New Voices 2013
REPORT on PRPD Public Radio Programming Conference
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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

Wow, were to begin? The AIR/New Voices team – Sue, Erin, Luis, Noland, and Lo – were incredibly warm, supportive, responsive, professional, and genuinely interested in seeing us flourish at the PRPD Conference. Likewise, our cohort of New Voices was passionate, brilliant, friendly, and completely devoid of any spirit of competitiveness or conceit. I came away with so many ideas about creative projects, social media strategies, fundraising approaches, and collaborative content production.

Additionally, I really enjoyed the collegiality I shared with the many AIR members I met. Someone at the AIR mingle mentioned that because of our love of audio we had all taken the same vow of poverty. That remark made me feel like we share an honorific vocation – that we are each called by an unquenchable curiosity for which we receive Divine tribute (ie: the spoils of the pledge drive). What other than grace of the highest form can explain the preternatural logic of the public radio ‘love economy’?

In short, I had a blast, and truly felt a sense of belonging. I will say, however, that if I were not part of a collective like the New Voices, I could easily have felt alien and inhibited because of the class, age, and racial skew of the conference population. And certainly, there is the reality that these radio leaders have known each other for years and have formed intimate networks. Good for them. Must be nice. Not so good for everyone else.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

I wore a few different hats at the PRPD conference. One of those was the exotic feather-adorned, wide-brimmed straw hat I donned as a newly-minted member of my station’s board of directors. I attended meeting sessions that would not only strengthen my producer chops, but that could provide useful information to help our Board improve the financial outlook and programmatic coherency of WRFG. A couple of things stood out for me in the more ‘managerial’ sessions. First was the central assumption of “the college graduate” as
anchoring listener. Second was the way that Program Directors tended to discuss the ubiquitous conference theme of cultivating diversity among producers and listeners. I wasn’t surprised that the latter topic surfaced; after all, there are super smart people at the helm of these media organizations. They know that diversity is an endemic problem. What was interesting, though, was the sense of urgency attributed to such an old problem.

What puzzled me most, however, was the oft-proposed response to this exigent dilemma – that marketing is somehow the panacea. The notion that listenership can be diversified through enhanced marketing seems fundamentally flawed. ‘Marketization’ as a model of inclusion shows just how out-of-touch some public media thought leaders are. To sustain relevance and grow new audiences, public radio must, like the stealth ethnographer, embed itself in existing institutions. On that point, let me revisit my critique about the way in which the “educated listener” is defined – i.e., the college grad-as-audience paradigm. Public radio must become a part of the communicative infrastructure of churches, schools, recreation centers, libraries, GED centers, narc anon meetings, hip-hop festivals, and street basketball tournaments. Growing listenership means ‘being there’...in an authentic and committed way. Sure, I listen to public radio probably because of my background, my education. But as a producer at a 40-year old grassroots community radio station, I also know through personal experience that there are a WHOLE LOT of folks without degrees or diplomas, folks without steady jobs, folks with criminal records, who call into our shows with great political savvy and social insight. Street intellectuals, if you will. They are hungry for INFORMATION. They are CURIOUS and SOCIALLY ENGAGED. They are trying to be entrepreneurs, be addiction-free, be better parents. And many of them live at the poverty line. Like college-educated listeners, they are also dissatisfied with commercial media. I know this because they tune into my show – a show about social justice and sociological scholarship. But there are no data about them. They are an invisible audience in terms of the premises upon which broadcast clocks and fundraising schemes are based.

One thing the conference motivated me to think about is the unaddressed need for updated metrics for profiling listeners. In these pessimistic times for public radio, and in the hope of a resurgent future, there is no excuse for overlooking the underemployed, less-schooled listener. These people are not marginal, if anything, they are mainstream America, and they could very well be the next “sustaining subscribers” of public radio.

So a key lesson for my own professional practice was to keep pressing forward, experimenting with ways of satisfying and showing respect for these listeners. At some point, perhaps sooner than later, these experiments could become best practices and policies with widespread applications for public radio in general.

3. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?

It would have been nice to have some sort of closing session with all the New Voices. Nothing too heady, but a ritual of some sort is always good for bringing the energy full circle. Rituals give the ordinary an extraordinary imprint in our lives.

Also, I am grateful that AIR saw value in bringing me in as an ambassador for progressive community radio. While AIR’s mandate is to serve independent producers, community radio practitioners are effectively ‘independents’ working on behalf of specific community-based entities and interests. Thus, generally, community radio producers are likely to relay the information from such conferences to other volunteers at the institutions we serve. It’s a
way of having producers lead organizational change from the middle – strengthening practice in the studio or on the beat, shaping policy at the station as a whole, and serving communities better on the ground. In the future, I hope AIR continues to reach out to our ilk because an investment in one of us stretches the grant dollars a long way.

4. **DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPD WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK?** Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

Going into the conference, I had certain skeptical preconceptions about the journalistic enterprise of storytelling. My concerns had to do with the preponderance of stories that focus on the spectacle of events or the exceptionalism of personal experience without any reference to social forces, power structures, or collective histories. The fetish of “the story” and the focus on “the character” make it possible to talk ad nauseum, for example, about mass-murdering gunmen as psychologically unstable *individuals* instead of interrogating the societal patterns that produce such personae and the killing resources at their disposal. (Don’t even get me started on the sham of neutrality in reporting.)

But after talking with other New Voices and independent producers, as well as sitting in on producer-centered sessions, my appreciation of “the journalistic story” has evolved tremendously. Good stories do make it possible not only to begin the broader conversations that move us from the particular to the universal, but in very direct ways, stories can also help us make meaning of social patterns, especially when such stories are born in the context of deep and reciprocal relationships between journalists and communities. At the conference, I saw demonstrations of projects like *SonicTrace* and *I See Change*. I found both projects to be extraordinary at bridging personal and social narrative, biography and cartography, ideology and circumstance. I am now encouraged to move beyond the format of explanatory dialogue, which is the model for my long-form talk shows, to now start making my own community-embedded radio stories.
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City/State: London, England  
Professional affiliation: Podcast Producer at the London School of Economics and BBC World Service/Editorial Partnerships

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

Radio is Dead, by the way

The conference began with the apocalyptic pronouncements of Wikimedia’s Sue Gardner. Did you hear that people of the public radio world, sitting out there in silent fury? Or is that stunned silence? Anyway, radio is dead. D-e-a-d. Dead. “Sure, ok” was the first thought that came to mind (selfishly, because I am a podcaster, I didn’t give as much mental push-back). I work in the UK and the only access I have to American public radio is through podcasts. The act of transmitting radio waves to a metal rod I own, is completely irrelevant to me. Sure, ok. Maybe radio is dead.

Or is it?

“Are you with me?” - Sue Schardt

Right after Sue Gardner came the New Voices listening session. If at best, the industry as rigid and antique, as Wikimedia’s Gardner hinted, then where does that leave the rest of us? Our group had some really uplifting but realistic conversation about this. The industry is too risk averse. It doesn’t reflect nor attract enough diversity. How do we New Voices make it in this ceiling-ridden world then?

Andrew Ramsammy started a discussion about the difficulties of getting people behind your projects and Sue Schardt reminded us that we need to be clear about our value proposition. State your pitch and be in tune to whether your pitchees share the passion you have for your project. “Are you with me?”

I walked away feeling that if public media, radio more specifically, is merely ailing and not dead, then the enthusiasm and clarity in that room was part of what could cure it.

“If you give people the room to do good things, good things will happen” - Noland Walker

I know I am receiving a stipend from AIR but it isn’t for saying this (because what follows is the truth!): Localore breakout session was my favourite part of the conference. I walked away feeling that if I had any sort of future in American public media it lay in a multimedia project like the ones talked about: Sonic Trace, Curious City, Austin Music Map, and iSeeChange. I was seduced not only by the amazing quality of the storytelling techniques and the multimedia, but by the enthusiasm of its producers: “Success is when the project starts to tell you what it is”, said one.
“Wearing the uniform but not playing the game” - Luis Perez

When organisations grow, instincts are replaced with protocols which protect it, and keep it running efficiently. But protocols make it annoyingly resistant to change. Luis really challenged programmers and editors in that room to start living their promises for diversity at the Air Mix and Mingle and Torey Malatia drove the point of innovation home. I just hope these thoughts are still stewing in the brains of the attendees.

