much of its existing programming from standard-definition to high definition beginning with the 2002–03 season, with select shows among that season's slate of freshmen scripted series being broadcast in HD from their debuts.^[111]

The network completed its conversion to high definition in September 2012, with the launch of NBC Kids, a new Saturday morning children's block programmed by new partial sister network PBS Kids Sprout, which also became the second Saturday morning children's block with an entirely HD schedule (after the ABC-syndicated *Litton's Weekend Adventure*). All of the network's programming has been presented in full HD since then (with the exception of certain holiday specials produced prior to 2005 – such as its annual broadcast of *It's a Wonderful Life* – which continue to be presented in 4:3 SD, although some have been remastered for HD broadcast).

NBCi



NBCi header used from 1999 to 2007.

In 1999, NBC launched NBCi (briefly changing its web address to "www.nbc.com"), a heavily advertised online venture serving as an attempt to launch an Internet portal and homepage. This move saw NBC partner with XOOM.com (not to be confused with the current money transfer service), e-mail.com, AllBusiness.com,^[112] and Snap.com (eventually acquiring all four companies outright; Snap should also not be confused with the current-day parent of Snapchat) to launch a multi-faceted internet portal with e-mail, webhosting, community, chat and personalization capabilities, and news content. Subsequently, in April 2000, NBC purchased GlobalBrain, a company specializing in search engines that learned from searches initiated by its users, for \$32 million.

The experiment lasted roughly one season; after its failure, NBCi's operations were folded back into NBC.^[113] The NBC Television portion of the website reverted to NBC.com. However, the NBCi website continued in operation as a portal for NBC-branded content (NBCi.com would be redirected to NBCi.msnbc.com), using a co-branded version of InfoSpace to deliver minimal portal content. In mid-2007, NBCi.com began to mirror the main NBC.com website;^[114] NBCi.com was eventually redirected to the NBC.com domain in 2010.

Evolution of the NBC logo

NBC has used a number of logos throughout its history; early logos used by the television and radio networks were similar to the logo of its then parent company, RCA. Logos used later in NBC's existence incorporated stylized peacock designs, including the current version that has been in use since 1986.

International broadcasts

Canada

NBC network programs can be received throughout most of Canada on cable, satellite and IPTV providers through certain U.S.-based affiliates of the network (such as WBTS-LD/Boston, KING-TV/Seattle, KBJR-TV/Duluth, Minnesota, WGRZ/Buffalo, New York and WDIV-TV/Detroit). Some programs carried on these stations are subject to simultaneous substitutions, a practice imposed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission in which a pay television provider supplants an American station's signal with a feed from a Canadian station/network airing a particular program in the same time slot to protect domestic advertising revenue. Some of these affiliates are also receivable over-the-air in southern areas of the country located near the Canada–United States border (signal coverage was somewhat reduced after the digital television transition in 2009 due to the lower radiated power required to transmit digital signals).

Europe and the Middle East

NBC no longer exists outside the Americas as a channel in its own right. However, NBC News and MSNBC programs are broadcast for a few hours a day on OSN News, formerly known as Orbit News in Africa and the Middle East. Sister network CNBC Europe also broadcasts occasional breaking news coverage from MSNBC as well as *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. CNBC Europe also broadcast daily airings of *NBC Nightly News* at 00:30 CET Monday to Fridays.^[115]^[116]

NBC Super Channel becomes NBC Europe

In 1993, then-NBC parent General Electric acquired Super Channel, relaunching the Pan-European cable network as NBC Super Channel.^[117] In 1996, the channel was renamed NBC Europe, but was, from then on, almost always referred to on-air as simply "NBC".

Most of NBC Europe's prime time programming was produced in Europe due to rights restrictions associated with U.S. primetime shows; the channel's weekday late night schedule after 11:00 p.m. Central European Time, however, featured *The Tonight Show*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and *Later*, which the channel's slogan "Where the Stars Come Out at Night" was based around. Many NBC News programs were broadcast on NBC Europe, including *Dateline NBC*, *Meet the Press* and *NBC Nightly News*, the latter of which was broadcast simultaneously with the initial U.S. telecast. *Today* was also initially aired live in the afternoons, but was later broadcast instead the following morning on a more than half-day delay.

