

INSP Goes Mobile With Smartphone Apps

Dropped like a rock.

That's how the Inspiration Network (INSP) felt after cable television provider the Dish Network suddenly decided, amid ongoing rate negotiations between the two, to no longer carry the faith-based network's programming. The decision came in early August, and within minutes of discovering the news, thousands of faithful INSP viewers flocked to social media sites to voice their outrage.

Using Facebook, Twitter, email and other online vehicles, the army of supporters lobbed a massive yet organic onslaught of complaints toward Dish and furthered the attack with a digital petition demanding that INSP's family-friendly programming be returned. Dish even removed posts from its Facebook wall because of the swell of people complaining. And by the end of the month, the two sides reached an agreement and INSP returned to its familiar channel 259 spot.

"Social media has democratized the flow of information in this country," INSP Chief Strategy Officer Bill Airy said during the ordeal. "It's not a one-way process anymore. People who never had a voice now have one. It's phenomenal to see how many people have seized on social media as a way to express themselves."

Yet the irony of INSP's short-lived war is that the network no longer relies solely on Dish to air its programming. In March, Time Warner Cable asked INSP to be one of the first channels featured on its new iPad app, which allows customers to watch live programming, browse archived content and use a DVR remotely—all from the tablet device. INSP is also on Comcast's

Xfinity TV app, which provides on-demand television programming for the iPad, iPhone, Android and other devices.