



BBC WORLD NEWS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS ON SCREENS ACROSS THE GLOBE

The award-winning 24-hour TV channel, BBC World News, is celebrating its 25th birthday this month and will mark its silver anniversary with a special on-screen look.

The English language channel originally launched with a half hour news bulletin as World Service Television (WSTV) on Monday 11th March 1991, when it replaced BBC TV Europe. At the time it inherited 700,000 subscribers but nowadays the channel is available in 433 million households across the world.

Eight months later, WSTV became a 24 hour news operation and launched in Asia – the start of its rapid growth which would eventually see it become available in more than 200 countries and territories.

In 1995 it relaunched as BBC World before changing its name to BBC World News in 2008 and moving to a new 24/7 multi-platform building dubbed ‘the world’s news room’ in 2013.

The original news team comprised of six journalists from the World Service team and six from television news. Today, BBC World News has access to the expertise of thousands of journalists based in over a hundred cities and state-of-the-art studios across the world.

Speaking about the anniversary, BBC Global News Ltd CEO Jim Egan said, “The world has changed dramatically for all of us in the past 25 years and so has the way we get news from the field to our viewers. But our commitment to providing accurate, impartial news of the highest quality to international audiences is unwavering. We’re proud that, in a world of great uncertainty and in a news industry which is every bit as volatile, BBC World News continues to grow and is the most trusted source of global television news available anywhere.”

BBC World News Timeline

1991 - World Service Television launches with its first half hour bulletin across Europe. Seven months later, new deals make the channel available across Asia and the Middle East. In November, BBC World Service Television becomes a 24 hour channel.



1992 - The channel becomes available in Africa for the first time.

1995 - World Service Television relaunches as BBC World and starts a new translation service for Japanese audiences.



1996 - BBC World launches in Latin America and is awarded terrestrial frequency in Berlin, the first foreign broadcaster anywhere to be granted such a licence.

1997 - BBC News launches its website – BBC.com.

1998 - BBC World moves to the world's first ever 24-hour fully digital newsroom and begins broadcasting bulletins on public service stations across the US.

2002 - BBC World distribution exceeds 100 million full-time homes for the first time.

2003 - BBC World becomes available full-time in United Nations headquarters in New York.

2004 - BBC World becomes available in more than a million hotel rooms globally.

2005 – BBC launches its User Generated Content Hub to address the increasing amount of footage being submitted by members of the public.

2007 - BBC World News America launches on BBC World and public television, delivering in-depth reports and analysis on major international news stories across the U.S.

2008 - BBC World changes its name to BBC World News and brings the channel closer to the BBC's TV, radio and online and newsgathering teams.



2009 - BBC World News launches an app on tablets and smartphones in 16 European countries.

2010 - BBC World News extends its app to 15 new countries, including Australia and New Zealand.

2012 - The BBC's commercially funded bbc.com/news and BBC World News services are merged under BBC Global News Ltd.

2013 - BBC World News relocates to a state-of-the-art multimedia newsroom alongside the World Service's 29 language services, the BBC's domestic news teams and all of the BBC's London-based TV, radio, online and social media teams. The building houses 3000 journalists, production and operational staff and means that the UK and global services are co-ordinated from one location, enabling colleagues to share production and coverage of breaking stories around the world.



Two brand new HD studios transform the range and quality of output, offering full HD production, virtual reality and enhanced graphics. Robotic cameras mounted on a track give programmes dynamic movement, fluidity and an exciting range of camera shots.

2014 - BBC is identified as a leader in global breaking news and the most-shared news brand on Twitter. It launches Outside Source – an innovative, interactive news show for the digital age which uses state-of-the-art touch screen technology to access a plethora of visual, aural and social media sources which bring the latest stories of the day to life.

2015 - BBC launches a new version of its international app, offering personalised news covering over 50,000 topics, and pilots new virtual voice-over technology to produce voiced and subtitled online news packages in different languages.

2016 - BBC World News celebrates its 25th anniversary with record figures of 85 million viewers per week.

BBC World News presenters talk about their most memorable moment from the past 25 years

Ros Atkins:

I got to Soweto a few hours after Nelson Mandela had died, and I expected to report on quiet mourning, but by the time I was on air a singing, dancing celebration of his life was very much under way.

Rajan Datar:

From my perspective it's always a joy to be allowed entry into a country that has been isolated for decades, as with our filming trip to Myanmar, or Burma, where we discovered incredible natural beauty and people desperate to talk to the rest of the world.

Karin Giannone:

My most memorable moment was the first time I was sent abroad for BBC World News to Rome to cover the Italian debt crisis and the resignation of Silvio Berlusconi. Being live on air in huge crowds when he finally stepped down - I will always remember that moment.

Geeta Guru-Murthy:

A memorable moment? Well, rolling on three huge stories: Israel and Gaza, the Yazidis and IS plus the Malaysian plane crash over Ukraine. All totally distressing but absolutely gripping. It is of course the human stories that stay with you; watching the Afghanistan girl being threatened to be sold off in marriage thinking, 'is there anything we can do?' The little boy in dungarees suspected of having Ebola. Those are the stories that stay with you, but I hope that in telling those stories and being part of this incredible news room that we do something to help.

Lucy Hockings:

From the 9/11 attacks to the current refugee crisis here in Europe and all the world-altering events in between, it's been amazing for me to be part of the BBC World News team for all of these years.

Katty Kay:

My most memorable moment was covering the 2008 US presidential election. Watching Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton run for the White House was endlessly exciting and also inspiring.

Yogita Limaye:

The most memorable story I've covered is the Nepal earthquake. Being able to communicate the scale of the disaster, especially from the more remote parts of the country, to people around the world made me really see why journalism matters.