In 1999, NBC Europe ceased broadcasting in most of Europe outside of Germany; the network was concurrently relaunched as a German-language technology channel aimed at a younger demographic, with the new series *NBC GIGA* as its flagship program. In 2005, the channel was relaunched again as the free-to-air movie channel Das Vierte which eventually shut down end of 2013 (acquired by Disney which replaced it by a German version of Disney Channel. GIGA Television was subsequently spun off as a separate digital channel, available on satellite and cable providers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland which shut down as a TV-station end of 2009.

Latin America

Mexico

NBC programming is available in Mexico through free-to-air affiliates in markets located within proximity to the Mexico–United States border (such as KYMA-DT/Yuma, Arizona; KGNS-TV/Laredo, Texas; KTSM/El Paso, Texas; KVEO/Brownsville, Texas; and KNSD/San Diego), whose signals are readily receivable over-the-air in border areas of northern Mexico. Some U.S.-based border affiliates are also available on subscription television providers throughout the country, including in the Mexico City area.

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, satellite providers carry either select U.S.-based NBC and Telemundo affiliated stations or the main network feed from NBCUniversal or Telemundo. The main local affiliate stations are NBC 6 WTVJ, Telemundo 51 WSCV in Miami. In addition to the NBC programming there is also available by the NBC sister network Telemundo, a Spanish network based in the United States.

Canal de Noticias

In 1993, NBC launched a 24-hour Spanish-language news channel serving Latin America (the second news channel serving that region overall, after Noticias ECO, and the first to broadcast 24 hours a day), Canal de Noticias NBC, which based its news schedule around the "wheel" format conceived at CNN.^[118] The channel, which was headquartered in the offices of the NBC News Channel affiliate news service in Charlotte, North Carolina, employed over 50 journalists to produce, write, anchor and provide technical services. Canal de Noticias NBC shut down in 1999 due to the channel's inability to generate sustainable advertising revenue.

Caribbean

In the Caribbean, many subscription providers carry either select U.S.-based NBC affiliated stations or the main network feed from NBC O&Os WNBC in New York City or WTVJ in Miami. In addition, the network's programming has been available in the U.S. Virgin Islands since 2004 on WVGN-LD in Charlotte Amalie (owned by LKK Group), while Telemundo owned-and-operated station WKAQ-TV in San Juan, Puerto Rico carries the WNBC feed on a digital subchannel. In these areas, NBC programs are available in English and in Spanish via second audio program.

Bahamas

In the Bahamas, NBC programming is available via U.S.-based affiliate stations on domestic cable providers.

Netherlands Antilles

In Aruba, NBC maintains an affiliation with Oranjestad station PJA-TV (which brands on-air as "ATV").

Puerto Rico

In Puerto Rico, Telemundo O&O WKAQ-TV carries "NBC Puerto Rico" over their third subchannel, which is effectively a simulcast of WNBC with some local advertising and station identification.

Bermuda

Until it ended operations in 2014, NBC's entire program lineup was carried by VSB-TV, using the Eastern Time Zone feed, though an hour ahead due to its location in the Atlantic Time Zone. Bermuda currently receives NBC service from WTVJ Miami via cable.

Pacific

Guam

In Guam, the entire NBC programming lineup is carried by Hagåtña affiliate KUAM-TV (which has been an NBC affiliate since 1956) via the network's East Coast satellite feed. Entertainment and news programming is broadcast day and date on a one-day tape delay as Guam is on the west side of the International Date Line (for example, the network's Thursday prime time lineup airs Friday evenings on KUAM, and is advertised by the station as airing on the latter night in on-air promotions). Live programming, including breaking news and sporting events, airs as scheduled; because of the time difference with the six U.S. time zones, live sports coverage often airs on the station early in the morning. KUAM's programming is relayed to the Northern Mariana Islands via satellite station WSZE in Saipan.