“Don’t hold onto the status quo when the quo has lost its status” - Pat Harrison

I enjoyed seeing the panel of women in public media (including Sue Schardt!) on the final day. PRPD seemed committed to representing women on panels as equally to men. I thought this was a really important initiative.

“Now that’s a pitch” - Nancy Mullane

I tried that first line of my pitch about the cannibals and cannabis growers several times with people: keep the alliteration, lead with the cannibals, good stuff. But it didn’t have the same charm as when I was on stage pitching to Nancy Mullane of Life of the Law. I was asked to re-pitch my idea in under a minute. I managed to focus my thoughts and pull it off. For my first pitch, it was a proud moment!

Everybody must get stoned. A.K.A. Haters gonna hate

I walked over to the BBC table at the end of the Kitchen Sisters Benediction 2.0 to say bye to someone I knew. “You wouldn’t see that at a meeting in Britain.” He of course was referring to the high school band that waltzed-in to the Hyatt Regency performing Bob Dylan. The Kitchen Sisters were a revelation.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

As someone who started her radio career abroad, the American market was always something of a mystery to me. I probably listen to an equal amount of programs from the UK as I do the US but I came into radio through the BBC and that world is very different. At the conference I kept meeting people’s whose voices I recognised and whose names I recognised attached to my favourite shows. Over the course of the three days, I felt that the idea of me freelancing in American radio had become less remote. I suddenly felt part of a world I had only watched from afar. There were many conversations I had with producers and general public radio gods but the following stuck out most in my mind:

Nancy Camden, fellow New Voicer, said to me “The biggest obstacle for creative people are the people above them holding them back”. This reinforced for me that I need to have trust in myself and my ideas. People at the top are busy. They are paying off mortgages and need to make a 5pm doctor’s appointment. When you face a barrier, keep plugging away and you will prevail.

Chris Bannon of WYNC gave me some really good advice for my podcasts and generally how to look at a project objectively after working on it for some time.
Luis, his cup overfloweth with resonating metaphors and encouraging words. I thank him for that.

3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?

I have been in touch with Nancy Mullane since the Pitch Panel. I hope my story does come to fruition!

There were a few people at the BBC I wanted to chase.

I hope to pitch to David Krasnow one day (I enjoyed the one-to-one AIR sessions)

Amongst our New Voicers:

Neena Pathak, New Voicer, and I had talked about doing a year-long project on a social justice topic with a multimedia element to it.

Lilly Sullivan, New Voicer, will be on work trips in Brazil this month and I hope to meet up with her and attend some of her organisation’s events.

Kavita Pillay needs a sort of ‘fixer’ for her butler story in England so I might fill that role!

4. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?

I think for PRPD if they had a stronger and more advanced multimedia and social media component, attendees would greatly benefit. I went to the social media breakout session but it was fairly rudimentary.

Both Erin and Sue were extremely helpful and encouraging and I think this made me feel really at ease from hour one. I do wish we had a closing session with the New Voicers. It would have been nice to give some concluding thoughts and to see everyone as a group before we left.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

Unequivocally it will. As an American public media outsider, I now have ‘ins’. I intend to pursue them whole-heartedly in the next year.
1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

I went to the Public Radio Program Directors (PRPD) conference determined to learn through other’s experience as much as I could about the medium. Because of the generous spirit from the top down, I learned from hosts of national shows, station managers and program directors, producers, creators of computer programs, presidents of networks, directors of organizations and my fellow AIR scholars. In the process, I learned more about myself. I identified some strengths as well as weaknesses and my project vision was refined. Confidence blossomed. Thanks to AIR, I am certain this conference vaulted me into a strong position for realizing my proposed series, Spotting Wisconsin.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

The panel of women talking about The New Face of Public Radio made me proud of women in this medium, past and present. We continue to explore new territory and bring others with us. All of the women on that panel have assumed important leadership roles. Through their example, I am inspired to not be afraid of risk and to stand strongly in my space as I create a path.

The President and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Patricia de Stacy Harrison—what an approachable woman! I showed her my card and she thought I was ‘spot on’ in planning to give voice to Midwestern rural and small-town everyday people. She said that sense of place is currently very important in radio. Her comments make me believe that my time is now.

When I shared my card with Garrison Keillor, he understood exactly what I am trying to accomplish with Spotting Wisconsin and said, “I think it’s a wonderful idea,” adding that it shouldn’t be ‘slick.’ He thought it needed to be a thirty-minute show. I wondered if he is thinking that too much in public radio is becoming slick and more fast-paced than he would wish.

While I still have major steps to the creation of my series, the PRPD conference stimulated me to think beyond the immediate goal—to envision possibilities farther out. All of the programs and networks at the conference began with a small thought. Years later, several were celebrating birthdays of big ideas.

Torey Malatia’s reference to those in radio as ‘makers’ felt personal. I came to this media from 30 years as a maker of visual art. He named my life career: maker. He
also advised that in order to make, you need to understand the following: “This is a communications business. As a producer, you do need to use your communication skills and your passion for communicating to drive the relationships you need to build with people, who can help support your work.”

After the Kitchen Sisters had blessed us all with their benediction and the conference was over, I left the hotel thinking, ‘I can’t believe it—three days of intense learning and networking—over.’ I never went to my room to rest or went out to sightsee during those three days. I used every potential minute to grow. On the trip from the hotel to the airport, I was with women from Third Coast Festival. Unexpectedly, the learning continued. I was given good advice from Johanna Zorn, Executive Director. In reference to something I was thinking of doing, she said, “Be clear of what you want.” It made me realize that I have to be crystal clear on what I need from each person I approach regarding anything to do with my developing project.

3. **DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?**

Sue Schardt informed me as to who was at the conference from Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR.) I was pleased to connect a few times with Mike Arnold, Associate Director of Radio at WPR. I met Jennifer Dargan from WPR, who invited me to an after-conference brown bag session. The first step in any project is building relationships.

I had cards printed up and carried them so I could easily pull one out to give to someone. In exchange, I got other people’s cards and when I came home, I organized them. I followed up with either paper mail or emails, based on what I thought was best. Sometimes, a connection is not immediately needed but later may prove valuable to you or the other person.

As I say about the concept of *Spotting Wisconsin*, “You never know what you might learn when you are neighborly to those you meet.” After being at the PRPD conference, I have new neighbors in public radio.

4. **DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?**

Early on, I would have liked a complete list of AIR Scholar’s names and their cities. A photograph with the bio would have been helpful to begin putting a name to a face. A list of conference participants would be good to have at the conference.

5. **DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment?**
Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

I went to Atlanta thinking that one of the main things I wanted to learn was how to pitch a story. What the pitch session taught me was how to be clear and succinct in presenting everything. For me, that translates into how to pitch the whole series of *Spotting Wisconsin* rather than individual stories.

I feel better equipped to get this series out to the public by knowing much more about social media and how to work it. From the social media session, I wrote down, “It is the art of participating, inviting people in.” “Be flawsome—flawed and awesome.” Presenter Lori Lewis encouraged us to ‘mess around’ in social media and through that, to learn what works and what doesn’t. I think that applies to everything. You don’t have to be an expert to get going. You have to get going to become an expert.

I fully expect to feel discouraged again at various times. I suggested to a fellow scholar that everyone, even the ones at the top of their careers have to deal with discouragement, disappointment and worry about where things are or are not going . . . and money. Stations, shows and individuals struggle.

As I ponder the conference, it all comes down to this: Keep growing and keep going.
1. GENERAL OVERVIEW.

