



Acronyms & Abbreviations

A guide to the often-obscure initials and acronyms
in public broadcasting and electronic media

ACE: The American Council on Education is a trade association representing colleges and universities. ACE, formed in 1918, is the issue forum and lobbying locus for the heads of institutions of higher education. <http://www.acenet.edu>

AECT: The Association for Educational Communications and Technology began in 1923 as the Department of Visual Instruction at the National Education Association. Spun off in 1974, AECT is now a membership organization that trains teachers, administrators, professors and others in the use of instructional technology. <http://www.aect.org>

AFTRA: If a media reporter or actor is "working for scale" you can thank the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the union of actors and on-air talent, founded in 1937. The group comprises 30 locals and 80,000 members who belong to the AFL-CIO.

AGC: The Affinity Group Coalition, is comprised of representatives from BETA, the Joint Licensee Group, the Major Market Group, the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA), the Organization of State Broadcasting Executives (OSBE), the Small Station Association (SSA), and the University Licensee Association (ULA), representing over 90% of the public television licensee community.

AIT: The Agency for Instructional Technology (originally the Agency for Instructional *Television*) is an American-Canadian company that creates consortia of state and provincial agencies and public TV stations, to develop, produce, buy and distribute instructional television programs and other instructional materials. <http://www.ait.net/>

Annenberg/CPB Project: Funded by the Annenberg Foundation and by fees for use of its materials, the Project develops video courses and web materials for grade-school teacher training and operates the Annenberg/CPB Channel satellite service. In earlier years, starting with its founding in 1981, the project also developed college-credit telecourses for the general learner. *This service was discontinued in October 2008.*

APT: American Public Television (formerly American Program Service) acquires, sells and distributes programming—much of it "how-to" programs and British imports—to public TV stations nationwide. APT was created in 1980 as the Interregional Program Service by EEN (the Eastern Educational Television Network), later was renamed American Program Service and then American Public Television in 1999.

www.aptonline.org

APTS: Association of Public Television Stations (formerly America's Public Television Stations, with the same initials) is a national membership organization that lobbies and undertakes planning/research projects in the interests of the stations and noncommercial TV in general. Until APTS was set up in 1980, the function was performed by PBS. APTS was known in its early years as NAPTS, the *National* Association of Public Television Stations. www.pts.org

ATAS: The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, founded in 1946 and based in the Los Angeles area, presents the annual primetime Emmy awards, offers a series of events in its L.A. headquarters, and publishes *Emmy* magazine. NATAS, a sister organization in New York, handles news, daytime and sports programs and has chapters around the country.

ATSC: The Advanced Television Systems Committee is a broadcasters/manufacturers industry association that documented the Grand Alliance digital TV system, which the FCC adopted in 1996, and is still working to encourage and facilitate the development of the family of ATSC specs for digital TV transmission. The standard has become known as the ATSC standard, just as the original U.S. standard is known as "NTSC" (see NTSC). <http://www.atsc.org>

AWM / Alliance for Women in Media: American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT) was an organization of women in broadcasting and allied fields established in 1951. In 2010, this organization adopted the name of *Alliance for Women in Media*. AWM is a non-profit, professional organization of women and men who work in the electronic media and allied fields. <http://www.allwomeninmedia.org/> or <http://www.awrt.org/>

AWC: The Association for Women in Communications, formerly WICI (Women in Communications Inc.) is an old and respected advocacy group for women in the media. AWC organizes the annual Clarion Awards competition. Formed in 1909, it focuses on the journalism and public relations industries. <http://www.womcom.org>

BBC: The British Broadcasting Corp. is known in the U.S. primarily as a supplier of quality public TV and radio programs. The BBC is the largest production house in the world, annually turning out more than 5,200 hours of TV and radio programming.

Bento: Bento is a tool used by PBS member stations to create Web sites, manage online content, and leverage Merlin and COVE data. It is a CPB-funded project being developed by PBS Interactive and Member Stations.

Beta Group, The: a public television affinity group made up of over 30 alternative public television stations nationwide, including two dozen Program Differentiation Plan (PDP) members of PBS and several independent, non-PBS member stations.

Broadband: A communication bandwidth of at least 256 kbit/s. Each channel is 6 MHz wide and uses an extensive range of frequencies to effortlessly relay and receive data between networks.¹ In telecommunications, a **broadband** signaling method is one that handles a wide band of frequencies. *Broadband* is a relative term, understood according to its context. The wider (or broader) the bandwidth of a channel, the greater the information-carrying capacity, given the same channel quality.

