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Opening Shot

PRSS Plans to Transition to Single Combined Carrier

As announced on September 21, 2017, the PRSS has begun a process to merge our live streams and files traffic into a combined carrier. This is a key element for the future distribution system we are developing, and it will unfold, in several different phases, over the next nine months. We are requesting the support and participation of every interconnected station in ensuring this is a smooth process that poses minimal impact on stations or their listeners.

Stations currently receive live streams from Galaxy 16, transponder 3, and files from Galaxy 16, transponder 5. Our initiative is to introduce a new modulation scheme that would allow us to optimize bandwidth as well as combine streams and files in a single carrier on transponder 1. The PRSS has successfully tested and validated the combined streams and files carrier on an adjacent transponder and has been working closely with participating beta stations to gather data and validate service.

Beginning in November, and extending through the fall, the PRSS, in coordination with stations, will begin the first technical phase of issuing network changes on your IDC 4104 receiver to retrieve files traffic from the new combined carrier. The migration to the new carrier will take place on November 5, 2017, from the PRSS NOC in Washington, and we will send communications out to you in advance.

Shortly thereafter, we will send out a request (and link) for stations to complete a survey audit and provide their signal level readings after the first phase of the migration is completed. The expected time to complete the survey is expected to be about an hour. It is essential that every interconnected station provide this information to the PRSS so that we can provide assistance to those stations who require it. We are prepared to work with each station individually as necessary to ensure you have optimal reception. The survey will close at the end of December.

Once all interconnected stations are migrated from the existing files carrier to the new combined carrier, we will share the details, timing and any relevant information for moving live streams to the combined carrier. PRSS plans to begin helping stations make this transition starting in January 2018, with an eye toward having all stations switched to the combined carrier by April 2018.

As we move forward, we are prepared to address all questions and concerns from the station community. In the meantime, if you and/or your staff have any immediate questions or comments, please communicate with the PRSS Help Desk at 800.971.7677 or email PRSSHelp@npr.org. We are setting up a special designation for any inquiries on this subject, and your message will be routed to the engineers working directly on the project.

Below, please find a Q&A with Matt Walther, Sr Manager of Operations, who is helping to oversee this project.

Q: What is the timeline for stations to move to the new combined carrier?

A: The migration to the new carrier will take place on November 5, 2017. Beginning in November, and extending through the fall, the PRSS, in coordination with stations, will begin the first technical phase of issuing network changes on your IDC 4104 receiver to retrieve files traffic from the new combined carrier.

To be more specific, PRSS will reprogram the L-Band 2 DVB Carrier definition in your stations receiver. This will allow the receiver to tune into the files portion of the combined carrier.

The L-Band 1 DVB Carrier definition for receiving Live Streams will not be changed at this time. In 2018, stations will have their L-Band 1 Carrier definitions updated to pull all ContentDepot programming, live streams and file delivery via the combined carrier. As we get closer to this phase of the transition, we will send out communications to all Stations.

Q: Will the move to this new modulation scheme obsolete the SR2000pro receivers or will they continue to work?

A: The SR2000 units can only decode DVB-S transmissions. The updated ContentDepot combined carrier will be utilizing the DVB-S2 modulation standard. This means that the SR2000 units will not be able to decode the new combined carrier.

For the first phase of the transition, PRSS is only moving the files carrier to the new combined carrier. This means that for a limited time, stations can continue use the SR2000's units to decode ContentDepot streams. Once the PRSS moves the live streams to the new combined carrier, the SR2000 units will not be used for any ContentDepot content.

Q: We have several of the old SR2000 receivers manually tuned and used for backup purposes. Will these still be useful for live streams after the transition? If so, will you provide instructions on retuning?

A: As mentioned above, the SR2000 units will not be able to decode the new combined carrier. Stations will need to utilize the SFX 4104 receivers for all ContentDepot programs and file delivery.

Q: Can one subscribe to the Squawk Channel that includes the national EAS alerts on a full-time basis (24x7) with a 4104 receiver?

A: Currently NPR has not created a Program page for the Squawk channel. Once NPR creates a page for Squawk, a station will be able to subscribe and assign it to an open port on a SFX 4104 receiver. This subscription will be available 24x7 and will contain the national Emergency Alert Notification (EAN).

Q: Are there other options for getting Squawk?

A: A plan is being developed to provide the Squawk channel via the SR2000 units. This plan involves creating a dedicated carrier utilizing DVB-S specifically for the Squawk channel. Information about this carrier will be provided in the near future. Stations can also utilize the web for Squawk content via the link: <http://www.npr.org/squawk>

BuNOC Drill Scheduled for Thurs, October 12

The PRSS will conduct a drill of its Back-up NOC in St. Paul, Minn., on Thursday, October 12, 2017. The test is tentatively scheduled to begin at 10:00 pm ET and will last between two to three hours. A more detailed schedule will be sent as a message to the system as the date draws more near.

As with previous BuNOC drills, there is a short period when switching from Washington to St. Paul where ContentDepot and ContentDepot messaging will not be available. Once we have switched to the BuNOC, anybody wishing to log into ContentDepot will have to use a special URL, which the PRSS will provide ahead of time and during the drill. At the end of the drill, when switching from the BuNOC back to the primary NOC, there will be another brief period where ContentDepot will not be available. Each step of the process will be communicated to the system.