Connection — that word summarizes my experience at PRPC. Often times I feel as public radio producers, reporters and storytellers; we’re separated from the mainstream culture. And that is totally fine. So, my time at the conference was valuable. I felt woven into a group of people that understand my role in journalism and the media. As a young journalist with big ideas and different approaches, I felt welcomed. But I also saw the lack of diversity — in age, ethnicity and platforms (digital or radio). This is where I felt AIR’s New Voices scholarship program kicked in. My New Voices colleagues ranged in different ages, experience levels and backgrounds. Seeing diverse talent in the program amped me to feel connected. And connection is what I received from PRPC.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME?

Jaws dropped, eyes squinted, bewildered expressions appeared on faces. A moment — and reality — I took away from the conference was the attendees’ reaction to Sue Gardner’s “sun-setting” the radio dial comment at the opening event. The conversations that sparked after the statement made me ponder about public media. What’s now, what’s next, what’s my role? This was a pivotal moment for my self-evaluation. I understood that when the next waves of changes come, one must be ready to brace them and be a step head, if possible. And with all this includes the local, regional and national levels.

Also, a top take-away is how important independent producers are to this medium. At first, I didn’t understand the concept. Was it a freelancer? Was it someone who grew with the station — but not really? By conversing and sharing with various talented independent producers, I grasped the potential of the job. Being a young indie producer myself, I was inspired to create and escalate to the next level. I learned ways to pitch effectively to national programs — shout out to the New Voices who bravely took part in the pitching panel — and craft stories to different angles. I felt invigorated to delve into my role in of digital and production.

3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?

I felt brand new to the radio world at the conference. I knew a few folks from previous internships and work in public media, but I stood unfamiliar with everyone else and everything else. But I quickly realized all these new, different faces were here to do the same — engage and connect. Someone I feel I definitely connected was Neena Pathak from New Voices. Being interested in demographic changes, education and regional aspect, we clicked. Neena, a former high school teacher, and I bounced off story ideas about immigration and demographics. We promised — maybe even pinky-promised — to
keep in touch regarding our next steps in radio, and hopefully collaborate on a project. Many of those conversations flourished with other New Voices like Kavita Pillay, Cheryl Brumley and Davey Kim. And during that week, I also met people across the country like folks from Capital Public Radio in Sacramento. This also served as an opportunity to catch up with contacts I had previously met and update them on my current role at KCRW.

4. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?

I felt a sense of organic mentorship at the AIR New Voices program. While the participants and mentors introduced themselves at the listening session, a sense of family began. That really benefitted me — it formed a safety zone during the conference. But there wasn’t a final event where we could share our take-aways and business cards. I suggest an informal New Voices event to gather reactions and say farewells.

The “mandatory” events should definitely be kept. They felt handpicked for newcomers like us. And in each session or mixer, I walked away with something new. For the Bringing New Voices panel, I understood the management side of things — something that I’m not often exposed to.

A suggestion for PRPD would be to infuse more panels and sessions that cater to the intersection of digital and radio platforms. There should be an emphasis in that area, which could prove essential for smaller stations that don’t have the capacity in staff or resources. I would also suggest more diversity in speakers and panelists. What made me comfortable at New Voices was seeing people in my age range and skin color. Diversity would be beneficial to PRPD and its attendance, and in the larger spectrum — the industry.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK?

My experience at PRPC definitely influenced my career path. As a journalist with a digital background and a passion for audio storytelling, I want to merge those two platforms in the programs, projects and stories I take on. In other journalism conferences, I’ve learned the online aspect — the drive, the language, the reason. At PRPC, I understood the radio side. I want to get to a point where I am able to influence public media newsroom on direction and platform usages.
Name: Davey Kim  
City/State: Los Angeles, CA  
Professional affiliation: Intern for Marketplace & The Dinner Party Download (APM)

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. This was an experience like no other. As a recent college graduate and radio neophyte, the New Voices 2013 program opened my eyes (and ears) to the limitless potential of radio. As an aspiring radio reporter and producer, I found the “mentor-mentee” conversations and workshops the most beneficial to me. In the bustling world of radio, it is hard to meet mentors who aren’t “on deadline” or caught up with their own projects. Thus, face-time with working professionals and specifically my New Voices group re-re-re-affirmed why I am passionate about radio and why I want to dedicate my life to this calling (in a nutshell, my goal is to use public radio to foster conversations and dialogue, which promotes social awareness and hopefully social change). I particularly enjoyed hearing everyone’s background (TV producer, Sociology Professor, Ex-Cigarette company organizer, Documentarian and etc.) and their break into radio. While this PRPD conference was centered on professional development, for me it was more about experiencing the professional and personal culture of like-minded individuals.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME?  
What I learned (or yearned most for) was what was missing at the conference, yet ironically mentioned the most: diversity. I believe I was the youngest attendee at the conference (but imagine how many other fresh college graduates would benefit and contribute at a conference that focuses on the future of public radio) I believe I was also one of the very few Asian-Americans and people of color but imagine how diversity (through the representation of new ethnicities, cultures, age, religion and sexuality) can add new life and vigor to public radio. For example, coverage of minority and LGBT issues in the heartland is very low. But those areas have the largest refugee centers and those cities have growing LGBT communities. If we are trying to reach new audiences, we need to have more minority perspectives and producers in place to make that happen. Having said all this, I am optimistic about the future as I see changes already at my local NPR station (new education, immigration and emerging communities reporters) and I hope other stations adopt a similar mindset too. I am also excited because I am part of that change as well.

3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?  
The professional connections I am most looking forward to is working with Glynn Washington and Snap Judgment. Snap Judgment was one of the shows that hooked me to public radio (To me, Snap Judgment is program with strong storytelling social advocacy). He is looking forward to hearing some of my pitches (which are currently in the works). I also had the opportunity to finally meet Peter Clowney (based in
Minnesota), the creative director of The Dinner Party Download (the culture show that I work for), and he was incredibly willing to speak with me on my post-internship plans slash worries slash adventure. He currently is on the lookout for any jobs that might be of interest and he’s also going to sit down with me in November to layout my career. I also made a noteworthy connection with Catherine Burns (Creative Director of The Moth). She recognized my love for radio and took her time to connect me with her colleagues in LA to collaborate on future LA-based storyslams and storytelling events. I am also currently working with Kavita Pillay to pitch a story to PRI's The World and this collaboration is important to me as I develop my radio reporting skills. Last but not least, I am thankful to have experienced PRPC and New Voices with my traveling buddy and roommate Brian de los Santos. I greatly admire his passion and the work he does with Sonic Trace (maps out and tells stories of Mexican immigrants) and take inspiration from him to do something similar in my radio journey.

4. **DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?**

I am very proud to have been in the AIR and the New Voices program for they are doing what the PRPD conference lacks (see Question 2). I think it would have also been great to have some time at the end of the day for New Voices members to meet and share what they learned from the sessions. That way our professional development isn’t limited to just the sessions we attended, but that we can also learn about other aspects of the conference as well.

Even though the PRPD conference attendee makeup consists mostly of working professionals, it would be encouraging to see a panel or workshop that focuses on independent producers (how to succeed as an independent producer/how to better incorporate independent producers in the station). It seems that many freelance producers are struggling to make financial ends meet with just radio. It also seems that the mainstream public media rejects many of their novel ideas. It is important that we support creative independent producers because this fuels innovation and innovation is what defines the future of public radio.

