

# Al-Jazeera buys Current TV from Al Gore

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FILE - In this Jan. 13, 2012 file photo, Former Vice President Al Gore, Current TV Chairman and Co-Founder, participates in the Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour in Pasadena, Calif. Al-Jazeera, the Pan-Arab news channel that has struggled to win space on American cable television, has acquired Current TV, Gore confirmed Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2013. (AP Photo/Danny Moloshok, File)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Al-Jazeera, the Pan-Arab news channel that struggled to win space on American cable television, has acquired Current TV, boosting its reach in the U.S. nearly ninefold to about 40 million homes. With a focus on U.S. news, it plans to rebrand the left-leaning news network that cofounder Al Gore couldn't make relevant.

The former vice president confirmed the sale Wednesday, saying in a statement that Al-Jazeera shares Current TV's mission "to give voice to those who are not typically heard; to speak truth to power; to provide independent and diverse points of view; and to tell the stories that no one else is telling."

The acquisition lifts Al-Jazeera's reach beyond a few large U.S. metropolitan areas including New York and Washington, where about 4.7 million homes can now watch Al-Jazeera English.

Al-Jazeera, owned by the government of Qatar, plans to gradually transform Current into a network called Al-Jazeera America by adding five to 10 new U.S. bureaus beyond the five it has now and hiring more journalists. More than half of the content will be U.S. news and the network will have its headquarters in New York, spokesman Stan Collender said.

Collender said there are no rules against foreign ownership of a cable channel — unlike the strict rules limiting foreign ownership of free-to-air TV stations. He said the move is based on demand, adding that 40 percent of viewing traffic on Al-Jazeera English's website is from the U.S.

"This is a pure business decision based on recognized demand," Collender said. "When people watch Al-Jazeera, they tend to like it a great deal."