Creating Models for Innovation

PRI was established in 1983 to expand the voices and energize the perspectives heard on the public airwaves. We built a model designed to challenge the status quo by encouraging new talent, ideas, and formats. We have been the industry leader in fostering new models for pooling risk, leveraging investment, and managing production partnerships.

“Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship … the act that endows resources with a new capacity ….”
— Peter Drucker, Harvard Business Review

PRI functions as a powerful source for innovation in public radio. Over the last 20 years, we have launched more new programs from independent and station-based producers than any other network. As a result, more stations use PRI programs than those of any other public radio producer,
Creating Models for Innovation

supplier, or network, and every week, 15.2 million listeners tune in to PRI programs for news, music, cultural perspectives, and entertainment.

Driving innovation in public radio is essential to who we are and what we do. It’s what sets us apart and makes us vital.

“PRI is extremely forward thinking, station focused, and entrepreneurial. They’re constantly examining how they can serve stations better, meet station needs, and help stations achieve their aspirations.”

— Jeff Luchsinger, Vice President and Station Manager, KERA/Dallas

We began 20 years ago as the national distributor of A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor®. Ever since, PRI programs have fueled public radio’s audience growth and helped make PRI’s affiliate stations the channels of choice for curious minds, those who want to explore and engage their world.

“PRI is ... more in touch with stations’ individual needs than anyone, and better set up in every way to help a producer get his or her show out to the public.”

— Ira Glass, Producer and Host, *This American Life*

While radio functions in a more competitive media environment than ever before, the overall public radio audience has more than doubled since 1988, and listening to PRI programs has significantly outpaced the growth of the industry as a whole.
PRI launches industry-strengthening initiatives, including Capitol Hill Bureau from PRI, the Global Resources Desk, the PRI Fellows Program, and Public Radio Op-Ed.

PRI recruits and supports creative talent at the leading edge of public radio. Anticipating the evolving preferences of listeners, the needs of affiliates, the requirements of producers, and the technologies on which each group relies, PRI remains at the forefront of innovation.

PRI and station investors form American Public Radio LLC to create and manage digital satellite radio channels.

PRI launches industry-strengthening initiatives, including Capitol Hill Bureau from PRI, the Global Resources Desk, the PRI Fellows Program, and Public Radio Op-Ed.
This year, Public Radio International celebrates 20 years of innovation, growth, and expanding public service.

Over two decades, PRI has brought listeners more great moments than can be enumerated in this brief report. As one reflects on a prolific output that includes Marketplace® and This American Life, PRI’s The World and A Prairie Home Companion®, it becomes apparent that it is the imagination, attention to craft, and ability to tell great stories that make PRI’s programming so very compelling.

As we reflect on what has driven public radio’s incredible growth, we can only marvel at the dedication to invention and excellence demonstrated by the talented producers, editors, reporters, hosts, and performers who make up the public radio family. By challenging our audience to think about crucial issues, by widening exposure to music and the arts, and by encouraging participation in community life, public radio has become a central force in American media, culture, and public affairs.

From its founding, PRI has offered new ways of approaching the business of public service broadcasting. We eschewed the notion of owning studios and hiring production staff in favor of investing in the best ideas, talent, and production capacity in America and around the world. We led in establishing the concept of a program marketplace in public radio, broadening access for independent producers and choice for local stations and listeners alike. We introduced new ways of raising startup capital for new programs and projects, and of sharing in the risks and rewards at the heart of innovation.

We owe profound thanks to the many partners who have joined with us over the years in a process of invention and re-invention, never accepting that the status quo is good enough, and believing there is always a better way.

We look to the next 20 years with abiding faith that our focus on diverse audiences and willingness to take risks in partnership with others provide the grounding and agility to deepen service to our nation, and further understanding of our place in a changing world.

