



“Ladies and gentlemen, rock and roll.”

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEBUT OF

MTV

On Aug. 1, 1981, at 12:01 a.m., MTV officially launched with The Buggles’ “Video Killed the Radio Star.” The first hour featured videos by the Buggles, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, The Who, Cliff Richard, The Pretenders, Todd Rundgren, Styx, Split Enz and .38 Special. In the 40 years since that day, MTV has been at the forefront of developments in music, pop culture, entertainment and activism. Here is a look at how the channel has broken ground and evolved to serve today’s youth:

As MTV came on air, viewers saw the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing and then an astronaut placing the MTV logo flag on the moon. The “Moon Man” became an icon of the station, featured as the Video Music Awards statue. Later, MTV redubbed it as the “Moon Person” to be more inclusive.

GROUNDBREAKING SERIES

MUSIC VIDEOS

In December 1983, MTV debuted Michael Jackson’s 14-minute “Thriller” film and music video, the first such video to combine the world of filmmaking and music.



MTV VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS

The first “MTV Video Music Awards” aired from Radio City Music Hall in New York City on Sept. 14, 1984.

‘CLUB MTV’

“Club MTV,” a video-age dance show hosted by “Downtown” Julie Brown, debuted on Aug. 31, 1987. It was the first program on the network to have a Monday through Friday daily time slot.

‘REMOTE CONTROL’

MTV’s first game show, “Remote Control,” challenged contestants’ TV knowledge. It launched in December 1987.

‘YO! MTV RAPS’

Debuting on Aug. 7, 1988, the weekly rap music show featured Fab 5 with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover as hosts.

‘MTV UNPLUGGED’

“Unplugged” debuted in November 1989 with performances by Squeeze, Syd Straw and Elliot Easton and later featured Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, LL Cool J, Tony Bennet and Alanis Morissette.

‘THE REAL WORLD’

Reality television entered the mainstream on May 21, 1992, with the debut of this soap opera following three months in the lives of seven young adults who meet for the first time and live in a New York City loft together.

‘BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD’

“Beavis and Butt-Head,” an original animated series starring two suburban misfits and created by Mike Judge, debuted in March 1993.

‘THE JON STEWART SHOW’

On Oct. 25, 1993, MTV premiered The Jon Stewart Show, the first talk show on MTV.

‘ROAD RULES’

In July 1994, “Road Rules,” MTV’s first docu-adventure series, debuted and starred five strangers who travel across the globe, tackling a series of adventures and challenges posed along the way.



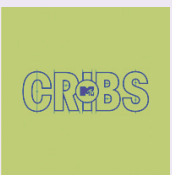
the first truly interactive television shows.

‘JACKASS’

On Oct. 1, 2000, MTV premiered the weekly comedy show that featured silly pranks and ridiculous stunts. It lead to a film series.

‘MTV CRIBS’

Premiering in October 2000, MTV Crips featured tours of the homes of celebrities.



‘PUNK’D’

The hidden camera/practical joke series was hosted and produced by Ashton Kutcher and debuted in 2003.

‘LAGUNA BEACH’

In September 2004, MTV premiered television’s first “reality drama” series “Laguna Beach – The Real Orange County.”

‘16 & PREGNANT’

On June 11, 2009, MTV aired the groundbreaking documentary “16 & Pregnant” as an intimate look inside the lives of teens as they face unexpected pregnancies and become parents at a young age. A spin-off series, “Teen Mom,” launched in December 2009.

‘JERSEY SHORE’

Also in December 2009, “Jersey Shore” premiered and became the No. 1 show across all television and MTV’s highest rated series.



the series that exposed the potential dangers of the modern dating world.

‘CATFISH’

In November 2012, a national phenom was launched with

ACTIVISM

Political and social activism have permeated MTV’s mission and programming since its launch. Here is a look at some of the causes the channel has supported:

SAFE SEX

In January 1985, MTV became one of the first networks to air safe sex PSAs. In December 2011, it changed the color of its logo to red in support of World AIDS Day, urging young people to get tested. One of its original programs, “Teen Mom,” is cited as influencing a recent reduction in teen birth rates.



DISASTER RELIEF

MTV has hosted numerous benefits in relief of natural disasters across the globe, including broadcasting “Live AID” in 1985 to raise awareness of the famine in Ethiopia; producing ReAct Now, a special that raised millions for Hurricane Katrina victims; and the 2010 “Hope for Haiti” telethon for earthquake relief. In 2017, “Hand in Hand” raised funds for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma victims.



POLITICS

MTV has continually engaged young people in politics by stressing the importance of voting and highlighting important issues. Young people were urged to “Rock the Vote” in 1990. The “Choose or Lose” campaign centered on the 1992 presidential election, when the channel hosted a series of forums with Bill Clinton. In 2008, MTV hosted Hillary Clinton, John McCain and Barack Obama for a discussion ahead of the election. And in 2020, the “+1thevote” campaign was aimed at first-time voters, making voting an experience to be shared with friends, or a “plus one.”



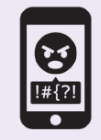
EQUALITY

On Jan. 10, 2001, MTV launched “Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Discrimination” and ran a scroll listing the names of hundreds of victims of various hate crimes across the country. The scroll ran continuously for more than 17 hours. On April 30, 2014, the “Look Different” campaign to combat the hidden racial, gender and LGBT inequality in society launched. On Jan. 19, 2015, all programming aired in black and white, encouraging audiences to have #TheTalk on race and relations. A similar campaign later that year used satire to expose systemic racism and white privilege. At 5 p.m. on June 20, 2020, MTV went off the air for eight minutes and 46 seconds in honor of George Floyd and in support of social justice.



BULLYING

In December 2009, MTV launched the “A THIN LINE” campaign, empowering America’s youth to identify, respond to and stop the spread of digital abuse. In 2011, President Obama recognized MTV’s efforts to fight online bullying during the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention.



NOTABLE BRANDS



MTV

Central entertainment brand focused on youth content and pop culture.



MTV2

Creates comedy, music and lifestyle entertainment for millennial males.



MTVU

Broadcast to more than 750 college campuses. Reaches 9 million students.



MTV LIVE

A 24-hour music network featuring series, events, performances and videos.



MTV CLASSIC

Features a mix of fan-favorite MTV series and music programming.