CAAM: The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) is a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the diversity of Asian American experiences by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. www.asianamericanmedia.org (See NAATA).

CBC: The Canadian Broadcasting Corp., created in 1936, is Canada's publicly funded (but not strictly noncommercial) broadcaster, which operates radio (noncommercial) and television (limited commercial) networks in both English and French (SRC, Société Radio Canada), as well as cable networks and Canada's overseas broadcast voice, Radio Canada International. CBC receives annual funding from the Canadian government.

CC: Closed captioning provides visual subtitles for hearing-impaired television viewers.

COFDM: Coded Orthogonal Frequency Domain Multiplexing is a modulation technology used for digital TV broadcasting in Europe. It is less susceptible to ghosting or multipath interference than early generations of U.S. DTV standard receivers using 8-VSB modulation. Some U.S. broadcasters, led by Sinclair Broadcast Group, urged the FCC to permit the use of COFDM in addition to 8-VSB. See also VSB.

COVE: “*Create once, view everywhere.*” COVE is also the name of a video player tool developed by PBS Station Products & Innovations (PBS SPI). NPR has COPE (“*Create once, publish everywhere.*”) an API (application programming interface) developed for multiplatform distribution of public radio assets.

CPB: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is the nonprofit corporation authorized by Congress in 1967 to develop noncommercial TV and radio. The organization is in the difficult position of both upholding the public interest as seen by Congress and insulating the public broadcasters from undue interference by politicians. CPB funds public television and radio stations directly with Community Service Grants and supports productivity and revenue-development initiatives.

CSG: The Community Service Grant is the basic operating support that stations receive from CPB. Derived from CPB's federal appropriation, it is one of the few station funding sources that is not earmarked for certain uses. It includes a flat base grant plus a variable "incentive grant" component based on the amount of nonfederal money raised by the

station (NFFS). The base grant assures that small stations receive a substantial amount, and the incentive grant encourages stations to work on local fundraising.

CSRG: The Community Station Resource Group was the original name of what's now called the **Major Market Group or MMG**, an "affinity group" of large community-licensee (freestanding nonprofit) public TV stations that came together in the mid-1990s, following the model of public radio's Station Resource Group.

CTW: Children's Television Workshop. See Sesame Workshop.

DAB: Digital Audio Broadcasting uses digital instead of analog technology for radio transmission. DAB technologies include IBOC (in-band on-channel) transmission from terrestrial stations and direct satellite broadcasting by companies such as XM and Sirius.

DACS: Direct Access Communications System (pronounced "dax") was an electronic text messaging systems used by PBS and NPR from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s for distribution of internal schedules, memos, advisories and other messages between the stations and their national and regional organizations. In 1995 PBS replaced the DACS with PBS Express, and then later with PBS Connect.

DBS: The idea of Direct Broadcast Satellite was introduced with fanfare in the early 1980s and became reality in the 1990s. Commercial services are now distributing a cable-like menu of TV channels nationwide. Subscribers use small satellite dishes to receive the signal from high-powered satellites. Similar audio-only services are offered by commercial operators such as XM and Sirius.

DEI: The Development Exchange Inc., is a membership organization that fosters effective fundraising in public radio and holds the annual Public Radio Development /Marketing Conference every spring. It was founded in 1982 by Doug Eichten and opened offices in Minneapolis in 1997.

DMA: Designated Market Area is the geographic unit used in Nielsen Media Research television ratings.

DSL: Digital Subscriber Line is a recent technology that speeds up the transmission of data on an ordinary phone line, permitting broadband services to offices and homes within a short distance of a telephone company central office.

DTV: Digital television. A catchall acronym for all the types of television broadcasting that use digital encoding and transmission. In the United States, DTV broadcasting began by a few stations in 1998. By the end of 2000, more than 160 stations were broadcasting digital signals, reaching more than 65 percent of U.S. households with TV. In 2009, all over-the-air television signals in the United States were digitally transmitted.

DVI: Descriptive Video Information is a generic term invented by PBS for DVS (see below).

DVS™: Descriptive Video Service is a WGBH trademark for a supplemental audio service for viewers with impaired vision, carried by many public television stations on the SAP (Separate Audio Program) channel. DVS provides narrated descriptions of key visual elements for blind or low-vision audience members without interfering with the programs' dialogue. WGBH launched DVS as a national service over PBS in January 1990. DVI (Descriptive Video Information) is a generic term for the same service.