Stephen L. Salyer  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Public Radio International
Global and Cultural Perspectives

PRI extends the global and cultural perspectives available to listeners on-air and online. Following discussions with two of our production partners, BBC World Service and WNYC, New York Public Radio, we invested in two major series: *The Changing World*, probing documentaries on major global issues, and *The Next Big Thing*, a lively magazine that uses street reporting, music, humor, and conversation to explore the human experience.

Two other exceptional programs new to the PRI collection are *Speaking of Faith™*, a series produced by Minnesota Public Radio that connects issues in the news to questions of faith, theology, and ethics, and *Brain Brew*, a high-energy series.
designed to help entrepreneurs, innovators, and dreamers succeed, produced by Mark Perzel for WGUC/Cincinnati.

One-time specials, documentaries, and seasonal programs further enrich the variety of on-air and online content available from PRI. Each year, our affiliates have more than 100 such titles available to them, all free as part of their affiliation. Stations enhance their regular broadcast schedules with an array of specials created for sacred and secular holidays, Black History and Women’s History Months, as well as timely specials on global issues.

Empowering, Diversifying, Decentralizing

In 2002 – 03, PRI developed several public service initiatives that are unique in public radio.
First is a new program service called Capitol Hill Bureau from PRI. Based at WAMU in Washington, D.C., the Bureau covers congressional delegations for local affiliate stations. Because each station’s coverage is customized, the service functions as that station’s own news bureau on the Hill. Most important, Capitol Hill Bureau empowers listeners by putting them in direct contact with their representatives.

The PRI Fellows Program was established with partnering stations to support journalists of color. These journalists not only produce content for their host station and for PRI programs, they also recruit and train new journalists of color to do the same. The intent is to cultivate journalists whose talents, perspectives, and worldviews diversify and strengthen public radio locally and nationally.
Expanding the Portfolio

The inaugural fellowship, awarded to Jacqui Gales Webb, is based at WAMU/Washington, D.C. A second fellowship, awarded to Eric Yo-Ping Lai, is underway at KQED/San Francisco. A third fellowship, focused on cultivating Hispanic American journalists, is in development.

The **Global Resources Desk** is another key initiative that strengthens and diversifies local station content. It will enable stations to present reports, interviews, and conversations about global issues throughout their broadcast day.

As our country’s demographics change, stations recognize the urgent need to create programming that speaks to and reflects their increasingly internationalized communities. The Global Resources Desk is designed to help stations develop...
local content that connects relevant global issues to their communities.

The desk could, for example, help stations adapt segments from PRI’s *The World* to use in their local news broadcasts. It might provide a report to stimulate discussion on a local call-in program, assist in booking compelling guests, background a global topic for the local host, or supply Web components for extended audience engagement. A commissioning fund will encourage stations to develop special features, some of which could then be broadcast nationally on PRI’s *The World* or other PRI programs.

In partnership with eight leading stations, PRI created *Public Radio Op-Ed*. This new service will take full advantage of the culturally diverse, dynamic, and provocative people living in
participating stations’ communities to produce riveting commentary. It will feature voices seldom heard on the air and deliver a range of challenging opinion and analysis to listeners nationwide.

The Global Resources Desk, PRI Fellows Program, *Capitol Hill Bureau from PRI*, and Public Radio Op-Ed are powerful vehicles for decentralizing and diversifying public radio content. These innovative projects will be fully realized throughout 2003 – 04.
Editorial Excellence

PRI affiliate stations understand that serving listeners goes well beyond transmitting a reliable signal. They understand the importance of providing programming that informs, intrigues, entertains, and uplifts — qualities their discriminating listeners value.

