



Sounds live. Sounds local.

Phase II

Strengthening Local Programming through
Digital Production Partnerships – Phase Two

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JazzWorks, LLC

The Project Mission

The purpose of this project is to continue the pioneering work in new production technology started by JazzWorks in 1998. The project will yield new production technologies that can be used to improve a public radio station's ability to

- 1) Localize nationally produced programming to improve on-air fundraising; and
- 2) Localize nationally produced programming to better integrate local public service with nationally distributed program services.

In 1998, CPB awarded JazzWorks a Future Fund grant to develop store-and-forward satellite technology for public radio stations. As a result, JazzWorks now provides the nation's only continuous daily jazz programming for public radio stations that sounds live and local for twenty-four stations throughout the country, including several regional broadcasters serving multiple markets.

Too often, national programming for public radio stations can sound disjointed – disconnected from the station during continuity breaks. This is particularly true during local fundraising for nationally produced programs. Differences in the skill levels of national versus local on-air talent, problems with automation systems at local stations, and the technical difficulty of integrating local content voiced by national talent with the national program service exacerbate this problem.

Nowhere is this problem more profoundly encountered than in fundraising for nationally distributed long-form music programming. In most cases, stations do not have the personnel trained in the music format to properly set up the fundraising case-and-close – so that the value of the content is emphasized. Since many stations use nationally produced long-form programming because they lack affordable local talent at their stations; it is little wonder that these stations experience challenges in developing talent to fundraise this long-form programming.

Another challenge facing public radio stations airing nationally produced programming involves creating programming for station breaks. On the surface, this would seem like a most basic production task. The process of recording, for example, a Morning Edition thirty-second daily promo, and then mixing it with a tag containing the local station's calls is, at one level, very simple. However, over the past four years that JazzWorks has been distributing programming, we have found that public radio stations – particularly smaller stations – lack the staff to perform even these most basic functions. As a result, important, topical program promos are not produced. They are not integrated into these stations' broadcast schedules.

The new production technologies developed by JazzWorks laid the foundation for resolving these problems. With the JazzWorks distributive production system, network quality programming can be produced virtually anywhere the announcer has access to a microphone, a computer, a good Internet connection, and an ISDN line.

With the JazzWorks store-and-forward satellite technology, localized station continuity can now be voiced by the same voices that produce the JazzWorks national program service. This localized station programming is then distributed to the special satellite receivers at affiliate stations across the country for broadcast during JazzWorks

station breaks. The result is an air sound that sounds like national quality talent is producing the program at the local public radio station.

Most importantly, this sophisticated satellite system that cuts away from the JazzWorks national program stream to play localized audio at each station requires no station investment in expensive automation systems or maintenance for these systems. These station breaks are handled at the JazzWorks satellite uplink; the only equipment required at the local public radio station is the JazzWorks store-and-forward satellite receiver (less than \$5,000 per receiver). By comparison, stations can pay \$50,000 or more for a comparable broadcast automation to do exactly the same thing.

The first phase of the JazzWorks digital production partnership culminated with JazzWorks being able to provide the following benefits to each affiliate station:

- 1) Floating 7 second local station positioning statements (liners) in the national announcer's voice during each hour of programming;
- 2) Fixed top of the hour Station ID's and break continuity;
- 3) Ability to switch away from JazzWorks at one minute past the hour for local stations to air locally or nationally produced newscasts, without the need for additional automation equipment.
- 4) Virtually every other nationally distributed service goes silent for several minutes each day during fall and spring solar outages. During these periods, JazzWorks affiliates -- and their listeners -- enjoy uninterrupted programming, because JazzWork's store-and-forward technology can pre-feed programming that is then played from the station's JazzWorks satellite receiver during the solar outage hours. No work is required by the local station to take advantage of this feature.

5. With the distributed production technology developed by JazzWorks, national talent can be located anywhere in the country and do not have to move to a production center to produce their programs -- often just minutes or hours before broadcast.

In the second phase of this project, we propose to provide the following deliverables:

- 1) Affordable, localized, fundraising programming produced by JazzWorks' national announcers that will air during each local affiliate's fundraising drives. This fundraising programming will be automatically played from the station's JazzWorks satellite receiver, and could be customized to contain the station's local pledge numbers and web addresses. It would require no other additional effort from the stations other than to tell JazzWorks when it is fundraising -- and to take the pledges. The JazzWorks Technical Operations Center handles the technical integration.
- 2) Floating localized 60 second station breaks that will allow a station to schedule public service programming, underwriting, weather, and other local continuity (using national JazzWorks talent, if desired) when it is airing JazzWorks programming. This localized programming will play out of the station's JazzWorks satellite receiver, and will not require any additional automation equipment for the affiliate to purchase or maintain.
- 3) A simple system whereby Jazzworks' production center in Pittsburgh can record national program promos from NPR, PRI, etc., and add a tag with local station calls. These promos will then be distributed via satellite directly into the JazzWorks satellite receiver's hard drive for playback on-air. These tagged promos will be available for local station use throughout the broadcast day -- even when the affiliate is airing programming other than JazzWorks.

4) Performance affidavits detailing when these localized program elements are aired, for purposes of merging this data with stations' existing traffic software. This will allow stations to properly invoice underwriters when airing local programming originating from the JazzWorks satellite receiver.

5) A technology system (Virtual Master Control) that would allow a single station or a network of stations to provide localized programming by using a remote master control center located hundreds or thousands of miles away from the station.

As was the case with the original Future Fund grant, this is not a programming proposal. Rather, this is a project proposes to develop new production technologies and applications that can be used by other public radio producers to benefit the entire public radio system. For example, the technologies developed from the first phase of the JazzWorks "Strengthening Local Programming through Digital Production Partnerships" project are now being used by CPRN (Classical Public Radio Network) to produce their daily 24 hour classical program service that is currently in national distribution.