

# Chinese Central Television

## Zhōng Yāng Diànshìtái 中央电视台

**Chinese Central Television (CCTV, 中央电视台) is the official television broadcasting system of the Chinese government. Growing steadily since its trial broadcast in 1958, CCTV claimed to reach 94 percent of China's population in 2008 with 16 channels and a daily total of 220 hours of programming. CCTV's program content is heavily scrutinized by the Chinese government.**

Chinese Central Television (CCTV) is the official television broadcasting system of the Chinese government, placed administratively under the National Bureau of Radio, Film, and Television within the State Council and editorially under the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee. It is one of the most important media organizations of China.

CCTV began its trial broadcast on 1 May 1958 and began its official broadcast on 2 September 1958 as Beijing Television. In 1978 it was officially named "Chinese Central Television." CCTV broadcasts on sixteen channels with a daily total of 220 hours of programming. Channel 1, a comprehensive channel, offers mainly news and other information-based programs. The other channels and their content are Channel 2, business; Channel 3, mixed entertainment programs; Channel 4, Mandarin broadcasts to an overseas audience; Channel 5, sports; Channel 6, movies; Channel 7, children's, military, and agriculture; Channel

8, TV drama series; Channel 9, international broadcasts in English; Channel 10, science; Channel 11, theater; Channel 12, legal issues; Channel 13, news; Channel 14, children's programming; Channel 15, music; and Channel 16, programs in French and Spanish. CCTV International was launched in September of 2000 and is an English-language twenty-four-hour news channel dedicated to reporting news and information to its global audience. Both Channels 4 and 9, with a special focus on China, are transmitted through satellites for audience overseas.

In addition, since 2003 CCTV has offered eleven pay channels that have even more diverse programming and are tailored toward special interests. CCTV also has twenty-eight channels of programs available online through its website ([www.CCTV.com](http://www.CCTV.com)). CCTV's estimate of its audience base in China is 1.1 billion.

Within CCTV's structure are fifteen departments or centers responsible for various aspects of the TV system's operation. In addition, CCTV owns China TV Drama Production Center (established in 1983), Central Documentary Production Studio (since 1993), and Beijing Science and Education Film Studio (created in 1995). CCTV also has its own TV program distribution center, China International Television Company (since 1984); Central Satellite TV Broadcasting Center (established in 1995); and China Philharmonic Orchestra (created in 2003). It also has its own publishing house, which publishes *China Television*, *Television Studies*, and *Modern TV Technology*. CCTV employs nearly ten thousand fulltime and part-time staff members.

Besides its claim to reach 94 percent of China's population, CCTV has made an effort to capture audiences



**Villagers gather to watch the government-run Chinese Central Television station. As of 2009 China TV-watching population (counting everyone from the age of four) numbers 1.29 billion, the largest in the world. PHOTO BY JOAN LEBOLD COHEN.**

overseas. By 2007 it had established business relationships with more than two hundred TV stations in thirty-six countries. CCTV has fourteen foreign correspondent branches around the globe for international news coverage in addition to its extensive correspondent network in China.

CCTV's new broadcasting center in Beijing, designed by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and equipped with the most updated technology, was completed in 2008 and in operation in time for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics; this new facility has the capacity of broadcasting in two hundred channels. CCTV is the most steadily growing media organization in China, and

its program content is heavily scrutinized by the Chinese government.

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### Further Reading

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