



Public Radio
Satellite System

Program Distribution FAQ for Producers Distributing Independently

The following FAQ addresses some general questions that were initially discussed September 20, 2008, at a PRSS[®] Producer Breakfast held at the PRPD Conference in Hollywood, California. Managed by NPR Distribution, the PRSS is a unique, cooperative enterprise that was established in 1979 for the benefit of the entire public radio system.

Specific suggestions made by the attendees for ContentDepot[®] services and enhancements have been added to the PRSS enhancement request list. Further refinements have been made through subsequent consultation with AIR, the Association of Independents in Radio

What is ContentDepot[®] ?

The PRSS ContentDepot is a subscription-based, national digital distribution network that program producers use to distribute their shows to stations. The system continues to incorporate satellite/analog distribution, because satellite technology is still the most cost-effective and reliable means of delivering high-quality audio programming to a national network of radio stations. But the ContentDepot also provides alternative distribution methods like internet-only delivery, to give over 425 stations and their networks the flexibility in receiving and storing programs and other information from nearly 200 producers.

The ContentDepot includes a web-based portal used by both producers and stations to manage program marketing information and materials, operational information, and actual audio files. All interconnected public radio stations across the country have ContentDepot-provided equipment to receive audio from the ContentDepot in a manner that they can easily automate.

For more information about the ContentDepot and for training materials on how to use it, please visit www.prss.org.

What are my options for delivering programs to stations via Content Depot[®] ?

There are three basic options for program delivery:

- **File transfer** is used to deliver pre-recorded programs. This allows stations the most flexibility. The files are delivered to station receivers before the beginning of the program's air window, and stations can use them any time during that window.
- **Live stream** delivery is for programs that stations take directly to air or record for later use. Use this delivery type when you need to make sure that stations have up-to-the-minute content.
- **Live with subsequent file** delivery combines the up-to-the-minute content of live streaming with some of the flexibility of file transfer. While a program is streaming, it is recorded and segmented in the Network Operations Center (NOC). When recording is complete, the files are uploaded to the ContentDepot and delivered to stations for their use at any time during the air window you specify.

For file transfer programs, you can prepare the files yourself and upload them directly to the ContentDepot. There is no need to overnight a CD or to feed audio to the NOC for encoding.

What tips do you have for how we can maximize our use of the ContentDepot®?

Audition audio

When you are marketing your program, don't forget that the ContentDepot provides places for you to post audio samples as part of your program page. Stations do not have to subscribe to download and listen to audition samples; these are available at any time (audition samples are not restricted by air windows), and there is no charge to the producer or stations when these samples are downloaded. Look for the audition sample slots on the main program page for your program. You can have up to three files for a sample program (can be a complete program or a specially-produced sampler) as well as any promotional samples.

Evergreen or "long tail" files

As we noted above, if you have a special that you have already pushed to stations but wish to make available on an ongoing basis (for more than six months), there are ways to do it. You can upload the program files to the evergreen episode section of your program page. An evergreen episode by its nature has no restrictions on broadcast time, and stations can come to the ContentDepot and request your files at any time. There is no charge to the producer or the stations for these manual downloads.

Content exchanges

In addition to program distribution services, the PRSS ContentDepot offers a content exchange service. Content exchanges are online forums where members within a group can publish files (audio, graphics, documents, etc.) to a content exchange and let other people access them. Content exchanges are designed for simple-file sharing and collaboration--not the distribution of completed programs or series. Membership in an exchange may be open to all or limited to a defined set of users as determined by the group. Common uses of an exchange include regional news networks sharing news pieces of local interest; communities of producers sharing pieces for collaborative production within their group; short pieces for use by stations within larger programs (e.g., StoryCorps); or forums for storing and sharing training materials related to public radio.

The content exchange service is available at no charge to PRSS producers and stations, and it uses the national infrastructure maintained by the PRSS. This means that you get the same round-the-clock support for content exchanges, and stations can receive files from exchanges using the same distribution paths as regular programs.

Are any improvements being made to the ContentDepot®?

Yes, PRSS staff is constantly working on upgrades, fixes, and improvements to the ContentDepot. We encourage all of you to submit ideas and suggestions to PRSS. We can't guarantee when any particular improvement will rise to the top of the priority list, but we do keep track of all of your suggestions. Every spring, we conduct a Users Summit with a working group of station and producer advisors. These advisors help us to prioritize system enhancements that will be of the most benefit to all users. Additionally, on an ongoing basis, we will continue to meet with communities of producers and stations across the country to solicit your feedback.

The major areas of work currently underway at the request of the user advisory group include improving promo delivery, messaging, reports, and the speed with which portal pages load.

