

# Univision, Disney look at English news channel

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(AP) -- Univision and Disney are in talks to create a 24-hour news channel for Latinos in English, two sources close to the negotiations said Monday.

Both sources declined to go on the record because they were not authorized to speak.

The goal would be to begin broadcasting before the November presidential election. That would give the network plenty of time to provide political coverage geared toward Hispanics, who are considered influential swing voters in states like Florida, New Mexico and Colorado.

Univision is the nation's largest Spanish-language media company, and it has long prided itself on its Spanish-language content. In recent years, officials have quietly acknowledged that in order to maintain and expand viewership, they also need to provide content to second- and third-generation Latinos who speak English as their first language.

Univision officials and [ABC News](#) spokesman Jeff Schneider declined to comment on Monday.

The move comes in response to the 2010 census, which showed U.S. born Latinos made up nearly 60 percent of the growth in the nation's [Hispanic population](#) over the last decade.

The proposed deal also reflects the stepped up efforts of mainstream media companies to target Latinos. Fox News added its [Fox News Latino](#) website in 2010 and Huffington Post now has an online Huffpost LatinoVoices site. Meanwhile, NBC Universal has increased the cross-pollination between its NBC News division and that of its Spanish [language network](#), Telemundo.

Top Telemundo news anchor Jose Diaz-Balart has anchored NBC News and [MSNBC](#) programs. NBC also recently unveiled its NBC Latino tumblr website in English. Univision News also has a tumblr English site, and a small but growing social media presence.

Jorge Plasencia, vice chair of the National Council of La Raza and CEO of the Hispanic marketing firm Republica, which includes Univision among its clients, said he believes that a news channel in English would fulfill a niche.

"There's nearly 50 million Latinos in the U.S. They do want to know what's going on in Mexico, Puerto Rico and all over Latin America. The major networks don't cover that news," he said. "It's hard for those networks to go into those issues in depth because they're trying reach all of America."

[Univision](#) and other Spanish-language networks have provided significant coverage of Latin America for their viewers. Plasencia believes second- and third-generation Latinos are still interested in that coverage, but they want it in English.

For Latinos who live in cities like Los Angeles, New York and Miami that have large Hispanic populations, local broadcasts often have Latino anchors and cover stories that are particularly relevant to the Hispanic community. But the national broadcasts are lagging in that type of coverage, he added.

"That's why I think this and Huffpost LatinoVoices exist, because there's an appetite," Plasencia said.

Last month, SiriusXM's Cristina Radio channel launched a new all-English political show, hosted by top Democratic and Republican Latina analysts, as well as a bilingual foreign affairs program out of Washington. Other online news sites are continuing to pop up.

Voxxi, a new Hispanic online news magazine, was throwing its launch party Tuesday at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

Plasencia noted that the controversy regarding Arizona's Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, over his aggressive efforts to seek out illegal immigrants, has received significant coverage on Spanish-language networks but not so much in English.

"This network will take our issues and make them mainstream because many other people besides Latinos may be watching," he said.

Roberto Suro, a professor of journalism and public policy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, says finding the right audience may be tricky.

"There are several assumptions here. Is there room for another all-news channel? And within the Hispanic market, is there enough demand for an all-news channel?" Suro said.

Already CNN, Fox and MSNB compete in English. CNN en Espanol provides 24 hour coverage in Spanish.

The new channel would reflect the growing trend toward more niche audiences, but he added that the English-speaking Latino market is much more diverse than the Spanish-language market.

"There's a longstanding effort to try and create content for English speaking Latinos," Suro said. "This is a very broad population segment, and the question is, "what is the identity? Is it heavily Hispanic, all about news about Latinos? Or is it who delivers the [news](#)? It's an elusive brand."

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