5. **DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK?**

It’s only been a two weeks since PRPC, but I already feel like I’ve made new strides in my career. After sharing my story and show ideas with radio veterans, I am finally putting my freelance ideas into action. (As a life-long Los Angelinos) I am no longer wary of relocating for a new job/position either, as I have learned the personal and professional benefits of being in a new environment. Sharing my goals and dreams, and hearing from new perspectives have given me a renewed strength as an aspiring producer. My goal is to be an educator and the conference affirmed to me that there is a community that supports me in doing just that.
Name: Emma Lacey-Bordeaux  
City/State: Atlanta, Georgia  
Professional affiliation: Freelance Multimedia Producer/Reporter

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.
   a. This was my first foray into the public media world and, as such, provided great insights. I enjoyed the passion and creativity I saw and heard at the conference. From the unbelievably inspiring Localore projects to the conversations I had with New Voices about their dream stories and projects, I heard new ideas and ways of conceiving storytelling.
   b. The conference taught me a lot about what people in the public media realm value, what they are looking for and what they are concerned about. While there’s a lot of pride in the products public media produces, I learned that many in public media are looking for innovation, they are looking for different perspectives and presentations. They are worried about not getting it right as news platforms and consumption patterns change. I heard these thoughts in the lunches, the panels and the side conversations.
   c. I spent much of my time listening and absorbing what I’d heard on panels and at the lunches. I spent the rest of my time chatting with new voices people and other conference attendees. I made good connections and had many opportunities to think broadly about storytelling and innovation.
   d. The most inspiring single part of the conference was the Localore panel. It showcased truly innovative work and I continue to be amazed by what the producers accomplished. Hearing from the station managers also provided great insight into the mechanics of innovation.
   e. The AIR meeting was also really great. Glynn Washington did a fantastic job as MC and set a tone for frank and entertaining discussion. Luis Perez spoke with conviction and power, I really appreciated what he had to say. Tory Malatia’s point about smart and strategic innovation was a welcome sentiment.
   f. I also enjoyed all the flexible time built into the conference. I found myself in many a fascinating conversation during those breaks.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?
   a. The new voices program reminded me of the intangible power of enthusiasm and optimism. As journalists we have a fabulous opportunity. I carry that feeling and the joy of my work with me everyday. The conference reminded me how powerful and infectious those feelings are.
   b. The New Voices were endlessly inspiring. They had great passion and excitement. I also really enjoyed getting to know Luis and the other AIR folks. Everyone had such a different story and different motivations as storytellers. Talking to everyone throughout the conference reminded me of the beauty and power in embracing your own story and your own difference.
3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?
   a. Most everyone I meet, talked with and shared laughs with is a potential collaborator. I don’t have anything in the works at present but I have a whole new network of people doing amazing and interesting things.
   b. I had a great conversation with a couple of the new voices about pitching. We talked strategy and also traded notes on the stories we have in the works. I’m looking forward to hearing the pieces that they end up producing.

4. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?
   a. In many of the conference wide discussions I often felt as if I was joining in on a conversation in the middle. I felt as if I was missing something. For the new voices it might be nice to have more explicit mentors for the conference. I know I would have benefited from having one individual who I could turn to for insights. For example, “diversity” came up again and again. There’s a focus on this issue and clearly strong feelings, I would have liked to know more about what that’s all about. I want to know more of the history or trajectory of that conversation.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?
   a. I think the innovation that exists in the media at the moment is hugely inspiring and this conference drove home that power. For example, the barriers between journalists and our audiences are shifting. Curious City was a great example of that, as is KCRW’s effort. It’s exhilarating and exciting to think about new ways of engaging audiences as more of stakeholders in the storytelling process. Another great example, the varied interests, backgrounds and methods I heard from at the conference. Also the explosion in platforms and presentations. It’s never been a better time to be a storyteller. That’s what I’m taking with me.
Name: Eboni A. Lemon  
City/State: Atlanta, GA  
Professional affiliation: Georgia Public Broadcasting

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

I completely underestimated how influential the PRPD conference was going to be. Coming from the television side of public media, I knew I was going to learn a lot but I didn’t realize how progressive public radio’s prospective on storytelling was. The conference gave me the jolt I need to further my career in public media. It was nice to be among accomplished radio personalities, producers and editors. Everyone was welcoming and for once I felt like I was a part of a community people like me even though I from the television side of public media. Overall, the conference has opened my eyes/ears to new concepts.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were there certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

One of the biggest impressions was the New Voices listening session held on the first night. I was extremely intimidated being in a room of radio producers who have projects, podcasts and programs under their belts but, my intimidation morphed into motivation from listening to fellow New Voices’ stories and accomplishments. From this session I first saw the opportunities that radio had to offer and learned that essentially producing for radio would make me a better producer on multi-platforms. There is more interaction with the community in radio to complete the full spectrum of stories instead of just relying on images.

A major lesson I learned was the flexibility in radio that just doesn’t exist in television. There is more allowance to make mistakes and take chances encouraging creativity; because of this, radio has potential to reach audiences that public media has yet to grasp all together. From projects like TPT’s Open Air and all of the Localore projects plus shows like State of the ReUnion and Kitchen Sisters I was really impressed. Public radio has come a long way and it’s not just news, talk and classical music. There is a new generation of public radio emerging, but I still see room to grow into other aspects of public media without shifting its core values.

I also enjoyed the session about building ‘go-team’ because they discussed creating space for projects within a bureaucratic institution though piggy backing off other projects without threatening its own resources. Limited resources are a constant struggle at my station so this session was one I could to.

3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?
I lucked up when I met Doug Mitchell. He just happened to have an open seat next to him during a lunch break and I sat next to him because I couldn’t find other New Voice members. He like everyone there was very open and gave me some great advice. He directed me to other opportunities in Atlanta that could benefit my career and I have profited on one already. I will be attending the Online News Association Conference as one of the social media producers thanks to Mr. Mitchell. I also look forward to becoming an official AIR member so I can participate in the mentorship program.

In addition, I made wonderful connections with the New Voices in general there was definitely a sense of comradery and support throughout the group as a whole. New voice members Nancy Camdem and Andrew Ramsammy gave me great encouraging about starting my own projects and the difficulties along the way. Kali-Ahset Amen and I also bonded, both being from Atlanta, I hope to collaborate/assist with her with projects which will be another chance for me to learn more about radio production. Before the conference I was in my own world at the station not venture too much outside of my own department, now moving forward I plan to cultivate my relationship with members of the radio department and with Tanya Ott the Vice President of radio. She was so kind to let me curate a show before the conference and I can’t wait to do it again.

4. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?

There is not much that I didn’t like about the New Voices Program, but I don’t have a lot to compare it to because it was my first ever professional conference I’ve been to. The ‘one on ones’ were a great asset to the program. I would only recommend that ‘one on one’ sessions be held before the conference. I would also recommend having a closing session with New Voice members in addition to the opening session. It would be nice for members to reflect on the conference together and to exchange contact info.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

I am absolutely sure the conference renewed a sense of my commitment in my career. I tweeted after the Kitchen Sisters’ awesome benediction that PRPD was like a church revival and it was time to spread the good news. My idea of not just public radio but public media in general has change and am determined to broaden I’ve decided that I will venture out of television not totally pursue a new direction in my career. There are so many different ways to share information and tell stories; I should not confine it to TV. My next steps are to learn more about audio editing software and to continue to cultivate my relationships I met at the conference.
1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

In so many regards, I’ve come to realize that the Public Radio Programming Conference is essentially the “Ground Zero” of public radio. This is the granddaddy conference. I was totally in heaven to just return form it, and truly was amazed at how encouraging this community was for the newbie. My fellow New Voices cohorts and I had the pleasure of engaging in dialogue with professionals in every facet of public radio. They were topics of significant importance to the future of public radio, and those engaged in them covered the full spectrum of public radio. They were General Managers and Program Directors of pretty much every public radio station in the country. They were the staff of nationally-distributed public radio programs. They were fundraising executives, independent producers, audience research executives, distributors like PRI and APM … web editors, … I mean, you name it! I’m admittedly a bit of an extrovert, and had a ball zipping around meeting my heroes. Collectively, the attendees at PRPC were an extraordinarily encouraging community. It was as if everyone was saying “you’re meant to be here – you’ve found your calling.” But, the reverse was also true. My New Voices pals and I could see in the eyes of those we’d met a that they were actively engaged in their calling in life. Public radio is interesting like this, and so refreshing. These are idealists. They are motivated by building extraordinary content, and my New Voices buddies and I were truly on Cloud 9.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

I networked like crazy at this conference, and I think that will pay off in the long run. Admittedly, a lot of this networking happened through phone calls and e-mails with my heroes in public radio well over a year ago. Here, at PRPC, I finally met these great folks – like Bari Scott. During an Army deployment to Kuwait that I just returned from a month ago, I called Bari Scott on an 11-hour time difference. She gave me over an hour of her time. What an amazing person!! I’d recommend any New Voice who meets someone at a conference like this attain the business card of who they’re talking to, or at a minimum, to get their name and title for a latter Linkedin connection. Quite literally, every person I met was invaluable in one way or another – more so than the breakaway sessions, which were hugely informative but not nearly as valuable as facetime with the dynamos themselves.