Stephen Sackur:

My most powerful memory is reporting from Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. I uncovered the first evidence of mass graves containing thousands of bodies murdered by Saddam's regime. It was important to bear witness.

Jon Sopel:

The most memorable moment for me was sitting down and interviewing US President Barack Obama and then watching it go out not on BBC World News - though it did, but on all the American networks who wanted to run our interview.

Laura Trevelyan:

The most important story I've covered was the humanitarian crisis caused by Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. I travelled with the UN Secretary General as he surveyed the devastation and persuaded Myanmar's isolated military rulers to accept outside help.

Five things that have changed news in the last 25 years

- 1) Technology.** By 1991, news reporting from the field had already undergone a seismic shift, thanks to the progression from film to video tape in the 1980s. The greater access to satellite technology meant it became easier for broadcasters to reach across the globe, and for our journalists to beam their pictures back to headquarters. The development of the internet – especially with greater bandwidth – changed things even further, enabling footage to be sent via a laptop and a miniature sat dish – meaning journalists could report from the most remote and inaccessible regions on Earth, be it a war zone or the Antarctic.

Nowadays, technology does things we could never have dreamed of back then. A simple mobile phone is a video camera and transmitter in one. Computers and broadband and now 4G mobile technology, mean entire programmes can be edited and broadcast from a hotel room. BBC World News' technology programme Click has just filmed an entire episode using 360 degree cameras. We're currently trying out automated voiceover technology which has the potential to produce voiced and subtitled online packages in languages spoken all over the world. Drones have transformed the type of pictures we're able to collect, whether they're images from right at the heart of the action or sweeping aerial shots that demonstrate scale, such as those of the vast refugee camp on the Turkish/Syrian border. Virtual Reality is becoming available to mainstream consumers.

- 2) Audiences.** For news organisations to survive in an increasingly competitive world, they need to give audiences what they want, when and how they want it. In 1991, audiences would tune in to their favourite radio station for the headlines at the top of the hour, or wait to get their daily news fix from the evening newscast. When the BBC launched international news on TV it was via a 30 minute daily bulletin. Now consumers expect instant coverage, constantly updated. They don't want to wait and they want it wherever they are – on their TV, particularly during fast-moving breaking stories, but also on the radio in the car and on their phone or tablet when they're on the go. The majority of our online traffic now comes from mobile devices so we've launched a new project called Newstream which involves creating mobile-first content which is tailored specifically for mobiles, such as footage which is filmed in portrait rather than landscape format.

3) Citizen journalism. On Boxing Day 2004, a tsunami caused widespread devastation across South East Asia. Facebook was in its infancy, Twitter wasn't born, and yet the BBC received thousands of unsolicited videos, mobile phone pictures and eyewitness accounts. That day, the line between audiences and traditional journalism became less distinct. Much of the material we received was sent via email and mobile phones to relatives, who sent it on to news organisations. A week after the disaster, BBC News had received 50,000 emails and our messageboard recorded around 400,000. It was shortly afterwards that we launched our User Generated Content Hub – a team of people who source and verify the best third party footage from the vast amounts available.

Back in 2005, email and messageboards were our currency. Now smartphones, private messaging and live-streaming apps and a plethora of social media networks have redefined the challenge of searching, discovering and verifying UGC. But with more and more content, much of it inaccurate, some of it propaganda, flooding our TV screens, inboxes and social media feeds, knowing what to trust is paramount. There are increasing numbers of people and groups intent on distorting images to mislead journalists, so the team are responsible for ensuring that any footage we use adheres to the BBC's strict editorial standards. They use a range of techniques such as picture recognition and geolocation software to ensure it is accurate for our audiences.

4) Social Media. In 2009 a commercial airliner crash landed in the Hudson river in New York. Twitter users broke the story 15 minutes before the mainstream media. A bystander took a dramatic snap of the downed plane and uploaded it to Twitpic. The response to his image crashed the service.

Since then, a whole host of new social media platforms have become part of everyday life – Instagram, Snapchat, chat apps such as WhatsApp and Viber. More recently, live-streaming apps have taken it to new levels. The likes of Facebook Mentions, NomadCast, MyEye, Meerkat and Periscope allow people to view live footage direct from the scene of a breaking story.

However, what we hear time and again is that people see stories on social media but they don't believe it until they see it from a trusted news source. Social media is great for speed but not necessarily for accuracy so there is very much still a role for traditional

media brands in providing verified news, whether on TV, radio, online or one of the increasing numbers of social media platforms.

- 5) Globalisation.** Last year BBC World News conducted some research that showed that two thirds of people feel that news stories from elsewhere in the world are now more relevant to them than they have been in the past. Seven out of 10 people said they were more concerned about world events than ever before, with terrorism, conflict, health and the environment topping the list of issues.

As a global organisation, having reporters on the ground is key to telling the story. The BBC has journalists in more places than any other international news channel which means we can get expert reporters on the scene quickly. When a big story covering a number of different locations breaks, such as the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, we have journalists across the globe who we deploy to the scene in order to report on the local angle to build up a truly global perspective.

About BBC World News and BBC.com

BBC World News and BBC.com, the BBC's commercially funded international 24-hour English news platforms, are owned and operated by BBC Global News Ltd. BBC World News television is available in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide, and over 433 million households and 1.8 million hotel rooms. The channel's content is also available on 178 cruise ships, 53 airlines and 23 mobile phone networks.

During the 24 hour news cycle, BBC World News programmes are anchored from London, Singapore and Washington, complemented by rolling breaking news coverage and reports from journalists across the world.

BBC.com offers up-to-the minute international news and in-depth analysis for PCs, tablets and mobile devices to more than 85 million unique browsers each month.