EBU: The European Broadcasting Union, an association of public service broadcasters formed in 1950, is the primary distributor of news and sports programming in Western Europe, operating the 13-channel Eurovision system. CPB's membership in the EBU gives U.S. public broadcasters an entree to international broadcasting.

The Educational Broadband Service (EBS), formerly known as **the Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS),** is an educational service that has generally been used for the transmission of instructional material to accredited educational institutions and non-educational institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, training centers, and rehabilitation centers using high-powered systems. The recent revamping of the EBS spectrum makes it possible for EBS users to continue their instructional services utilizing low-power broadband systems while also providing students with high-speed internet access.

EPS: Executive Program Services is a program distributor and consultancy for public TV founded by longtime programmers (and former PBS staffers) Alan Foster and Dick Hanratty, with offices in Rocky Mount, Virginia, and Bremerton, Washington.
www.epstv.com

FCC: The Communications Act of 1934 created the Federal Communications Commission as an independent agency to regulate interstate communications. The National Association of Educational Broadcasters persuaded the FCC to reserve five radio channels nationwide for educational broadcasting in 1938, paving the way in 1952 to reserve 242 local TV channels.

GRP: Gross Rating Points is a measure of the volume or raw "tonnage" of audience response to a program. Specifically, it's the sum of all the average quarter-hour (or sometimes average half-hour) ratings accumulated within a period. It reflects both the number of households that tune in (the "cume") and the frequency with which they watch.

HDTV: High Definition Television delivers wide-screen, high-resolution pictures and multichannel, compact-disc-quality sound to broadcast TV. Analog HDTV systems were developed in the late 1970s by Japanese Broadcasting Corp. (NHK), and U.S. firms later developed digital systems, including the so-called Grand Alliance or ATSC system. The ATSC system encompasses 18 different picture formats, including six that deliver true HDTV, including 1920 x 1080 pixels (1080 lines) and 1280x720 pixels (720 lines). All six have 16:9 aspect ratios (ratio of width to height). The FCC adopted parts of that system as the national DTV transmission standard in 1996. See also SDTV.

HUT: Homes Using Television is a measure of the percentage of households in a market or in the country using their TV sets at a given time of day. The HUT is approximately the sum of ratings of all the broadcasters in a given area.

IMA: Integrated Media Association is a group of public broadcasters interested in developing the Internet and other new media as platforms for public service. IMA, which adopted its name in 2003, was formerly PRISA (Public Radio Internet Service Alliance), which had grown from an informal group of a dozen public radio stations that began meeting in 1998. <http://www.integratedmedia.org>

INPUT: INPUT is the annual international screening conference for the exchange of program ideas among producers, programmers and others involved in the making of innovative programming for public television. Its annual showcase is held in May in a different country each year. <http://www.scetv.org/about/input/>

ITFS: (see **Educational Broadband Service (EBS)**)

ITVS: The Independent Television Service is a production-funding and distribution mechanism that supports the work of independent film and video makers on public television. Created in 1988 in response to a congressional directive to CPB, and funded by CPB, ITVS is committed to increasing public TV's diversity, innovation and programming for underserved audiences. ITVS was headquartered at first in St. Paul, Minnesota and relocated to San Francisco, California in 1997. www.itvs.org

LInCS: Local Independents Collaborating with Stations is a grant program operated by ITVS. Matching grants of up to \$65,000 are awarded to assist production partnerships between public TV stations and independent producers.

LPB: Latino Public Broadcasting was selected in 1999 to serve as the CPB-funded minority consortium representing Latino producers and audiences. It supports production and distribution for public TV programs by and about Latino Americans. The project is the successor to the National Latino Communications Center (NLCC), which lost CPB aid the previous year.

Mbps: Megabits per second, or millions of bits per second, is a measure of transmission capacity or data flow for digital media.

MHz: Megahertz — one is equal to 1 million Hertz (cycles per second) or 1,000 KHz — is the measure used to indicate the frequency of an FM or TV channel.

MIP-TV: MIP-TV is the French acronym for Marche International des Programmes de Television, the large international programming festival and marketplace scheduled every spring in Cannes, France. The related MIPCOM Market—the Marche International des Films et des Programmes pour la TV, la Video, le Cable et les Satellites—is held annually in the fall.

MMG: (alt. PTMMG) The Public Television Major Market Group, an affinity group of executives from the top 30 markets. Dennis Haarsager is the MMG's executive director. (2011)

MPEG: Motion Pictures Expert Group is an international standards-setting body that has specified standards for digital audio and video recording.

