Pacifica Radio Archives

Goals and Plans for 2011 and Beyond

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Introduction

The World Wide Web of 2010 is considerably different from that of only five years ago, and would be almost unrecognizable to someone who was a Web user in 2000. There has been tremendous growth in Web use, but even more than that there has been a qualitative change in the nature of the interaction that takes place online. The Web was originally developed, twenty years ago, to be a Web of documents, and it remained that way for over a decade. Web users searched for and read the documents, but the interaction between users took place off the Web, generally in email discussion. What characterizes the Web today is that the documents that were the foreground of the Web originally are now background information, and the primary interaction between Web users is on sites designed to facilitate user-to-user communication rather than user-to-document action. Although search engine use remains high, searching is only one way that users discover resources. Much discovery today relies on serendipity provided by social interaction with a chosen online peer group, whether that is one's Facebook friends or an interest group organized around photographs at Flickr.

Current PRA Web Presence

The Pacifica Radio Archives has a well-designed Web site, plus a blog where programs from their national weekly radio series, *From the Vault* are posted each week at that same time that they are aired on member stations. Both of these are solid "Web 1.0" sites, meaning that they deliver material to Web users but do not permit users to engage in the type of interaction that creates and fosters a community of enthusiasts. There is a Facebook group for Friends of the Pacifica Radio Archives that has over 300 members but with a low level of activity. The Archives has a Twitter account that is used to alert followers to news and events related to the Archives and their programs.

Analysis and Goals

The greatest value of the Archives is having the rich resources they own come alive for a new generation of listeners. For nearly any contemporary occasion there is something in the Archives' vault that could add information unavailable elsewhere. Unlike written history, the sound materials of the Archives bring the past to life. Much of this wealth, however, is in formats not entirely suited to online listening, with key segments located in the midst of longer broadcasts that cover a variety of topics. Preparation of materials for Web listening is notably different from the broadcast medium. The *From the Vault* blog posts present recordings of broadcast length (one to one and a half hours) which are streamed as a single program. The Archives need to have the capability to carefully and intelligently edit their materials for an online audience, where listening times are measured in minutes, not hours. They also need to be able to provide short previews for

each of their full-length program files that are available for purchase so that potential customers can sample the sounds before buying. This type of preview of electronic materials has become the norm for online sales, from Amazon's books to iTunes music, and purchasers have come to expect such a service.

The Archives also need to harness the power of their online communities to increase the use of their materials and to facilitate fundraising. Opportunities to support the Archives must be easily accessible with all interactions, and giving to the Archives needs to be as close to a one-click process as possible. Solicitation of small donations, such as $1, $5 and $10, across a broad visitor base needs to be explored.

For the management of the preservation and dissemination activities of the Archives, some additional work is needed on the databases that support sales and management functions. At the moment there are two separate databases: one that represents all Archives holdings, and one that represents programs available for purchase. These need to be combined, and additional support provided for the inventory and preservation functions. In addition, in order to allow linking from Web resources to Archives holdings, all programs in the database must be represented by a persistent web address (URL).

General Goals for 2011 and Beyond

♦ Use online capabilities to promote and disseminate Archives materials, in particular providing increased access to audio materials restored and preserved with NEA funding

♦ Increase the visibility of the Archives through social networking

♦ Increase the Archives' interaction with its audience using the capabilities of today's Web tools (this has both technical and promotional aspects)

Specific Goals for 2011

Content Delivery

♦ Develop offline delivery of programs and program segments in popular formats for use on handheld devices such as cell phones, mp3 players, and iPods.

♦ Create applications ("apps") for offline devices such as the iPhone and Android platform, that will bring Pacifica content to a new audience

♦ Identify, create and promote program segments that are appropriate for Web listening

♦ Explore making Archives content available through iTunes for a fee, and make use of marketing capabilities in iTunes to promote the PRA content

Website and Database

Combine existing sales and internal databases, and minimize duplicate effort for input of **Pacifica**

- data into the primary database

- Make all cataloged resources addressable from anywhere on the Web using http URLs, which would allow linking from external resources to PRA program descriptions

- Bring database up-to-date with recent preservation and program activities

Social Networking

- Create short sound files that can be promoted quickly through Facebook, Twitter and other sites.

- Create link to Archives materials from popular tools such as Wikipedia, for example from the Wikipedia page on Pete Seeger to the documentary produced in 2006

- Use the blog to provide short versions of weekly broadcasts, and promote purchase of full programs

- Explore fundraising activities that are appropriate to social networking, such as using one-click payments

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