American Samoa

In American Samoa, NBC was affiliated with KKHJ-LP in Pago Pago^[119] from 2005 to 2012. Cable television providers on the islands carry the network's programming via Seattle affiliate KING-TV.

Federated States of Micronesia

In the Federated States of Micronesia, NBC programming is available on domestic cable providers via Honolulu affiliate KHNL.

Asia

NBC Asia and CNBC Asia

NBC Asia launched in 1994, distributed to Nepal, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines. Like NBC Europe, NBC Asia featured most of NBC's news programs as well as *The Tonight Show*, *Late Night* and *Saturday Night Live*. Like its European counterpart, it was not allowed to broadcast American-produced primetime shows due to existing broadcast agreements with other domestic broadcasters. NBC Asia produced a regional evening news program that aired each weeknight, and occasionally simulcast some programs from CNBC Asia and MSNBC. NBC also operated NBC Super Sports, a 24-hour channel devoted to televising sporting events.

In July 1998, NBC Asia was replaced by a regional version of the National Geographic Channel. As is the case with NBC Europe, CNBC Asia broadcasts select episodes of *The Tonight Show* and *Late Night* as well as *Meet the Press* as part of its weekend schedule, and airs NFL games under the *Sunday Night Football* brand.

Regional partners

Through regional partners, NBC-produced programs are seen in some countries in the continent. In the Philippines, Jack TV (owned by Solar Entertainment) airs *Will & Grace* and *Saturday Night Live*, while TalkTV airs *The Tonight Show* and NBC News programs including the weekday and weekend editions of *Today*, *Early Today*, *Dateline NBC* and *NBC Nightly News*. Solar TV formerly broadcast *The Jay Leno Show* from 2009 to 2010. In Hong Kong, English language free-to-air channel TVB Pearl (operated by TVB) airs live broadcasts of *NBC Nightly News*, as well as other select NBC programs.

Australia

In Australia, the Seven Network has maintained close ties with NBC and has used a majority of the U.S. network's image campaigns and slogans since the 1970s (conversely, in 2009, NBC and Seven both used the Guy Sebastian single "Like it Like That" in image promos for their respective summer schedules). The network's Seven News division has used John Williams-composed "The Mission" (the proprietary theme music for NBC News' flagship programs since 1985) as the theme music for its local and national news programs since the mid-1980s. Local newscasts were also titled *Seven Nightly News* from the mid-1980s until c. 2000. NBC News and Seven News often share news resources, with the former division using Seven's reporters for breaking news coverage and select taped story packages relating to Australian stories and the latter sometimes incorporating NBC News reports into its national bulletins.

Seven also rebroadcasts some of NBC's news and current affairs programming during the early morning hours (usually from 3:00 to 5:00 a.m. local time), including the weekday and weekend editions of *Today* (which it brands as *NBC Today* to differentiate it from the unrelated morning program on the Nine Network), *Dateline NBC* and *Meet the Press*.

