

Corporation for Public Broadcasting -Harwood Alliance Overview February 2014

Summary

The Harwood Institute and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which provides essential financial support to nearly 1,400 locally owned public television and radio stations across the U.S., began a two-year partnership in 2008 to innovate with 12 public broadcasters to deepen their local significance and improve the civic health of communities.

Goals

1. Generate examples among the 12 stations of what it means for a station to turn outward and engage its community in a new way.
2. Identify and articulate a clear set of ideas, frameworks, and tools that any public broadcaster could use to make a difference in his or her community.
3. Devise ways to package and spread the work throughout the public broadcasting system over time.

The Stations

- KBPS, Portland, OR
- KETC, St. Louis, MO
- KNPR, Las Vegas, NV
- KRCB, Sonoma County, CA
- Maryland Public Television
- Vermont Public Television
- WILL, Champaign-Urbana, IL
- WNPT, Nashville, TN
- WPBT, Miami, FL
- WSKG, Binghamton, NY
- WTIP, North Shore, MN

Highlights of Results

- Improved Civic Health
 - KETC created *Facing the Mortgage Crisis* to connect St. Louis residents to organizations and resources that could help them deal with the financial crisis. KETC convened local groups to deal with these concerns, which led to new networks and ways for people to connect to needed supports.
 - WTIP created a *First Thursday* program along with ongoing community conversations to help raise awareness of issues. One example that surfaced from engaging residents was the need for more broadband access, which led to the County Commission launching its first-ever feasibility study of countywide broadband for this small community.
- New Content and Innovations
 - KNPR retooled *State of Nevada*, its flagship program, to focus more intently on locally relevant issues. During that time, the audience for the program grew 20 percent.

- KNPR and VPT transformed their Web sites into community portals rather than just adjunct to their on-air programming. This led to increased relevance for the community and increased Web traffic. Example: KNPR's site had 9,000 visitors per month in 2006. In 2008 after these changes, the number was 15,000.
- WPBT transformed its video sharing site *uVu* from an addendum to on-air material to a community resource and online space open for community partners to share content and connect with the community.
- Internal Changes
 - MPT changed its project review process so that now, staff members are expected to explain how a project meets their strategic priorities and also deliberately connects to community priorities MPT uncovered through their community engagement.
 - VPT began using Harwood-developed "innovation spaces" as a regular part of their planning. In these spaces, VPT members regularly explore how they can continue shifting from being "broadcasters" to "public media organizations with broadcasting assets."
 - KRCB producers shifted the way they produce programming, beginning each initial project with the question, "How do we connect this to the community." The local producer also began a blog to engage the community.
- More Money
 - WILL saw a 28 percent increase in funding from local contributors as a result of this effort.
 - MPT's work with the Community Engagement Initiative spurred an individual donor to contribute \$1 million for a New Initiatives Fund to support more community-based initiatives.
 - KNPR was the only grantee in Las Vegas that received an increase in funding from the Wells Fargo Foundation as a result of this initiative. They, like others, had previously been told to expect cuts because of the financial meltdown in 2008.
 - WTIP transformed its membership drive to reflect its new connection with community, featuring listeners, community leaders, and non-profit managers proclaiming their partnerships with WTIP and expressing the station's value in the community. This led to a 30 percent increase in membership.

What's Next?

Moving forward, the Institute is focused on working with public broadcasters on the following:

1. Establishing new networks – state and national and proof points of stations implementing the Harwood approach.
2. Developing and equipping "ambassadors" for this approach to help spread turning outward to other public broadcasters.
3. Working with stations to create innovative ways to engage the public around issues related to building the conditions for people and organizations to work together to solve complex challenges and strengthen communities.

