



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 22, 2022

CNN+ to be Shut Down, One Month After Launch

Warner Bros. Discovery announced on Thursday it will be pulling the plug on CNN+ on April 30, just one month after its dismal launch.

“As we become Warner Bros. Discovery, CNN will be strongest as part of WBD’s streaming strategy which envisions news as an important part of a compelling broader offering along with sports, entertainment, and nonfiction content,” CNN Worldwide CEO Chris Licht said in a statement.



“We have therefore made the decision to cease operations of CNN+ and focus our investment on CNN’s core news-gathering operations and in further building CNN Digital,” Licht continued. “This is not a decision about quality; we appreciate all of the work, ambition and creativity that went into building CNN+, an organization with terrific talent and compelling programming. But our customers and CNN will be best served with a simpler streaming choice.”

CNN+ launched on March 29 with little fanfare, subscription figures revealed. CNN+ had only signed on approximately 150,000 subscribers, despite projections that it would have two million new subscribers in the first year. The paltry figures come in spite of the management team spending \$300 million on launching CNN+ and \$100 to \$200 million on advertising and hiring approximately 500 employees to work on the service, an insider told the *New York Post*. The streaming service even offered special offers as low as \$2.99 per month to new subscribers, *The Epoch Times* reported.

Fewer than 10,000 people reportedly use CNN+ on a daily basis, CNBC reported. By comparison, CNN’s cable network, which has also suffered a sharp decline over the last year, continues to have an average of 773,000 total viewers per day. And even with CNN’s users far surpassing those of CNN+, CNN’s decline is fairly massive. The Daily Wire reported CNN’s regular programming averaged just over 500,000 the week of January 3, 2022, compared to 2.7 million the same week in 2021.

Joe Concha, a media analyst for *The Hill*, said the shutdown means that CNN+ “might be the most spectacular failure we’ve seen in media history.”

Fox News reported CNN+ was the “brainchild” of former CNN president Jeff Zucker and former WarnerMedia CEO Justin Kilar, both of whom are no longer with the company. The failed service was expected to shift from CNN’s far-left programming, according to Fox News, but CNN+ was riddled with the same sort of liberal pundits one would expect from CNN.

What’s more, on the first day CNN+ was active, a guest on the new platform criticized CNN for drifting



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away from straight news content, much to the chagrin of the show's host.

Fox News reported that an original CNN anchor, Dave Walker, joined the inaugural edition of Brian Stelter's new streaming show and admitted that he was unhappy with CNN's bias and was hopeful that the station, under Licht's leadership, would return to more news coverage and less opinion.

"I used to anchor at CNN, and now I just yell at CNN," Walker said. "I think originally, it was pretty much 99 percent news content.... As cable news evolved and more competition came into the fray, you had more opinion, particularly in the evening hours. And I would say that's the major difference now. But maybe with the new ownership that may revert to more just basic news coverage."

According to a report on Thursday by CNN reporters Brian Stelter and Oliver Darcy, the decision to terminate the streaming service is partially the result of the recent merger with Warner Bros. Discovery.

"The streaming service ended up launching just two weeks before the WarnerMedia-Discovery merger completed, much to the exasperation of Discovery leadership, which had a different strategy but could not legally communicate with CNN executives before the deal was official," Stelter and Darcy wrote.

The Daily Wire also noted that Discovery had different plans for a much broader streaming service that would include all the brands under one label, and CNN+ did not fit into those plans.

"In a complex streaming market, consumers want simplicity and an all-in service which provides a better experience and more value than stand-alone offerings, and, for the company, a more sustainable business model to drive our future investments in great journalism and storytelling," Discovery's streaming boss J.B. Perrette said in a statement.

Of course, that still does not explain the new platform's low subscription figures.

The *New York Post* reported that the demise of the streaming platform prompted the termination of all junior staffers, while roughly 300 staffers were offered six months' severance as well as "first dibs on job opportunities within CNN," sources told the *Post*. Talent recruited for CNN+, including former Fox News host Chris Wallace and ex-MSNBC reporter Kasie Hunt, will be reassigned to CNN or other platforms within Warner Bros. Discovery media, the *Post* added.

According to the company, CNN+ customers will receive prorated refunds of subscription fees.



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