3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?
Where do I begin?! I counted 46 business cards when I packed my bags on the last day in Atlanta. 46!! The thing that floors me is that most all of these exchanges were of the “I can’t wait to talk to you more about this”-tone. That’s so encouraging, and valuable. My favorite handshake was probably Bari Scott, who I think is an extraordinary role model for, quite frankly, anyone in public radio. Sue Schardt at AIR had placed me in touch with Bari when I was still deployed with the Army to Kuwait (thank you, Sue). Another cool happening: I pitched my pitch to the pitch panel (say that three times, fast), and won! I spoke my pitch to Marketplace’s John Haas at AIR’s Pitch Panel brake-out session, and an not working with him on development of that story for national broadcast. Best of all, though, was this amazing “click” that happened among each and every of the New Voices. We bonded as though we’d been the best of friends for decades. It was wild! Now we e-mail each other almost daily, and are helping each other another pave-way into the world of public radio. An e-mail from Nancy Camden earlier today was signed out as “Here we go!!!!” I still smile at that. It’s synonymous with “blast off!” Here we go, Nancy! Here we go...

4. **DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?**

AIR did an outstanding job on planning and logistics of this program, and Erin and Sue have my sincere, deepest gratitude. They made this experience grand, for all of us. I do think there’s a huge potential, and mandate, to expand the head count of New Voices at these conferences. How can we do that? One option might be to invite stations, distributors, independent programs, news providers and even established independent producers to financially sponsor additional New Voices, thereby increasing the pool and, equally important; getting the word out further. I loved our small group, but do realize how many worthy recipients there are out there whom perhaps (a) never knew this program existed or (b) didn’t make the cut, and as a result; may NEVER enter public radio as a careerist. How to we snag these people?

5. **DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?**

Oh, golly! I’m more charged up to stay on track in public radio than every before. About 46 Linkedin connections were made during this conference, and well over 100 e-mails relating to have been sent or received as a result of post-conference follow up. It’s almost overwhelming, to be honest, in an exciting and thrilling sort of way. I left PRPC with a renewed sense of purpose for launching a public radio program that focuses on the human experience of serving in the military, from the voices of soldiers from any nation’s force. It’s a project I’ve incubated in my head for nearly a decade. Finally, it’s coming to life and this conference played a major part in helping us get closer to a pilot. I’m also reminded that I belong in public radio. The people that work in this industry are driven by ideals. They are the right people to work with, because they inspire me just as much as the work they produce.
Name: Neena Pathak  
City/State: Cambridge, MA  
Professional affiliation: Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

- General: Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.
- The Good: Having the opportunity to connect with radio people whose work I’ve admired for a long time.

A short story: I met Glynn Washington for the first time at RadioVision last year. I had no experience in radio production whatsoever. I didn’t even know how to hold a mic. Glynn talked to me about getting started in radio, about his career trajectory, about challenges he’s faced. I caught up with him this year at Meehan’s, where I told him of my very eventful year in radio (including making a podcast with Philly high schoolers about healthy eating, learning the radio ropes at Transom, reporting in Myanmar, getting on air, and becoming a New Voice). I wouldn’t have been able to make these small strides had it not been for countless conversations like the one I had with Glynn to keep me going as I figured out how to dive into the world of radio. PRPD was another space to have a bunch of these conversations, and I left the conference feeling recharged and ready to keep making stories that help us understand each other better.

Some other highlights included talking with Nikki Silva, Jesse Thorne, Nancy Mullane, Jennifer Brandel, Noland Walker, Julie Shapiro, the other New Voices, and a variety of others, which helped me to remember why I was drawn to audio storytelling and why I intend to stay in it.
- The Bad: The food – a veggie option would have been righteous (or maybe I missed an opportunity to indicate that this would have been helpful; in that case, I got my comeuppance in the form of bacon bits and chicken over romaine…so I guess in the scheme of things, I don’t have so much to complain about, but I needed to put a “Bad” because I don’t like leaving fields unpopulated).

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

- Sue Gardner’s opening speech was a bold choice from the PRPD planning committee, and one that I am thankful that the committee made. By asking us to think about the “sun setting on public radio,” I think she made us do something many of us are reluctant to do - reimagine the way we tell and hear stories in sound. And while I do think there is a place for radio – in communities where the internet is not yet the primary way to get information – and that radio production should be paid attention to so a variety of diverse communities across the nation and world can have access to quality
programming, I also see great truth in her assertion that the days of station-based audio consumption are coming to an end.

Even as I start getting involved in radio, there are programs I’d like to work for or certain kinds of stories I’d like to produce, but I don’t feel station loyalty when I listen or produce. I use apps to curate the type of listening experience I’d like to have and pitch content I care about to different programs, versus trying to hang around the station for long enough wearing many hats until receiving a coveted staff position (which, after talking to many program directors at the conference, seemed to be the way many people got a foot in the door). I’m very much willing to wear many hats and do whatever it takes to gain skills I need to be a good producer, but this willingness to work hard revolves less around stations and more around projects. I’d be open to working hard in a station context if it seemed like that’s where opportunities are, but it seems like there are more opportunities to get involved in audio journalism outside of getting one of the few staff positions at a station.

This leads me to the second biggest takeaway I had from the conference. Projects like Localore are hugely important. Full spectrum storytelling is hugely important. Figuring out how to make media interactive and participatory reminds me of inquiry-based instruction in the classroom. When I taught high school in Philly, I tried to facilitate students asking their own questions, and then using resources to pursue answers to their own questions, hopefully to get them to take their ingenuous curiosities to epistemological curiosities (to borrow from Paulo Freire in *The Pedagogy of Freedom*). I think platforms based around audio storytelling could enable this same kind of interaction within our communities, and I’d like to be a part of this type of project soon.

3. **DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?**

- I mostly got contacts so I could get in touch with people in the future when I have something to pitch. Since PRPD, I already pitched to John Haas of Marketplace and plan to pitch to Nancy Mullane (both of these pitches deal with an investigation we are working on at the Schuster Institute, where I work. I’m hoping to make some non-work related pitches as well).
- My fellow New Voice Cheryl Brumley and I may try to work together if we are able to secure Soros funding for a project on juvenile crime.

4. **DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?**

I would love a follow-up to Sue Gardner’s presentation where other presenters create simulations for audience members to help us reimagine what public media can look like in a digital age. I’d love to be taken through a few different viable visions where, for instance, a presenter would guide us through what a typical day within the new public media model would look like. Some questions to be answered might be:

- When will people listen to audio programming?
- How will they subscribe to the content they want?
- How will producers be paid?
o Will public media function under a paid service like Spotify (let’s call it Radify, just so we have something to call it for right now) where people pay a flat rate to get access to any audio stories that are licensed to the Radify network?

o Would a paid service like Radify make public radio more classist?

o How can we use the Internet to make quality audio content more accessible to a wide variety of people?

I’d love for a few presenters to come up with some models that they can pitch to the whole group, and then I’d like to break up into smaller groups to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each model. I think Sue Gardner’s closing statements regarding embodying public media to serve the public good would be useful to ground these reimagined models of public media. Her questions - What do Americans want/need? What would it look like to reinvent yourselves with the opportunities the Internet provides? How can the Internet help to give people what they want and need? – could begin to be answered in this follow-up session.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

My experience at PRPD was encouraging. I spoke with a lot of producers doing novel and interesting work. While I had more luck connecting with other producers, I did have some wonderful interactions with some program directors. Rob Peterson of St. Louis Public Radio was particularly personable and willing to share with me his trajectory through public radio and his thoughts on diversity in the field today. I felt most inspired by the producers and the thought leaders (like Sue Gardner) that are willing to think outside the box when it comes to audio production and consumption.
GENERAL OVERVIEW:

PRPD and New Voices came at a perfect time in my life and career trajectory: a moment in which I’ve been feeling a little stuck. I’ve wanted to find a mentor to sort through some of this stuckness, but I kept putting the idea on the backburner. I’ve been contemplating a move to New York, but the thought of uprooting and establishing myself in a new city (let alone one as massive as NYC) has felt daunting. I’ve been missing the ready-made community of colleagues that a good office environment offers and I’ve been wanting more face-to-face time with inspiring, thoughtful people but I figured that going without those interactions was one of the sacrifices of being an independent producer.

