

## Channels TV lays the foundation for sustainable digital video operations

Channels TV is a Nigerian 24-hour broadcaster that delivers news from around the African continent and produces in-house current affairs programs.

### OPPORTUNITY

Channels TV wanted to lay the groundwork for better video production so it could deliver trusted digital-first news and grow its YouTube audience. To do this, it invested in digital video capabilities that would bolster its team and technical abilities.

### APPROACH

Channels TV built a dedicated digital video studio, hired new staff, purchased cutting-edge equipment, and overhauled its internal operations and workflows. Then it started creating digital-first news videos.

**Getting the existing team on board:** As a first step, Channels TV informed the existing digital team about the proposed changes to operations. The team held brainstorming sessions and workshops on the direction they wanted for digital video. This ensured that everyone was on the same page, and invested in the project, from day one.

**Setting the team up for success:** Channels TV then identified gaps in the current team and hired staff to fill the roles. Additional equipment was purchased for new staff (e.g., video editing computers, software). Team members received ongoing training throughout the year in scripting, editing, titling, thumbnails, graphics design, photography, digital content monetization, cinematography and lighting, visual effects, and analytics.

**Building the studio:** A digital video studio was constructed and fitted out with new tools and equipment. The team didn't have to rely anymore on the broadcast studio facilities that were shared with the traditional TV teams, which often resulted in long wait times and production delays.

**Updating the channel:** The team overhauled the look and feel of the brand's existing YouTube channel. They updated the thumbnail template to use custom thumbnails rather than automatically generated ones. They also made changes to their titling strategy and the types of photos and graphics they used to make them more appealing to a global audience.

**Launching production:** Concurrently, the team headed into production for a digital-first series, "The News in 2 Minutes" — a two-minute, twice-daily news report covering the top five stories of the day (three local stories, one foreign, one sports). They also commenced work on a Hausa-language offering (short-form, summarized version of the news in Hausa, produced on a daily basis), for which they created a separate but linked YouTube channel.

**Looking to the future:** The Channels TV digital team have a solid foundation in place and are now in a position to roll out their full digital video strategy. In the coming months and years, they aim to produce many more digital offerings (e.g., explainer videos, talk shows, mini documentaries, etc.), further optimize their YouTube channel, provide more staff training, recruit additional team members, and better utilize analytics to review and modify digital operations.

### RESULTS

Channel TV laid the groundwork for a robust and sustainable digital video department, and updated its existing channel to bring it more in line with YouTube best practices.

- **Strengthened digital video capabilities**, including building a custom studio, and hiring and training a digital video team.
- **Overhauled the look and feel of its YouTube channel** to make it more appealing to a wider audience.
- **1.5M+ cumulative views** of "The News in 2 Minutes" by early 2020.
- **1M subscribers** in April 2020.

### LEARNINGS

**On digital**, new formats trump traditional broadcast formats: Well-produced and purpose-made video formats perform best on digital. The Channels TV team learned that digital-first videos resonated better with YouTube audiences than the same news stories clipped from broadcast and published online.

**Video optimization is critical:** Thumbnails, titles, and descriptions are important in driving video performance. Channels TV saw a massive jump in views for "The News in 2 Minutes" series when it moved away from titles that were basic date descriptions — for example, "News Update for May 15, 2019" to "Update: Nigeria Records Highest Single-Day Number Of Cases". The team also saw more click-through when they created custom thumbnails rather than relying on auto-generated ones.

**Communicate change to your audience:** Communication is crucial for smooth transformation or change. In the process of creating digital-first videos, Channels TV realized it had to engage in a two-way exchange with audiences, not just promote its content. This helped existing and new audiences better navigate the Channels TV pages and distinguish between old, traditional-style uploads and new, digital productions.

“**Our improved capacities helped extend our reach to an underserved demographic and push us forward in our fight for high-quality news to combat misinformation online.**”