This will be the first drill of the newly installed BuNOC, which was completely rebuilt this summer by PRSS engineers. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the PRSS Help Desk at 800.971.7677 or email PRSSHelp@npr.org.

The News



PRSS Wins CPB Grant for New MetaPub Project

The PRSS has received a \$419,000 grant from CPB to implement its metadata system MetaPub to stations across ten Midwest, South Central and Gulf Coast states that suffer from destructive weather events. The grant is yet another collaboration between CPB and the PRSS to use broadcast technology to improve emergency communications and public safety efforts.

Under the grant, the PRSS will outfit up to 30 stations with software and training to enable them to issue text and image alerts on mobile phones, HD radios, "connected car" screens, Radio Data System (RDS) displays and online audio streaming.

"The heart of this project is to tap into new technologies to bring better immediate emergency communications to stations and audiences," said CPB Vice President of Radio Erika Pulley-Hayes. "As demonstrated by the recent hurricanes, public media provides essential information services to local communities. Expanding this work across platforms can help save lives."

"Our goal is to give stations in severe weather-prone areas better tools to provide their audiences with potentially life-saving information over multiple communications channels in times of emergency," said NPR Distribution Vice President Michael Beach. "Stations can let their audiences know about impending threats from severe weather, recommended evasive action, and locations of emergency shelters. These stations will help develop a process that can be used nationally across public radio."

PRSS will provide participating stations with extensive engineering support and conduct quality-assurance tests. Participating stations will provide feedback about the installation and implementation of MetaPub and ways to improve usage and help their local communities.

The project builds on a pilot test of MetaPub in 2016. With a \$66,000 grant from CPB, six public radio stations transmitted emergency alert test messages using text and graphics as part of the statewide "Great California ShakeOut" earthquake drill last October.

This capability can also be used to provide non-emergency information, including programming details.

To learn more about the PRSS' MetaPub service, please visit <http://prss.org/metapub>.

Tips 'n' Tricks

Solar Outage Season Has Officially Begun

Stations should be advised that the 2017 fall solar outage season for the continental U.S. began on September 30 and will run through October 15.

For a list of all fall solar outage times and locations across the country, please see the pull-down menu on the left-hand side of the 'Tools and Resources' page located at <http://prss.org/tools-and-resources>. For rules that apply to all solar outages, please visit <http://prss.org/solar-outage-rules>.

If you have any questions or concerns about solar outages, please contact the PRSS Help Desk at 800.971.7677 or prsshelp@npr.org.

(Also, be aware that Daylight Saving Time will officially end at 2:00 am on Sunday, November 5, 2017.)

What's New in the ContentDepot?

There are several new programs (both recurring and one-time-only) appearing in the ContentDepot this month. Listed below are details on a sampling of new regularly occurring programs that your listeners may enjoy:

Snap Spooked Specials - A series of four one-hour specials from **New York Public Radio** that provide haunting listening perfect for the Halloween season.

HOL - Tinsel Takes 4: So Much More NPR Christmas Favorites - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **NPR** that features Lyn Neary presenting extraordinary Christmas stories from NPR's past and present.

HOL - The Big Tiny Desk Concert Holiday Special - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **NPR** that celebrates the season with holiday performances from the Tiny Desk Series.

Christmas with Madrigalia - A one-hour, one-time-only special from the **WXXI Public Broadcasting Council** that features the Rochester, N.Y., chamber choir performing a holiday concert that celebrates the excitement and joy of the season.

A Rochester Festival of Lessons and Carols 2017 - A one-hour, one-time-only special from the **WXXI Public Broadcasting Council** that presents one of the most beloved traditions of the holiday season made famous at King's College in Cambridge, England.

After Hurricane Irma - A two-hour, one-time-only special from **WLRN Public Media** that pulls in reports from newsrooms around the state to provide insight into what happened and what we can learn from it.

The Holidays of the Future - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **American Public Media** that looks at the latest technology trends and predicts the lasting effects on the holiday season.

It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders - A one-hour, weekly show from **NPR** featuring host Sam Sanders with two guests in a conversation about news and culture.

The Hilarious World of Depression - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **American Public Media** that provides fun, unusual and intriguing ways for people to get through the holiday season while dealing with depression.

Tick Tock Circadian Clock: A Brains On! Special - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **American Public Media** that is a show for kids and curious adults that explores the fascinating science behind circadian rhythms.

Every Good thing - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **American Public Media** that features an hour of stories and music to celebrate Thanksgiving.

Dreams of the Fallen - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **American Public Media** that seeks to recognize through music and poetry those who have protected our country, often at great sacrifice.

Hollywood Halloween - A one-hour, one-time-only special from **American Public Media** that presents a scary collection of the best classical film scores through cinema history.

Stay in Touch

We Want to Hear From You!

EsPRSS-O welcomes and encourages your questions, comments, suggestions and ideas.

- Have you or your team developed a particularly unique and/or nifty technique in operating ContentDepot?
- Are you facing any new challenges and want to get the perspective of others who might be in a similar situation?
- Are you seeing any technology or business developments on the horizon that your pubradio colleagues ought to know about?
- Got a notion on your mind that you want to share with the PRSS?

If so, don't hesitate, write in today!

Send any and all correspondence to PRSSCommunications@npr.org along with info on the best way to get in touch with you.

Stay in touch! Send your questions, comments and ideas to PRSSCommunications@npr.org. As always, the PRSS Help Desk is also available 24/7 at 800.971.7677 or email PRSSHelp@npr.org.



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