Then I arrived in Atlanta for PRPD.

During the Tuesday morning listening session, each person’s story was a reminder that -- in radio as in life -- (1) there is no one way to be awesome and (2) we are all part of something much larger than ourselves. Both of these simple and invaluable insights are easy to forget when one spends a lot of time working on one’s own. But when Sue Schardt spontaneously suggested that AIR could write a short letter of introduction for those of us who might need it, I felt myself choke up. Tenacity is key to the producerly life, and we get accustomed to people saying no and to having to prove ourselves. It’s all too rare that someone goes out of their way to say, “How can I be of help to you?” Sue, Erin, Noland and Luis’ understanding of the realities of independent producing and their dedication to the independent community was clear in every interaction I’ve had with them. For that I am truly grateful.

WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME?

- Having worked on the World Channel project at WGBH for a few years, I especially appreciated Building a Go Team. Their very specific insight into putting together an innovative project with no budget, no additional staff, and getting buy in from the station, staff and independents was excellent.

- Learn, test, grow! Invest in talent. Be open to value coming in in ways you did not expect it. BE PATIENT!

- Piggybacking on other people’s projects is a great way to go. You can benefit from their work and add value to their project.

- Jennifer Bendel’s comment that they used an Agile development approach to Curious City (this is something I’ve been meaning to implement on my own large projects and I’d love to hear more about how exactly they adopted Agile for a journalistic
undertaking).

- I loved Julia Drapkin’s comment about Localore: “AIR gave us the most amazing thing I’ve ever had: the permission to fail.” I was also inspired by KVNF’s decision to take on a politically charged topic that opened them to criticism from a conservative community, and by the journalistic courage Julia exhibited in managing antagonistic interviewees.

- Cheers to the gentleman (a Localore producer?) in Full Spectrum Storytelling who said, “I read Machiavelli a lot, and if you can get the right people to think your idea is their idea, you’re well on your way.”

- The pitch session: my heart was pounding as each producer presented their pitch and was grilled on the spot. It was illuminating to hear how other producers dealt with unexpected questions from each editor. And Ann was a very engaging moderator.

- I can’t end without a short note about the Kitchen Sisters benediction. I once heard Ira Glass say that, when done properly, audio is the most visual medium. In the hands of The Kitchen Sisters, it became a feast for all five senses.

**DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?**

I have been in touch with several of the New Voices and I’ve also corresponded with Noland Walker about the possibility of an AIR Mentorship. I’m also in touch with people from PRX and WCPN. And as I was working on this write-up, I received a LinkedIn message from a random PRI staff member with whom I had a brief conversation while trying to hunt down a drink ticket on Wednesday night. I never expected this person to remember me, but when I saw the message, I thought, “New Voices is the gift that keeps on giving!”

**DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?**

During the Full Spectrum Storytelling panel, I realized that I’d love to hear a panel of producers who have dealt with problems on a large project: where did their research or assumptions fall through? What setbacks and dark-night-of-the-soul moments did they encounter and how did they get through them? How did they pivot when they hit a roadblock on a project?

We take inspiration and learn much from the success of others, but I think there’s much to be said for the lessons learned in moments of struggle.

**DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK?**
I left PRPD with a new mentor, a new community and newfound energy to take on seemingly Sisyphean challenges one step at a time. PRPD and New Voices also confirmed for me that I get my energy from sustained face-to-face contact with other Makers (thank you, Torey!), and that being part of a large, community of Makers is my best incentive to move to New York.
1. **GENERAL OVERVIEW.** Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

   a. As someone who considers himself an outsider to public media, especially given that I have absolutely no radio experience (I’m a TV guy – don’t judge) but an avid listener and supporter of public radio, it was an honor to be chosen as a 2013 AIR New Voices scholar. It’s through experiences like the one at the PRPD that you get to learn a lot in a short amount of time and get to meet a ton of interesting and smart people. There were many themes that I heard at the conference from diversity to risk, from radios on death’s door to radio is alive and thriving. The main thread through all of those whispers in the hallways and the sometimes not-too-pretty sledgehammer of reality is that we’re living in the best-of and worst-of times in public media. As an independent I thrive in that type of chaos but for many of those seated next to me during the conference it’s unnerving. But the conversations I got to have with many of radio’s gatekeepers show glimpses of hope and light. I think it’s through independent and diverse thinking that our industry can not only survive but also thrive, but we have to work together and let go of things that aren’t working. And there’s an even greater opportunity to bridge the gap between NPR and PBS. I couldn’t believe the amount of video content that I got to see at a radio conference – which means there is a place for me, a TV guy in radio – who knew. So, what will get in the way of great things happening now that this conference is over and to the future of radio and for that matter public media? First lets start with me – the producer. It’s easy to play the blame game and cry foul on so many things, from the lack of station support – not just in financial terms but in overall support and connectivity, to that dreaded and maligned “D” word of diversity. Whatever the issue, there’s reality and not only do I have to deal with reality, I need to manage reality better - and that’s because on the other side of the table, where those gatekeepers sit, they too themselves are dealing with the very same reality that I’m dealing with but at a different angle, from lack of support up-on-high to how to connect with an ever-changing diverse audience that isn’t necessarily reflective of their own station’s makeup. So for as distant as things may appear on the horizon, things can only get better if I let go of my frustrations on focus on the great work I know I’m capable of doing and to showcase that everyday as a gentle reminder of who and what I’m capable of and that I’m also willing to learn. Now onto the gatekeepers. I need you. I really do. I love you. I really do love you. But you have to show me that you want me and want to love me, and with what little you have that you truly care for me. Look, I know you can’t give me the diamond ring I want but you can at least provide me a seed and the seed I need is hope. My unbridled passion for public media becomes smothered and choked when you don’t return my persistent and unanswered calls, when you don’t ask me out to lunch, and when you don’t even comment on the great work that I do. Your silence is deafening but it’s also defining our future of working together. I don’t have to tell you but people are connecting with content more so than connecting with stations. I know you roll your eyes at Kickstarter (and for some - Kickstarter who?) and people like Roman Mars but that’s a new reality and the next wave of public supporters – and many of those waves have crashed onto your shores and mine – and what’s been left behind are some amazing starfish, talent and audience ready to be
scooped up by us, public media. So to the leaders in the industry I beg you to find a way to cultivate the future of your station but cultivating relationships with us producers who are passionate about connecting with community. I want you to be my biggest fan and in return I’ll be the biggest champion of your station and system. But if in end, echoing the sentiments of what was said by our captain Luis Antonio Perez, we walk onto the field as opponents and not as a team both our futures will continue to remain uncertain and that’s a future I’m not willing to risk.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?
   a. During the “Public Media’s Full Spectrum Storytelling” Panel, Haley Howle from KUT talked about the work she did on the Austin Music Map and the event they did with Map Jam. During the Q&A, a programmer/or station manager asked her “How did you monetize that event?” Haley seemed perplexed by the question because the reality was that Haley and the team at KUT didn’t monetize the event. Haley didn’t really have an answer to the question and Hawk had to jump in with the “corporate” answer. But the truth to that question was more than just was evident on the surface of the question. It really was transparent to me that measurements of success vary from person-to-person especially from the management to producer point of view. While KUT’s goal might have been to simply begin to court new listeners to public radio, others, including many of the leaders in that room might have felt that “if we’re not making money, then we’re not making sense.” I felt bad for Haley and her team about the question, but again, the question was a reality that many are dealing with. It dawned on me that as producers we need to better articulate our measurements for success, so that when do succeed, or fail, at what we’re trying to solve for the results doesn’t get caught up in the traditional thinking of winning and that the win for us is something we get to own and define ourselves and our communities that we’re trying to garner.