Please do not hesitate to contact the PRSS Help Desk at 800.971.7677 or via prssplanning@npr.org any time you wish to share an idea or suggestion.

How much will it cost to distribute my program?

For live or file-based specials or series, you pay a small “ingest” fee to cover the cost of getting each episode to the ContentDepot and charges are based on the amount of audio you distribute. Transmission charges are based on the size of the audio files or streams sent through the system. There is no difference in the rates per episode charged to distribute a one-time special or an ongoing series. Any charges to get content to the PRSS, however, such as charges accrued for ISDN delivery of audio to the NOC, are the responsibility of the producer.

For details about rates for fiscal year 2010, visit www.prss.org. If you have questions about pricing, or if you would like a quote on specific costs to distribute your program, contact our Business Affairs office at 202.513.2618.

How does ContentDepot[®] distribution benefit my program?

ContentDepot distribution provides a number of benefits for program distributors and their programs:

- Fast, reliable, *automated* delivery via satellite—the most efficient way for your programs to reach stations.
- Access to a large (400+) network of interconnected public radio stations.
- Optional marketing and station support features that you can add to your pages for no additional charge, including:
 - Audition audio
 - An evergreen episode
 - Promos
 - Rundowns and other supporting documents
 - Detailed program information
- Round-the-clock support. The PRSS Help Desk is available to help when you need it. Critical situations receive immediate attention, even at night or on weekends.
- Improved producer control of program use, in which you decide:
 - Which stations are allowed to subscribe; and
 - When they can air the show.

How long will my program be available to stations?

That is up to you. There are some conventions: most ongoing weekly programs have one-week air windows, because that makes the programs more station-friendly. If you prefer, however, you can set the air window for any amount of time from the length of the program (for live feeds) to six months (especially good for one-time documentaries and other evergreen specials). If a new station subscribes to your program after the air window has begun, the new station can still download existing file-based episodes at no charge to the producer or station while the air window is still active.

If you want your files to be “pushed” to stations again in the future (delivered to all subscribed stations automatically), you would need to create a new episode page and upload your files to the new episode page. In this case, normal re-delivery charges would apply and you could make your program available for up to an additional six months.

If you have a special that you have already pushed to stations but that should be available on an ongoing basis, there are ways to do it. You may choose, after the initial file delivery, to upload the program files to the evergreen episode section of your program page. An evergreen episode by its nature has no restrictions on broadcast time, and stations can come to the ContentDepot and request your files at any time. There is no charge to the producer or the stations for these manual downloads.

What is broadcast liability insurance and how can I obtain it?

Any producer distributing programming over the PRSS or the PRSS website must be protected against claims that may arise from the broadcast, electronic distribution, and/or other transmission of a program or related material. Each producer is required to be covered by a multimedia liability policy with a minimum limitation of liability of \$1,000,000. You can either obtain this insurance yourself, or if you distribute programming over the satellite system, pay to participate in a group policy covering the PRSS. The current rate to participate in this policy is \$16 per transmission hour (or any part thereof), or \$1,225 for annual coverage. For those purchasing annual coverage through the policy covering the PRSS, the \$1,225 premium is due in advance.

NPR and Marsh USA, Inc., administer this multimedia liability policy for users of the PRSS. Subject to applicable deductibles and conditions, this coverage pays for liability arising out of:

- defamation
- invasion, infringement, or interference with rights of privacy or publicity
- infringement of copyright or trademark

Subject to certain conditions and exclusions of the Insurer, the current insurance policy provides media perils coverage for programming or other informational content (including but not limited to audio, printed, electronic, or Internet) provided by covered registered sources to and distributed by means of satellite facilities, electronic, or Internet transmissions via the PRSS. The present policy limit is \$1,000,000 for each loss and for each policy period, with a \$5,000 deductible for each loss. Please contact PRSS Business Affairs with any questions you may have about insurance requirements for distributing programming via the PRSS.

If you distribute a large volume of programming, you may want to get your own annual insurance coverage. For more information on this, please contact an independent insurance broker or:

Marsh USA, Inc.
1255 23rd Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: 202.263.7681
Fax: 202.263.7700

Please keep in mind that in order to avoid being billed the hourly rate, producers with annual policies must send NPR Distribution a certificate of insurance stating the effective date of the policy. It is also the producer's responsibility to submit updated copies of the certificate when a policy is renewed.

If you are part of a self-insured state institution and are prohibited by state law from obtaining insurance, you must notify Business Affairs in writing at the time you register. Failure to notify us of your self-insured status will result in your being billed at the hourly rate for insurance coverage.

If you have any questions, please contact Business Affairs at 202.513.2618 or via email at prssbusiness@npr.org. For more information about insurance, you may also visit www.prss.org.