Criticism and controversies

Presidents of NBC Entertainment


Executive	Term	Position
<u>Sylvester Weaver</u>	1953–1955	Weaver was hired by NBC in 1949, to help challenge CBS's ratings lead. While at NBC, Weaver established many operating practices that became standard for network television; he introduced the practice of networks producing their own television programs and selling advertising time during the broadcasts. Prior to this, advertising agencies usually developed each show for a particular client. Because commercial slots could now more easily be sold to more than one corporate sponsor for each program, a single advertiser pulling out of a program would not necessarily threaten it. Weaver also created several series for the network, <i>Today</i> (in 1952), <i>Tonight Starring Steve Allen</i> (in 1954, the first program in the <i>Tonight Show</i> franchise), <i>Home</i> (1954) and <i>Wide Wide World</i> (1955). Weaver strongly believed that broadcasting should educate as well as entertain and required NBC shows to typically include at least one sophisticated cultural reference or performance per installment – including a segment of a Giuseppe Verdi opera adapted to the comedic style of Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca's groundbreaking <i>Your Show of Shows</i> . Weaver did not ignore NBC Radio and gave it a shot in the arm in 1955, at a time when network radio was dying and giving way to television, when he developed <i>NBC Monitor</i> , a weekend-long magazine-style block featuring an array of news, music, comedy, drama and sports, with rotating advertisers and some of the most memorable names in broadcast journalism, entertainment and sports that ran until 1975 (20 years after Weaver's departure). Weaver departed shortly afterward, following disputes with NBC chairman David Sarnoff, who believed that his ideas were either too expensive or too highbrow for company tastes. His respective successors, Robert Sarnoff and Robert Kintner, standardized the network's programming practices with far less of the ambitiousness that characterized the Weaver years.
<u>Robert E. Kintner</u>	1958–1966	Kintner was appointed President in 1958; his tenure at NBC was marked by his aggressive effort to push the network's news division past CBS News in ratings and prestige. The news division was given more money, leading it to gain additional resources to provide coverage, notably of the 1960 Presidential election campaign, and led the <i>Huntley-Brinkley Report</i> to prominence among the network news programs.
<u>Julian Goodman</u>	1966–1974	Goodman, who joined NBC in 1966, helped establish Chet Huntley and David Brinkley as a well-known anchor team. While working at NBC, he negotiated a \$1 million deal to retain Johnny Carson as host of <i>The Tonight Show</i> .
<u>Herb Schlosser</u>	1974–1978	After Johnny Carson announced he wanted to cancel the weekend editions of <i>The Tonight Show</i> in order to instead have repeats of it aired on weeknights, ^[120] Schlosser approached his vice president of late night programming, Dick Ebersol, and asked him to create a show to fill the Saturday night time slot. At the suggestion of Paramount Pictures executive Barry Diller, Schlosser and Ebersol then approached Lorne Michaels. Over the next three weeks, Ebersol and Michaels developed the latter's idea for a variety show featuring high-concept comedy sketches, political satire, and music performances. By 1975 Michaels had assembled a talented cast, including Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi, Chevy Chase, Jane Curtin, Garrett Morris, Laraine Newman, Michael O'Donoghue, Gilda Radner, and George Coe. The show was originally called <i>NBC's Saturday Night</i> , because <i>Saturday Night Live</i> was in use by a program on the rival network ABC that was hosted by its sportscaster Howard Cosell. NBC purchased the rights to the name in 1976 and officially adopted the new title on March 26, 1977. <i>Saturday Night Live</i> remains on the air to this day.
<u>Fred Silverman</u>	1978–1981	Although Silverman developed many successful shows during his tenure at ABC, he left that network to become President and CEO of NBC in 1978. His three-year tenure at the network proved to be a difficult period for the network, marked by several high-profile failures such as <i>Hello, Larry</i> , <i>Pink Lady and Jeff</i> , <i>Supertrain</i> and the Jean Doumanian era of <i>Saturday Night Live</i> (Silverman hired Doumanian after Al Franken, the planned successor for outgoing creator/executive producer Lorne Michaels, castigated Silverman's failures in a sketch on the program ^[35]). Despite these failures, high points during Silverman's tenure included the launch of <i>Hill Street Blues</i> and the miniseries <i>Shōgun</i> . He also brought David Letterman to the network to host daytime talker <i>The David Letterman Show</i> , two years before the debut of Letterman's successful late night program in 1982, after Silverman negotiated a holding deal after the former's cancellation to keep Letterman from going to another network. However, Silverman nearly lost late night leader Johnny Carson, who filed a lawsuit against NBC during a contract dispute with the network; the case was settled out of court and Carson remained with NBC in exchange for acquiring the rights to his show and permission to reduce his time on-air (leading to the use of guest hosts on <i>The Tonight Show</i> such as Joan Rivers and his immediate successor, Jay Leno). ^[121] Silverman also developed successful sitcoms such as