3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?
   a. Absolutely yes. I got a mentor out of it with Noland Walker. I’ve already had two phone conversations with contacts from the event, Chaquita and Tyler from CPB. I pitched a story idea to Nancy Mullane who’s interested and I might help her with some underwriting sponsorships. And I’m now a member of AIR.

4. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?
   a. The opening New Voices meeting needed a bit more structure in terms of time allowed on introductions. While informative, it took too long to for some to tell their story. Two minutes should be more than enough time to share a little about yourself.
   b. I would have loved to have heard or seen some of the New Voices work.
   c. I think Luis did a great job of being the captain and would have wished I could have spent more time with him and the group.
d. I think that a mandate should be that all of us pitch in a private setting. I ended up pitching at the Producers Academy at WGBH, while not required was highly recommended, and it was one of the best experiences I had there. I might be a good program to look at. I think Sue mentioned that the Third Coast conference is more like a workshop.

e. I felt like I did make some connections with the New Voices but since we didn’t have much time together I didn’t really get to meet and bond with the group as I had wished.

f. While there was a lot of talk about diversity I believe many of us might have felt uncomfortable with the lack of overall diversity in the room. Perhaps AIR could have addressed to us how to acquiesce to the environment. I know several of the African-American women felt isolated and timid about approaching new people and it’s something that I too sometimes struggle with.

g. I wish there was a closing event in which the New Voices could have gotten together to share their experiences on what they learned and what they plan on doing when they go back to their respective corners of the world. Needed some “closure.”

h. Overall, I think a theme of “confidence building” is what the New Voices need more of and any opportunity to structure that confidence will be most appreciated by our group.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

a. I wrote this on my mentor application but feel this applies here as well: I would love to continue my work within public media in a more strategic way that allows other producers, internal or external, to be able to produce the quality work of their choosing but by guiding them through the business process of producing for public media. I'm not sure if that's something best suited externally, as I am today, or internally at a station. Also, I feel that as an outsider diversity will play a key in how I navigate the public media waters and want to be able to bring a perspective to the table which I feel is lacking substantially - which is diversity, not just in terms of skin color or gender, but also diversity of thought, which will be key in growing and diversifying our public media audience. To quote a recent article by Joanne McNeil "Absence of diversity signals something other than merit went into the selection process." We've gone too long with the selection committee choosing content and talent from the same stall of creators. I'd like to be a part of the change in public media that's so desperately needed. Also, there needs to exist a duality where content in public media is accessible on any platform. We can no longer exist in a world where we produce content exclusive to radio or TV. There's a great opportunity to bring PBS and NPR together and having attended the PRPD has allowed me to rethink about my future in public media and affirmed to me that I'm headed in the right direction.
Renata Sago  
Chicago, IL  
Assistant Producer, Chicago Public Media

I left Atlanta with a worn-out notebook, a handful of business cards, and enough promotional programming cds to launch my own radio station. Being showered with giveaways at the Public Radio Programming Conference was thrilling. However, the most valuable souvenir I took back to Chicago was a statement from AIR Executive Director Sue Schardt: “It is the time for the maker; it is our time.”

Schardt made that proclamation from behind the podium at the AIR @ 25 Mingle. “How prophetic,” I thought to myself when the words eased out of her mouth. Her words were telling of the crisis of leadership and internal organizational rifts facing public radio stations. They also spoke to the great responsibility that reporters and producers—makers in this field—have in shaping public media. The statement reminded me of my voice and its power. It encouraged me to devote my efforts to forging a space within this jungle of an industry to ensure that my voice be heard.

PRPC was my introduction to public radio as an industry. I did not know most of the public radio personalities at the conference and I could barely talk about public radio programs other than The World and This American Life. What I did know, though, was how important diverse voices are to public radio’s existence, and how my connection to minority communities informs my understanding of public radio in extraordinary way.

There were many moments when I felt like a fly in a glass of milk. I would look around me and snicker to myself at how I was surrounded by the leaders of public media discussing the need for diversity in programming, and how there was not even age, gender and ethnic diversity in the room. During his speech at the AIR @ 25 Mingle, Torey Malatia, former CEO of Chicago Public Media, breathed life into the meaning of the need for new voices. He said, “We lived in our fantasy of our community looking like our audience, and like our friends, and our associates. Living in fantasy is not for stewards of a public mission, nor fiduciaries of a public trust.” It is impossible to advance public media by being comfortable. It is impossible to advance public media if we only focus on serving part of the public. I hope that after all the seminars and listening session and panel discussions, program directors will begin to realize what it will take to move this industry forward.

Public radio is not on its death bed, though. AIR has stepped in to revive it by creating programs that bring fresh minds into the equation. I thank AIR for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the dialogue. I now feel as if I have the tools to realize my vision of bringing global topics to local audiences in an engaging and informative way. PRPC put me in the same room with producers from The World, NPR and BBC World
Service. I shared my ideas with them and was both inspired and encouraged to continue creating stories.

AIR gave me the chance to crack corny jokes with Q’s Jian Ghomeshi, to speak French with The World’s Marco Werman and hash out my ideas while eating chicken kabobs with Jim Russell. (I blindly walked into a conversation with Mr. Russell, and later found out that he is an award-winning producer for NPR, PRI and PBS. He is also the creator of Marketplace.) My conversations with people gave me a taste of the possibilities of a career in public radio and the ways to make those possibilities a reality.

In each of my New Voices colleagues, I found inspiration. Nancy, for example, showed me how profoundly impactful a personal narrative can be. Kristina and Kali taught me how exciting collaborating can be. Kavita and Cheryl gave me ideas about how to pitch and how to turn my passion into something concrete. Andrew showed me how far an idea, a push and a little bit of mojo can go.

I learned a lot and am thrilled to have planted so many seeds. I recognized a few individuals who will serve as great mentors for me. I also noticed that once I told people my vision, they were eager to help me. Although the conference began with a bleak view of public radio, hearing about initiatives through Localore (like CuriousCity and Austin Music Map) gave me a renewed sense of the possibilities that we can create for public radio. It reminded me that there are institutions that are supporting these sorts of efforts. It reminded me that there is a space for me. I just have to create it.

Being a maker is about having a vision and the courage to manifest that vision into something meaningful. I see public radio as a vector for many voices to manifest themselves. I am overjoyed that, in the words of Sue Schardt. It is, indeed, the maker’s time.

Thank you, AIR, for bringing me on board. Thank you, Sue Schardt, for emphasizing the importance of a value proposition in shaping how we create a space for ourselves in public radio. That was one of the most valuable parts of the New Voices Listening Session. My only suggestion to AIR would be to continue the New Voices program, kicking the door open for more and more makers.
Name: Lilly Sullivan  
City/State: Brooklyn, New York  
Professional affiliation: Independent

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Be as specific as you can, and give us the good and the bad.

It’s an interesting position to be standing at the beginning of a new career and trying to find your direction and community. That’s why I applied to be part of the New Voices program, and I’m so glad I did. My experience as a New Voices Scholar has done a lot to make me feel connected in what is currently an otherwise solitary profession. It was wonderful to have a chance to meet so many like-minded media makers at similar points in our careers. We started the conference getting to know our fellow New Voices Scholars and talking about our respective visions for public media. Sue Schardt, Erin Mishkin, and New Voices Captain Luis Perez each talked about their visions as well: for public media, and also for the role that that new producers play. It laid the framework that we carried through rest of the conference. It started us off with a sense of purpose for what we hoped to gain and contribute as New Voices Scholars.

2. WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS, OR IMPRESSIONS YOU CARRIED AWAY THAT YOU FEEL WILL MOST INFLUENCE YOU OVER TIME? Were their certain individuals that stand out in your mind? Things you heard?

