

Wednesday, June 21
BROWN BAG LUNCH

Public Radio Overview with Page Smith, Project Manager and Stacey Foxwell, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Programming

Interns sat down for the summer's third brown bag lunch with Page Smith, NPR's Station Project Manager and Stacey Foxwell, the Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Programming to discuss a general overview of public radio's history, where it currently stands, and what is in store for the future on Wednesday, June 21.

Page Smith began the overview with a discussion of the history of Public Radio. In 1967, the Public Broadcasting Act established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which ultimately led to the creation of NPR in 1970. Since then, money from CPB has been re-directed to stations, which allows for a market economy and self-sufficiency for public radio. Today over 280 stations are licensed as NPR stations. New technology such as the creation of satellite radio has put a big question mark of where the future of public radio is going.

The major industry players of public radio were discussed next including content and programming, distribution, finance, regulatory and legislative, and taskforces and special interest groups. Page Smith described NPR as a "three-legged stool" with the legs representing station membership, programming, and program distribution. She also reviewed the types of noncommercial stations: college, "public" or member stations which make up the largest percentage, and religious. She then gave a brief overview of who does what within a station, and where a station's income comes from.

Next, Stacey Foxwell discussed NPR programming. She began by reviewing NPR's mission statement which states "the mission of NPR is to work in partnership with member stations to create a more informed public – one challenged and invigorated by a deeper understanding and appreciation of essential events, ideas and cultures. To accomplish our mission, we produce, acquire and distribute programming that meets the highest standards of public service in journalism and cultural expression; we represent our members in matters of their mutual interest; and we provide distribution of content and interconnection for the entire public radio system." The middle sentence, Stacey explained, was the mission of the programming department, which includes the news and information, digital media departments as well. She then discussed who is who within her department and the demographics of an NPR listener. There are about 23.5 million NPR listeners total.

Listening measurements such as come, carriage, TSL, and AQH were discussed as well as the differences between a produced and acquired show. She ended her talk by discussing where story ideas come from and what the future holds for programming. She invited interns to email Maria Thomas, VP of Digital Media, if they had any ideas for website design of www.NPR.org.

Interns asked questions on how the impact of Internet radio listening will affect NPR, what makes NPR different than a newswire, whether there is a competition between member stations and if there has ever been an issue with NPR being a monopoly.

If there are any further questions, or if anyone wants a chance to sit in on an administrative meeting email Stacey at Sfoxwell@npr.org.

The next brown bag session will be held Wednesday, June 28 with Denise Leary on a discussion of music and the Internet.