		<p><i>Diff'rent Strokes</i>, <i>The Facts of Life</i> and <i>Gimme a Break!</i>, and made the series commitments that led to <i>Cheers</i> and <i>St. Elsewhere</i>. Silverman also pioneered the reality television genre with the 1979 debut of <i>Real People</i>. His contributions to the network's game show output included the Goodson-Todman-produced <i>Card Sharks</i> and a revival of <i>Password</i>, both of which enjoyed great success as part of the morning schedule, although he also canceled several other relatively popular series, including <i>The Hollywood Squares</i> and <i>High Rollers</i>, to make way for <i>The David Letterman Show</i> (those cancellations also threatened <i>Wheel of Fortune</i>, whose host, Chuck Woolery, left in a payment dispute during Silverman's tenure, although the show survived). Silverman also oversaw, while simultaneously objecting to, the hiring of Pat Sajak as the new host of <i>Wheel</i> (Sajak remains as host to this day in its syndicated incarnation).^[122] On Saturday mornings, at a time when there was much similarity in animated content on the major networks, Silverman oversaw the development of an animated series based on <i>The Smurfs</i> (which ran from 1981 to 1989, well after Silverman's departure, making it one of his longest-lasting contributions to the network) as well as a revival of <i>The Flintstones</i>. In addition, Silverman revitalized the NBC News division, helping <i>Today</i> and <i>NBC Nightly News</i> achieve parity with their competition for the first time in years; and created a new FM radio division with competitive stations in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. During his NBC tenure, Silverman also brought in an entirely new divisional and corporate management team, which remained in place long after Silverman's departure (among this group was Brandon Tartikoff, who as President of Entertainment, would help get NBC back on top by 1985). Silverman also reintroduced the peacock as NBC's corporate logo in 1979.</p>
Brandon Tartikoff	1981–1991	<p>Tartikoff was hired as a program executive at ABC in 1976. He joined NBC the following year, after being hired by Dick Ebersol to direct comedy programs for the network. Tartikoff took over as president of NBC's entertainment division in 1981,^[123] becoming the youngest person ever to hold the position, at age 32. At the time Tartikoff took over, NBC was mired in last place behind ABC and CBS, and faced a looming writers' strike and affiliates defecting to other networks (mostly to ABC); <i>Little House on the Prairie</i>, <i>Diff'rent Strokes</i> and <i>Real People</i> were the only prime time shows the network had in the Nielsen Top 20. Also of issue, Johnny Carson was reportedly in talks to move his landmark late-night talk show to ABC; while the original cast and writing staff of <i>Saturday Night Live</i> had left the show, and their replacements had earned <i>SNL</i> some of its worst reviews. By 1982, Tartikoff and network president Grant Tinker gradually turned the network's fortunes around.^[124] Tartikoff's successes as President of Entertainment included <i>The Cosby Show</i> (Tartikoff had pursued actor-comedian Bill Cosby to create a comedy pilot after having been impressed by the comedian's stories when Cosby was a guest host on <i>The Tonight Show</i>), the iconic 1980s drama <i>Miami Vice</i> (Tartikoff wrote a brainstorming memo that simply read "MTV cops", and later presented it to former <i>Hill Street Blues</i> writer/producer Anthony Yerkovich, who turned into the concept behind <i>Miami Vice</i>).^{[125][126][127][128]} and <i>Knight Rider</i> (which was inspired by a perceived lack of leading men who could act, with Tartikoff suggesting that a talking car could fill in the gaps in any leading man's acting abilities).^[124] While <i>Family Ties</i> was undergoing its casting process, Tartikoff was unexcited about Michael J. Fox being considered for the role of Alex P. Keaton,^[124] however, creator/executive producer Gary David Goldberg insisted on having Fox in the role until Tartikoff relented, saying, "Go ahead if you insist. But I'm telling you, this is not the kind of face you'll ever see on a lunch box". After Fox's stardom was cemented by <i>Back to the Future</i>, he good-naturedly sent Tartikoff a lunch box with Fox's picture that contained a note reading: "To Brandon: This is for you to put your crow in. Love and Kisses, Michael J. Fox", which Tartikoff kept in his office for the rest of his career. Johnny Carson broke the news of his retirement in February 1991 to Tartikoff during a lunch meeting at the Grille in Beverly Hills. Tartikoff and chairman Bob Wright were the only ones who knew of the planned retirement before it was made public days later.^[124] Tartikoff wrote in his memoirs that his biggest professional regret was cancelling the series <i>Buffalo Bill</i>, which he later went on to include in a fantasy "dream schedule" created for a <i>TV Guide</i> article that detailed his idea of "The Greatest Network Ever."</p>
Warren Littlefield	1991–1998	<p>Littlefield helped develop <i>Cheers</i>, <i>The Cosby Show</i> and <i>The Golden Girls</i> as senior, and later, executive vice president of NBC Entertainment under Brandon Tartikoff, of whom Littlefield was his protégé. During his tenure as president of NBC, Littlefield oversaw the creation of many hit shows during the 1990s such as <i>Seinfeld</i>, <i>The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air</i>, <i>Wings</i>, <i>Blossom</i>, <i>Law & Order</i>, <i>Mad About You</i>, <i>Sisters</i>, <i>Frasier</i>, <i>Friends</i>, <i>ER</i>, <i>Homicide: Life on the Street</i>, <i>Caroline in the City</i>, <i>NewsRadio</i>, <i>3rd Rock from the Sun</i>, <i>Suddenly Susan</i>, <i>Just Shoot Me!</i>, <i>Will & Grace</i> and <i>The West Wing</i>.</p>
Scott	1998–	<p>Sassa joined NBC in September 1997 as president of the NBC Television Stations division,</p>