NAATA: (See CAAM) The National Asian American Telecommunications Association, founded in 1980, produces, acquires and distributes Asian American programming for radio and TV. It is one of five minority production groups funded by CPB. It is now known as the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) www.asianamericanmedia.org

NAB: The National Association of Broadcasters is the television and radio industry's primary lobbying and trade organization. It largely represents the interests of commercial broadcasting, though 400 of its 6,000 members are public broadcasting organizations. <http://www.nab.org>

NAEB: The National Association of Educational Broadcasters, no longer in existence, began in 1925 as ACUBS, the Association of College and University Broadcasting Stations, which represented a few small stations. It developed the major national educational radio and TV program distribution systems, superseded by NPR and PBS in the 1970s, and it was instrumental in gaining federal support for the field. Until it folded in 1981, NAEB was public broadcasting's primary professional association.

NABA: The North American Broadcasters Association is a non-profit association of broadcasting organizations in the United States, Mexico and Canada. As a member of the World Broadcasting Unions (WBU), NABA enables North American broadcasters to share information, identify common interests and reach consensus on issues of an international nature. NABA provides representation for North American broadcasters in global forums on topics including protection of content, spectrum related concerns, the territorial integrity of broadcasters' signals and digital transition issues. (NABA was formerly known as **NANBA**, North American National Broadcasters Association.) www.nabanet.com

NAPT: Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc., formed in 1977 to promote, produce and distribute Native American TV and radio programming, is one of several minority production and distribution groups funded by CPB. <http://www.nativetelecom.org/>

NARAS: The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, also known as the Recording Academy, was established in 1957 and includes more than 13,000 musicians, producers and other recording professionals. It sponsors the Grammy Awards and numerous outreach, professional development, cultural enrichment and human services projects.

NASBE: The National Association of State Boards of Education is the lobbying group for the heads of state boards of education. represents state and territorial boards of education. It has existed for fifty years, currently maintaining a staff of twenty at its headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. www.nasbe.org

NATAS: The 40-year-old National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences is the New York City-based organization that awards Emmys in the categories of public service, news and documentaries, engineering, sports and daytime programs. Seventeen chapters hold Emmy competitions in major cities and regions. NATAS also publishes *Television Quarterly* magazine. The Los Angeles-based sister organization, ATAS (Academy of Television Arts and Sciences), presents the primetime Emmys.

NATPE: The National Association of Television Program Executives, a 1,700-member group of programmers (most in commercial TV), was formed in 1962. Its annual program conference is the largest marketplace for syndicated TV programming.

<http://www.natpe.org/natpe/>

NBPC: The National Black Programming Consortium supports the development, production and distribution of educationally and culturally specific television and film programs by and about Africans/African Americans. NBPC presents the Prized Pieces Awards and provides assistance to independent producers by serving as a fiscal agent and identifying funding sources. It is one of several minority consortia funded by CPB. NBPC, which has relocated to Harlem, also has an office in Pittsburgh.

NCME: National Center for Media Engagement was created originally as the National Center for Outreach. The center, based at Wisconsin Public Television, distributes grants, provides training and facilitates communication among outreach managers at stations across the country. <http://mediaengage.org/>

NCTA: The National Cable and Telecommunications Association is cable TV's lobbying group. <http://www.ncta.com/>

NEA: The National Endowment for the Arts is a federal agency created in 1965 to support American arts and artists. Another NEA, the National Education Association, is the 2.5 million-member teachers' union.

NEH: The National Endowment for the Humanities is a federal agency created in 1965 to support research, education and public activity in the humanities.

NETA: The National Educational Telecommunications Association was organized in July 1997 by members of Southern Educational Communications Association (SECA) and the Pacific Mountain Network (PMN). NETA provides representation, program acquisition and distribution, and professional development services to member stations and educational institutions across the country. NETA provides association support for the Affinity Group Coalition (AGC), the Organization of State Broadcasting Executives (OSBE), the Small Station Association, the University Licensees Association (ULA), the

Joint Licensee Group (JLG), and the Public television Major Market Association (PTMMG). The predecessor organization, SECA, was founded in 1967 and was the largest of the four major regional public TV associations. <http://www.netaonline.org>

NFCB: The National Federation of Community Broadcasters was organized in 1975 to represent community radio stations—generally low-budget, locally oriented and eclectic in programming that underscores localism, diversity and public service. <http://www.nfcb.org>

NFFS: Non-federal financial support is CPB's term for the portion of a public broadcasting licensee's income that is eligible to be matched by federal aid — CPB's Community Service Grants (CSG). For every dollar contributed by CPB, several come from nonfederal sources such as audience contributions, underwriting grants, and state aid.

