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## **PRX launches Radiotopia, new podcast network of story-driven public radio shows by industry's best emerging and established talent**

*Knight Foundation funds new model for audience engagement and revenue growth in public radio*

**Cambridge, Mass. – Feb. 4, 2014** – To establish a model for sustaining quality, story-driven public radio shows, [PRX](#), the award-winning public media company, today launched [Radiotopia](#) ([radiotopia.fm](http://radiotopia.fm)), a podcast network of the best emerging and established talent. The launch is supported by \$200,000 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

With Knight support, PRX will develop new audience engagement and revenue strategies toward a sustainable model for digital-first audio programming. The network will experiment with collaborative crowdfunding and new methods of sponsorship and cross-promotion, helping independent producers develop their programs over the long run. Together these insights will benefit PRX and the field as a whole.

"PRX is creating a platform where the art form's innovators, risk-takers and most gifted producers connect with an audience, expand their own brands, and flourish," said Jake Shapiro, CEO of PRX. "Radiotopia closes the gap between listeners who increasingly seek content on-demand and producers expanding the sound and experience of public radio."

"PRX is responding to a demand for flexibility from listeners who are increasingly turning away from traditional news sources and platforms," said Michael Maness, Knight Foundation VP/Journalism and Media Innovation. "With this as a basis, the network will create a model to reach and inform wide public audiences using digital platforms as a gateway to mainstream success."

Radiotopia is anchored by *99% Invisible*, the wildly popular design and architecture podcast hosted and produced by Roman Mars, who was named one of Fast Company's [100 Most Creative People](#) in 2013. Mars is program director of PRX Remix, PRX's 24/7 story channel available on XM 123 and public radio stations nationwide.

Radiotopia's inaugural lineup includes: *Radio Diaries*, the ordinary made extraordinary through first-person accounts exquisitely crafted by veteran producer Joe Richman; *Benjamin Walker's Theory of Everything*, a surprising exploration of philosophy using a

mix of journalism and fiction; *Strangers*, a fascinating look at how people connect in the modern world created by Lea Thau, former executive and creative director of The Moth; *Love + Radio*, an otherworldly journey into the minds of characters both seedy and sublime; *The Truth*, a fictional series breathing new life into radio drama by Jonathan Mitchell; and *Fugitive Waves*, an audio historical journey from the pioneering public radio production duo The Kitchen Sisters. Full descriptions are below.

The Radiotopia network roster will expand as PRX enlists new producers and programs that push the boundaries of storytelling and adopt a wide digital distribution model. PRX has a track record of introducing innovative new programs such as *The Moth Radio Hour*, *Snap Judgment* and *PRX Remix* to millions of listeners across broadcast and digital, Shapiro said. Radiotopia will draw upon PRX's technology, editorial, distribution and marketing expertise to cultivate a new generation of storytelling talent that resonates with today's audiences.

Mailchimp has joined as a launch sponsor, and the network plans to test creative use of personalized email campaigns to support distribution, marketing and fundraising for Radiotopia programs.

Radiotopia's inaugural roster is:

- [99% Invisible](#) – With over 1 million downloads per month, *99% Invisible* is one of the most popular podcasts in the world. The program explores design, architecture, and the 99%-invisible activity that shapes our world. The show is the brainchild of award-winning producer Roman Mars, who has been dubbed "the Ira Glass of design" by architecture and design columnist, Allison Arieff of The New York Times. Ira Glass, host and producer of *This American Life*, calls *99% Invisible* "completely wonderful...entertaining, and beautifully produced."
- [Benjamin Walker's Theory of Everything](#) - Combining drama, essay and interview the show creates a new kind of audio experience. Recent stories have ranged from "work at home art" to a story about a former prisoner from Guantanamo Bay, and a meditation on ephemeral images in the digital age
- [Radio Diaries](#) –Extraordinary stories of ordinary life, *Radio Diaries* offers first-person diaries, sound portraits and historical documentaries from award-winning producer Joe Richman and team.
- [Fugitive Waves](#) – From powerhouse producers, The Kitchen Sisters (*Lost & Found Sound*, *Hidden Kitchens*, *The Hidden World of Girls*) this new show mines the Sisters' deep archive of stories, lost recordings and shards of sound, along with new tales from remarkable people around the world. They are stories from the flip side of history.
- [Love + Radio](#) – Like nothing you've ever heard before, *Love + Radio* offers in-depth, otherworldly produced conversations exploring all of life's gray areas on

an eclectic range of subjects, from the seedy to the sublime. The show gets inside the mind of a rogue taxidermist, a Mafia associate turned investigative journalist, a woman who gives away her life savings every night, and countless other inimitable and fascinating characters.

- [Strangers](#) - The brainchild of Lea Thau, who earned a Peabody Award for her work with *The Moth*, *Strangers* features true stories about the people we meet, the connections we make, the heartbreaks we suffer, the kindnesses we encounter, and those frightful moments when we discover that we aren't even who we thought we were.
- [The Truth](#) – *The Truth* brings a modern radio storytelling sensibility to traditional radio drama, resulting in rich, evocative pieces that could be described as short films without pictures. Produced by Peabody Award winner Jonathan Mitchell, the show combines excellent writing with authentic, often improvised performances and rich sound design.

### **About PRX**

PRX is an award-winning nonprofit public media company, harnessing innovative technology to bring compelling stories to millions of people. PRX.org operates public radio's largest distribution marketplace, offering thousands of audio stories for broadcast and digital use, including *The Moth Radio Hour*, *Sound Opinions*, *State of the Re:Union*, *Snap Judgment*, and *WTF with Marc Maron*. PRX Remix is PRX's 24/7 channel featuring the best independent radio stories and new voices. PRX is also the leading mobile app developer for public media, with apps such as *Public Radio Player*, *Radiolab*, *This American Life*, *WBUR*, *KCRW Music Mine*, and more.

PRX was created through a collaboration of the Station Resource Group and Atlantic Public Media, and receives support from public radio stations and producers, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, and Knight Foundation.

### **About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

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