<u>Sassa</u>	1999	where he was responsible for overseeing the operation of NBC's then 13 owned-and-operated stations. ^[129] In October 1998, Sassa became president of NBC Entertainment, lasting in that position for eight months until he was reassigned to NBC's West Coast division in May 1999, where as its president, he oversaw NBC's entertainment-related businesses. ^[43] Sassa made the transition to that position after working alongside his predecessor, Don Ohlmeyer. During this time, he oversaw the development and production of NBC's new primetime series including such shows as <i>The West Wing</i> , <i>Law & Order: Special Victims Unit</i> and <i>Fear Factor</i> . Under Sassa, NBC rated as the #1 network for three out of four seasons.
<u>Garth Ancier</u>	1999–2000	Ancier, who also worked as television producer (most notably, serving as executive producer of tabloid talk show <i>Ricki Lake</i>) prior to joining the network, was named President of NBC Entertainment in 1999.
<u>Jeff Zucker</u>	2000–2004	Zucker was named President of NBC Entertainment in 2000, succeeding Garth Ancier. ^[130] In a 2004 profile on Zucker, <i>Businessweek</i> stated that in his four years as entertainment president, he was responsible for having "kept the network ahead of the pack by airing the gross out show <i>Fear Factor</i> , negotiating for the cast of the hit series <i>Friends</i> to take the series up to a tenth season, and signing Donald Trump for the reality show <i>The Apprentice</i> " and having helped increase NBC's operating revenue from \$532 million in 1999 to \$870 million by 2003. Other critical and/or commercial successes greenlit under Zucker included <i>Las Vegas</i> , <i>Law & Order: Criminal Intent</i> and <i>Scrubs</i> . He originated the concept of airing "Supersized" episodes (running longer than the standard 30-minute slot) of NBC sitcoms during sweeps and making aggressive programming efforts during the summer to compete with cable networks that began to draw viewers to their original programming content while the networks ran mostly reruns. Zucker also oversaw the successful transition of Bravo (which NBC acquired from Rainbow Media in 2002) from a film and arts-focused network to a network primarily reliant on reality series, and the repositioning of Telemundo to become more competitive with leading Spanish-language network Univision. In May 2004, following NBC's merger with Vivendi Universal, Zucker was promoted to president of the NBC Universal Television Group. Zucker's responsibilities, which already included NBC's cable channels, were expanded to include oversight of television production as well as USA Network, Sci-Fi Channel and Trio. Following his promotion, NBC slid from first place to fourth in the ratings. Shows that Zucker championed such as animated series <i>Father of the Pride</i> and the <i>Friends</i> spinoff <i>Joey</i> floundered. ^[131]
<u>Kevin Reilly</u>	2004–2007	Reilly was appointed President of Entertainment in May 2004. Having begun his career at NBC Entertainment almost two decades earlier, he returned to the network in the fall of 2003 as President of Primetime Development. Early in his NBC career, Reilly supervised <i>Law & Order</i> in its first season and helped develop <i>ER</i> . After his first stint at NBC, Reilly became President of Brad Grey Television, the television production arm of Brillstein-Grey Entertainment, in 1994. He was responsible for the development of the pilot for <i>The Sopranos</i> , and NBC sitcoms <i>Just Shoot Me!