

**Vermont Public Television Imagining**  
**Year 2012**  
John King

**From the Viewer's Living Room**

As I observe the living room of a local family, I see them accessing a variety of content and services from VPT. On television there is a number of different channels available from VPT. Channels offering content that is rich, informative, educational, inspiring, entertaining and which promotes lifelong learning and civic engagement.

Broadcasting is something that VPT does, but it is not who they are. VPT has become an essential community resource, dedicated to education and public service, which meets the needs of the state and improves the lives of its residents. The family appreciates and treasures our core values of:

- Understanding one another and various points of view
- Children's readiness to learn
- Lifelong learning
- Personal enrichment through arts, culture and entertainment
- Appreciation and respect for the environment and working landscapes
- Involvement and participation in community and civic affairs

This is not just our mission, but also the difference we intend to make in our state. All of the content provided or made available by VPT is rooted in these core values.

There is a High Definition Channel offering quality programming on a variety of topics of local, regional, national and international interest.

There is the V-SPAN Channel that provides on-going coverage of the Vermont Government, Vermont Legislature, Vermont Judiciary and other civic affairs content.

There is a VPT Family Channel offering the best in national and local children's and family friendly content promoting children's readiness to learn and a safe harbor for family viewing.

There is a channel providing content on lifelong learning opportunities, self-improvement and personal enrichment.

Through an arrangement with the local cable provider there is also a local Vermont Channel, which is programmed and managed for the cable provider by VPT. This Channel provides all VPT local content from local news and public affairs, local documentaries, local interview and talk programming.

No where else on the cable system is there such a wide variety of programming and content, dedicated to public service and education, than those provided by VPT.

At the same time the family can access their favorite VPT programs when they want through the VPT On-Demand portal on the cable system. Here they will find VPT's local programs and some of the best in national PBS programs. They use their Interactive Program Guides and their DVR to plan and archive their favorite VPT programming.

On the desktop computer in the living room, members of the family are accessing the VPT website which provides statewide information and services that have been aggregated by VPT through partnerships around the state. The family feels secure and trusting in accessing the content because of the VPT brand, reputation and local ownership. Here they can stream local programs, download - for free and for fee – content which can be sent to an mp3 player or video Ipod or other handheld devices. In a corner of the room one of the teenagers is viewing a recent VPT Teen program over their Cell phone.

VPT has met the promise of the digital future in serving the public with content on multi-platforms, when and where it's desired, all the while treating the public as citizens, not consumers.

### **From the Board Room of a Local Foundation**

At a Board meeting of the local Community Foundation I hear the Executive Director speak on the importance of providing funding to VPT. He explains that VPT is not just a broadcaster, but also an essential and vital community resource. A locally owned and operated Public Service Media organization

that listens to the community needs and then builds multi-organization collaborations to help meet those needs and improve the lives of all Vermonters. VPT's reach and impact throughout the state is unmatched by any other statewide organization, either commercial or non-profit.

He explains that VPT annually conducts "listening Sessions" throughout the state with residents and community leaders to gauge the needs, challenges and opportunities of the State. The information obtained in those sessions informs VPT's plans and priorities for the coming year in terms of the services, content and programs they provide.

VPT is a well known, trusted, highly respected organization which uses the power of media to foster: Understanding of one another and various points of view, Children's readiness to learn, lifelong learning, personal enrichment through the arts, culture and entertainment, respect for the environment and working landscapes and engagement and participation in community and civic affairs. Issues that are essential to the social and economic well being of the state.

Their digital infrastructure and technology innovations along with their collaborative approach has taken public service media to a new level in the state, while helping many other organizations in the state achieve greater reach and success.

He describes the Board, management and staff of VPT as a model for other organizations to follow. All are committed to the mission of VPT and are highly talented and passionate about the work they do. He comments that it is amazing what VPT has been able to accomplish with limited economic and staff resources. The VPT Board focuses on the strategic and mission related activities instead of mundane operational issues and required fiduciary responsibilities. The Board measures the outcomes rather than the output of the organization and re-evaluates the organization's statewide objectives on a regular basis.

The Executive Director distributes copies of the most recent VPT annual report entitled "In a World of Differences, We Make a World of Difference" which highlights the work and the significant impact made throughout the State. He concludes by saying that no other organization in the state contributes so much and has such a significant impact as VPT. He goes on to strongly recommend continued funding for the organization and by doing so

the Community Foundation can leverage their resources to achieve the greater good.

### **From Inside the Station**

From the time you enter the building you can sense and feel an energy and enthusiasm that is infectious. The building reminds you more of a community center than a public television station. Staff members are young, diverse and extremely “tech savvy”. Everyone is working on a variety of projects using the most sophisticated technology. Everyone is passionate about the work they do and the difference they are making to improve the lives of Vermonters. Everyone shares a sense of pride on working for an organization that is treasured by the people of Vermont.

The hallways and work areas are bustling as staff members collaborate opening and freely with each other. Today there are a number of activities going on at VPT. Studios, which were once large, have been converted to smaller areas. Instead of real props and sets, much of the sets are now done through computer-generated effects, making for a much more efficient and effective use of space.

In a former studio there is a workshop taking place on media literacy with a number of teachers and caregivers attending. A performance of the Vermont Youth Orchestra is going on in another location. A local public affairs program is being produced and a group of teens are taping some register to vote PSAs. A local Health Insurer is taping some commercials, which will be broadcast around the state. A group of visiting dignitaries from Russia are touring the station to better understand the importance of public service media, while the local yoga class is underway in another part of the building. As I walk through the halls I see an exhibit by a local artist, which has adorned the hallways with his work. VPT is a welcoming, exhilarating and vibrant organization.

As you continue to walk through the building you see staff that once were chained to complex editing and postproduction suites, sitting in their workspace doing the same work on laptop computers. Content is produced and tagged, indexed and archived for quick retrieval by VPT and others. The VPT interactive division is working on additional media and distribution options to launch on our website and web portals. The VPT outreach and

education divisions continue to build and expand partnerships from around the state and region and continue to develop new programs and services, which can be deployed.

VPT has worked hard to evolve into a valuable community resource and public service media organization. As I go to leave the building I read the granite plaque that has recently been added to the wall. The inscription reads – Vermont Public Television - 2012 Vermont Organization of the Year”.