

Knight Foundation awards NPR \$1.5M for web news

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(AP) -- NPR is getting a \$1.5 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to boost web training and content at member stations nationwide.

In the grant announced Wednesday, \$1 million will be devoted to training at about 70 local stations. About \$500,000 will be devoted to further integration of [radio](#) and digital coverage in NPR's newsroom.

John Bracken, the Knight Foundation's program director for journalism and media innovation, said the foundation hopes NPR will be seen as a model for [digital news](#) even as it has seen a "tumultuous year" of leadership changes at the radio network.

"In making this grant, Knight Foundation is betting on NPR," Bracken wrote in a blog post Wednesday. "Our expectation is that NPR will not just continue to provide quality journalism, but that it will become a model for nimbleness in the digital age and that it bring some stations along with it."

NPR [Senior Vice President](#) Kinsey Wilson, who oversees digital news, said public radio stations can fill a news void at the local level with their websites.

"We see an opportunity, particularly with the fairly precipitous decline in newspapers in local markets, to become an even more significant source of local news in those areas," he said.

Some public radio stations have been slower to develop online news content as their audiences have increased on the radio. For small stations strapped for cash, NPR is providing web services including design and technology to lower the cost for stations to enhance their websites through an existing program.

The new training will include strategies in multimedia, writing for the web, photography and use of social media. Stations will be able to apply for the grant-funded program.

Radio and digital news are becoming more entwined, Wilson said, with audiences growing on both sides for NPR. By the network's count, it has 19 million unique visitors each month to NPR's [web](#) and mobile sites. Its national radio audience also has grown to 26.8 million listeners each week. In the years ahead, those numbers may shift.

"Increasingly, radio will be delivered digitally," Wilson said.

In 2007, the Knight Foundation awarded NPR a similar \$1.5 million grant to boost its national digital initiatives.

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