</i> and <i>NewsRadio</i> . Reilly's vocal support of <i>The Office</i> helped it survive its first season, despite it suffering from low ratings. ^[132] Shows developed under Reilly included <i>My Name Is Earl</i> , <i>Heroes</i> , <i>30 Rock</i> and <i>Friday Night Lights</i> . ^[133] Although he signed a new three-year contract with NBC in February 2007, Reilly was terminated as President in late May 2007. ^[134] Approximately one month later, he joined Fox as its President of Entertainment.
<u>Ben Silverman</u>	2007–2009	Silverman and Marc Graboff were appointed co-chairmen of NBC Entertainment in 2007, succeeding Kevin Reilly. That year, Silverman became the first producer since Norman Lear (in 1973) to have two Emmy-nominated shows in the "Outstanding Comedy/Variety Series" category (<i>The Office</i> and ABC's <i>Ugly Betty</i>). ^[135] He is credited for his role in saving the critically acclaimed but low-rated NBC drama <i>Friday Night Lights</i> by striking an innovative deal, ^[136] in which DirecTV agreed to take on a substantial amount of the show's production budget in exchange for exclusive first window rights to broadcast the program on <i>The 101</i> while NBC would re-air the episodes later in the season. ^[137]
<u>Jeff Gaspin</u>	2009–2010	Gaspin first joined NBC in the early 1980s, as part of its associates program, after failing to find any jobs in finance on Wall Street. After spending five years in the finance department, he was promoted to a programming position at NBC News at the urging of the news division's then-president Michael Gartner, before being moved to the entertainment division. During his first tenure, Gaspin helped to develop and launch <i>Dateline NBC</i> and oversaw the expansion of <i>Today</i> to weekends. In 1996, Gaspin left NBC to become program development chief at VH1. Gaspin returned to NBC in 2001 as Executive Vice President of Program Strategy at NBC Entertainment, where he helped to develop new programs such as <i>The Apprentice</i> and <i>The Biggest Loser</i> . In 2002, Gaspin was appointed as President of Bravo, following NBC's purchase of the cable channel, where his most notable accomplishments were the massive

		hits <i>Queer Eye for the Straight Guy</i> and <i>Project Runway</i> . He was reassigned to President of NBC Universal Cable and Digital Content in 2007. ^[138] In July 2009, Gaspin was promoted to Chairman of NBC Universal Television Entertainment, becoming responsible for NBC Entertainment, USA Network, Bravo and NBC Universal Domestic Television Distribution.
Robert Greenblatt	2011–present	Greenblatt succeeded Jeff Gaspin in January 2011 after Comcast took control of NBCUniversal. ^[139]

See also

-  NBC portal
- Lists of NBC television affiliates
- List of NBC personalities
- NBC pages
- Olympics on NBC
- CBS
- PBS
- NFL on NBC

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- Robinson, Marc (2002). *Brought to You in Living Color: 75 Years of Great Moments in Television and Radio from NBC*. Wiley.

External links

- Official website (<http://www.nbc.com>)
- Official History and Milestones for NBC Universal (<http://www.nbcuniversal.com/our-history>)
- Museum of Broadcast Communications – NBC History (<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/N/htmlN/nationalbroa/nationalbroa.htm>)
- NBC Logo Creation History (<https://www.logaster.com/blog/nbc-logo/>)

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