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NTV Becomes Most-Watched Channel in 2012

By The Moscow Times

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NTV overtook rival Channel One for the first time since television audiences have been measured, becoming the most-watched television station of the year.

Since the beginning of 2012, NTV has captured an average of 13.9 percent of television viewers, while Channel One has attracted 13.7 percent, Vedomosti reported Tuesday, citing market research company TNS.

"NTV is fighting for its audience and economic efficiency rather than for being first or second. We were successful at this not only this year but in previous years too," NTV general director Vladimir Kulistikov told the business daily.

But Konstantin Ernst, general director of Channel One, reacted skeptically to the TNS findings, saying that his station stopped working with the research company seven years ago and that he doesn't trust its data, even though Channel One still sells its ads based on

numbers provided by TNS, according to Vedomosti.

Historically, three nationwide channels have dominated the Russian TV market: Channel One, Rossia and NTV. All are owned by the government either directly or through state-owned companies such as Gazprom.

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