A sampling of the editorial creativity and diversity heard on PRI affiliate stations:

News Programs

*The BBC’s Story of Africa* — a landmark 12-part series examining the history of Africa from an African perspective. Produced by BBC World Service

*Mercetplace®* — global business and finance, from economic shifts in Asia and South America to the business of technology, sports, and the arts worldwide. Produced by Minnesota Public Radio

PRI’s *The World* — incisive daily news, encompassing global issues and events, world literature and music. Produced by PRI, BBC World Service, and WGBH Radio Boston

*To the Point* — fast-paced, news-based discussion of topics ranging from war and peace to affirmative action, from PACS and soft money to global warming. Produced by PRI and KCRW/Santa Monica
Cultural Programs

American Routes® — Nick Spitzer hosts this guided tour of American music, showcasing blues, jazz, Cajun, country, zydeco, Tejano, and more. Produced by MBK Productions

PRI’s Studio 360 with Kurt Andersen — provocative examinations of art and culture, featuring the people and the places where art and real life collide. Produced by PRI and WNYC, New York Public Radio

This American Life — an imaginative, critically-acclaimed radio magazine hosted by Ira Glass that explores the complexities and absurdities of contemporary American life. Produced by Chicago Public Radio™

Classical Music Programs

American Mavericks — a compelling 13-part series featuring the music and stories of visionary American composers. Produced by Minnesota Public Radio

Classical 24® — a 24-hour music service whose knowledgeable, engaging hosts illuminate the history and performance of the classical music they present. Produced by Minnesota Public Radio

From the Top® — a weekly showcase for the nation’s young classical music performers. Produced by Tom Voegeli for Concert Productions, Inc., in association with WGBH Radio Boston and New England Conservatory of Music

“[PRI] is getting attention for programs that are considered edgier .... [NPR] music, talk and variety programs face tough competition ....”

— Time
Audience Response

The result of providing quality programming is the continued growth in listenership.

Community Outreach

In addition to airing and webcasting PRI programs, affiliate stations regularly take advantage of the community outreach opportunities available with program personalities. Every year, PRI program hosts and contributors partner with stations to conduct on-air interviews and call-ins, talk with students and teachers, perform live shows, meet with major donors and the press, and support station fundraising efforts.

The goodwill these outreach activities generate locally is invaluable to our affiliates. It underscores each station's ongoing commitment to public service, attracts new listeners, and reinforces the unique position each station holds in its market.
PRI Co-Production and Joint Venture Partners

Public Radio International, Minneapolis

PRI Fellows Program, WAMU/Washington, D.C.
PRI Fellows Program, KERA/Dallas
PRI Fellows Program, KQED/San Francisco

Classical 24®, Minnesota Public Radio, St. Paul
Capitol Hill Bureau from PRI, WAMU/Washington, D.C.
Global Resources Desk, Boston
PRI’s The World, WGBH Radio Boston and
BBC World Service, London
PRI’s Studio 360 with Kurt Andersen, WNYC,
New York Public Radio
Sound & Spirit, WGBH Radio Boston
To the Point, KCRW/Santa Monica

APR LLC Partner, WGBH Radio Boston
APR LLC Partner, Chicago Public Radio™
Public Interactive, Boston
Sirius Satellite Radio, New York

London, England
Emerging Platforms

PRI made great progress in working to secure a place for PRI affiliates and producers in new media distribution platforms.

With the launch of Sirius Satellite Radio in the spring of 2002, PRI’s Public Radio Channel became a reality. This new venture is managed through American Public Radio LLC, a partnership of PRI, Chicago Public Radio™, and WGBH Radio Boston. Establishing a strong presence on digital satellite radio allows PRI to serve audiences with a wide range of programs otherwise unavailable in their market. At the same time, it enables our program producers to develop new audiences for quality programming via a new distribution platform.
Co-owned by PRI, leading stations, and other public-spirited investors, Public Interactive has become public broadcasting’s leading Internet application service provider. It offers a rich variety of Web resources to public radio and television stations, including pledge tools, community calendars, 24/7 news and cultural services, e-mail marketing, and audio streaming. Since its founding in 1999, Public Interactive has become a vital resource for public broadcasters in over 225 stations nationwide.

Thanks to:

The Design Company
Joy Yoshikawa, Graphic Designer

PRI Marketing Communications
Dan Jensen, Director
Barbara Eisinger, Senior Writer/Editor
Ann Phi-Wendt, Publication Manager