When I got to PRPC, I was pretty blown over by how welcoming people were. So many industries are competitive, but everyone here seemed genuinely excited to welcome newcomers and share their experiences. Maybe it’s the industry, but I had an impression that it was a general sensibility instead. Experienced producers, people with decades of experience and accolades, were so willing to talk to us. Folks like Nikki Silva, Nancy Mullane, Al Letson, Glynn Washington, Jennifer Brandel, Daniel Alarcón: people whose work I really respect, who couldn’t have been kinder or more approachable. One producer literally sat down with us and said “Okay, all your questions? Shoot.” So we just drilled him with questions. We were so candid with him that we even eventually asked why he was being so generous with his time and knowledge. He said it was because he came to radio a little later in life as well, and likes to support people who are just starting out. And many people were like that. It felt like there was a kind of pay-it-forward mentality which I’ve never experienced at another professional conference.

In terms of something more concrete, I thought the Full Spectrum Storytelling panel was fantastic. One of the most interesting parts of PRPC for me was to see how public radio leaders are re-imagining the way public media can tell stories. Jennifer Brandel of Curious City was using some really exciting new strategies, philosophies, and platforms, as was Julia Kamari of Localore, and of course Anayansi Diaz-Cortes of Sonic Trace. I come from a background of multimedia storytelling, largely via web platforms, and this panel made me feel like there was much more room for using new approaches to reach new audiences in public media. It was energizing to see producers working toward a more inclusive goal, and to see their creative means of pursuing this goal.
3. DID YOU ESTABLISH ANY PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS THAT YOU EXPECT TO FOLLOW UP ON? AN ASSIGNMENT? A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS REAL POTENTIAL TO EVOLVE INTO A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?

There were a lot of connections. It was important that I really liked and respected my fellow New Voices Scholars, and those connections felt really important at this point. I am already planning to collaborate with one New Voices Scholar. We met for the first time at PRPD, and were surprised with how much we had in common. Beyond our team of New Voices and AIR folks, we had plenty of opportunity to make personal and professional connections where I certainly intend to follow up, in everything from pitching to possibility getting involved in future projects.

4. DO YOU HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR OR FOR PRPD IN HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONFERENCE OR TO THE NEW VOICES PROGRAM?

For me, one of the most inspiring conversations I had at PRPC was a one-on-one sit down with Nancy Mullane of Life of the Law. AIR had made room for one-on-one meet-up sessions with producers, so I wanted to meet Nancy. I was waiting to chat with her and another New Voices Scholar was going to meet with Nancy after me. So when Nancy saw us both, she did something kind of remarkable. She said, “Well, why don’t we all just meet together so we can double our time and really have a real conversation?” It was a good idea because we didn’t have to spend our limited time together making introductions. Instead, we were able to talk in depth about her experiences with the show, as a producer, and even some story ideas. I was inspired by Nancy’s frankness, commitment, and energy. So my suggestion: I wouldn’t have minded some more structured opportunities to sit with producers with conversation as the goal. We did have ample opportunity to meet producers at sessions or meals, but those structured discussions between New Voices Scholars and experienced producers were really useful for me.

5. DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRPC WILL INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR CAREER OR YOUR WORK? Do you have a renewed sense of commitment? Will you pursue a new direction? Did something you learn make you feel discouraged about the future?

It was hugely important to be part of this team. My experience with New Voices led me to meet talented individuals with great ideas and projects, still building their foundations for their undoubtedly shining careers. I felt inspired. Not only by the talent, which was self-evident, but also by the support, the community, the vision. And it’s hard to overstate the impact of New Voices Captain, Luis Perez. To a new producer, his warmth, enthusiasm, and leadership were galvanizing. It was an honor to be part of the group, and an invaluable experience to have a space for this kind of connection. I want to continue in these relationships, and I want to see everyone at Third Coast. The entire experience made me feel like there was so much possibility during PRPC and beyond.
Name: Kristina M. Sutton  
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Professional affiliation: Independent/Columbia College Chicago Student/AIR Member

First I would like to thank Sue Schardt, Erin Mishkin, and Luis Perez for not only making this opportunity happen for me but also for being an amazing support team while in Atlanta and being incredibly gracious, kind, interested, and invested individuals!

Although my path has been unconventional, I feel like I’ve always had a very specific vision for what I want to do and where I want to go in life. I’ve always been a person who has really solid pivotal moments in life were I go “That’s it!” and those moments help me to chisel and refine what my endgame looks like.

For me, being a part of AIR’s New Voice Scholar Program was exactly that for me! I felt so excited from the moment I was accepted into the program. I became more and more nervous leading up to the conference. I read everyone’s bio and felt incredibly honored to be included in such a wonderfully talented and interesting group of individuals.

Meeting everyone in the New Voices listening session Tuesday morning was a major highlight for me. I felt like it was really a safe space where we could bounce ideas around and play off of each other. As someone who loves to create and be involved with other people, this was an environment that I truly appreciated and treasured.

[As an aside, I really think myself and the rest of the scholars would have highly benefitted if we could have, as a group, carried those sessions into the rest of the week.]

Sessions that definitely made an impression on me were sessions geared towards new media (Tuesday’s session “Digital Dilemmas.”) The legalities of using music not just on the radio but also online (Wednesday’s “Digital Music Rights and Public Media”) and lastly how to pitch a story (Thursday’s “Getting to Yes, The Art of The Perfect Pitch.”) These sessions were incredibly informative for me in the sense that I have always wanted to executive produce my own public radio show and knowing about how to navigate and engage audiences on social media, how music licensing and copyrights work into the fold of a show and seeing fellow Voicers execute a live pitch were just all priceless nuggets of information that will stick with me.

Although information is useful and intellectually stimulating, my big take-aways were the personal connections I made with people at the conference and the conversations we had.

One of my most interesting conversations was with Gregg McVicar from RadioCamp,LLC. We had one of the most engaging conversations about the role that music can play not only in storytelling but also about different production techniques that I really wanted to experiment with in my own work. I told him about how I used to DJ hip-op and house music at a few local clubs in Chicago after he shared his experiences with Rock and Roll. And although I had hung up my DJ hat a while ago, my love for the turntables was pushing me to start and try to experiment with different ways I could introduce that art form into my passion for public media. I was really touched that he was just as excited as I was at even the thought of being able to pull that off.
I also, thanks to AIR, got to have a one-on-one sit down with John Haas, editor of Marketplace. It was an amazing opportunity to have pieces I had done on my own and ideas that I am developing critiqued by someone so experienced and knowledgeable. He gave me amazing and specific feedback. He helped to pinpoint where my weaknesses were and how I could overcome them. He really listened, gave suggestions and overall was just an incredible human being to interact with. It was truly a treat and a pleasure!

One of the biggest ways that I connected with people while I was there was I brought an Olympus recorder with me and asked people to talk about the moment that they knew they wanted to be apart of public media. The answers that I got were funny, quirky, heartwarming, serious, and just overall mind blowing. It amazes me that so many people come to this one really purpose filled passion in so many different ways! And even though each person’s story was unique, there was still that feeling they expressed in their story about how public media excited them that really resonated with me!

I really got a chance to connect on a personal level with people like Garrison Keillor, Torey Malatia, Glynn Washington, Alisa Miller, and Author Cohen. And that’s just to tease a small few!

What excited me most about my whole experience was the genuine reception I got from all of these people who were from all parts of the country and all walks of life! I feel like I’ve made connections with a variety of people who I can call on for feedback, critique and who will help push me to the next level. I came home genuinely happy. I have tape for days to comb through and I’m in the process of planning trips to visit with producers at WBEZ, WPR, MPR, and APM. This conference has definitely helped to refine my focus and has given me the tools I need to move forward. I really look forward to growing and developing all of the relationships that I established at PRPC.

The only slight adjustment I would make to any upcoming conference involving AIR New Voice Scholars would be, as I mentioned earlier, to conduct listening sessions with other scholars everyday. It was a great source of feedback and a great way to get to know the other scholars while being able to digest what’s happening with other people. But other than that, the conference was so well put together. Beautiful locations, flawless executions of every event and amazing support from AIR while I was there!