NFPB: National Friends of Public Broadcasting, the association of volunteers at public broadcasting stations, was founded with a Carnegie Foundation grant in 1970 to promote volunteerism in public TV. NFPB, now self-supporting, assists in developing support at the local level, and through this to develop an informed constituency that will serve both the station and the community. www.nfpb.org

NPR: National Public Radio, incorporated in 1970, is the principal national producer and distributor of news programming for public radio stations. NPR also distributes independently produced programming, operates public radio's satellite interconnection system and is public radio's primary lobbying group in Washington, D.C. <http://www.npr.org>

NTIA: An agency of the Department of Commerce, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration advises the president on communications and information policy. It also administered several grant programs, including the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, which was shuttered in 2012. (see PTFP).

NTSC: The National Television Standards Committee developed the black-and-white TV broadcast system that was adopted by the FCC in 1942. The committee was convened again in 1950 to develop a color TV standard, which the FCC adopted in 1953 and which was compatible with broadcasts using the original black-and-white standard. NTSC was an analog transmission system that used 525 scanning lines, broadcasting 30 complete frames per second.

OSBE: The Organization of State Broadcasting Executives is an interstate collaboration of chief executive officers of state public broadcasting networks and directors of commissions and authorities with statewide public broadcasting responsibilities. OSBE, formed in 1981, includes representatives from more than 20 states, which operate more than half of the public broadcasting stations in the United States. NETA acts as secretariat for OSBE.

PBS: The Public Broadcasting Service is a private, nonprofit corporation, founded in 1969, whose members are America's public TV stations. PBS provides quality TV programming and related services to 345 noncommercial stations serving all 50 states, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. PBS oversees program acquisition and provides program distribution and promotion; education services; new media ventures; fundraising support; engineering and technology development; and video marketing. www.pbs.org

PBS Express: This internal messaging system, operated by PBS, replaced DACS in 1996, and was itself superseded by PBS Connect.

PBS SPI: PBS Station Products and Innovation collaborates with PBS member stations in the development of products and services that enable stations to better engage with their audience. (*Twitter:* @SPI_PBS / *Blog* at <http://spiblog.pbs.org/>)

PDP (PBS Program Differentiation Plan) As approved by the PBS board in June 2009, a PBS member station in a market already served by one or more ("full NPS" or "primary") PBS member station (i.e., "overlap market") may make limited, time-delayed use of the PBS national program service and its fundraising program content.

PIC: Pacific Islanders in Communications was established to increase public broadcasting programming by and about indigenous Pacific Islanders. It provides media funds, training and outreach programs. PIC is one of the minority consortia funded by CPB. <http://www.piccom.org/>

PMBA: The Public Media Business Association is an association of financial, human resources, legal, information systems and administrative managers of public TV and radio stations. It is the current iteration of an organization founded in 1979 under the name, the Public Telecommunications Financial Management Association. <http://www.pmbaonline.org>

P.O.V. Named for the movie-industry acronym for "point of view," this continuing series is assembled by the American Documentary Inc. and distributed by PBS. It serves as a showcase for independent nonfiction films.

PRC: Public Radio Capital helps public radio organizations prepare for sustainable growth, secure new channels, increase revenues and expand public radio services. <http://www.publicradiocapital.org>

PRP: Public Radio Partners provided outsourced underwriting sales departments to public broadcasting stations. <http://www.publicradiopartners.com> In 2009, it was renamed Market Ingenuity. <http://www.marketingenuity.com/>

PTFP: The Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, a grant program operated by NTIA in the U.S. Department of Commerce, is a major source of matching grants for the

purchase of broadcast equipment by public TV and radio stations. This historic program's funding was discontinued permanently in 2012.

PTPA: Public Television Programmers Association is an individual-member association of public television station executives directly involved in acquisition and scheduling of programs at public television stations. The association was launched by TRAC Media Services and shares quarters with TRAC in Tucson, Arizona.

RTL: The PBS Ready to Learn Service is a service including a video and print curriculum for preschoolers preparing for their school careers. The concept was introduced by the late Ernest Boyer, author and former federal education official. Congress assists in funding the service with appropriations to CPB and PBS through the Department of Education.

RTNDA: The Radio-Television News Directors Association is the leading organization representing journalists working in the electronic media. RTNDA, formed in 1946, also provides training and research for its nearly 3,000 members. In 2009, it was renamed the Radio Television Digital News Association. <http://www.rtna.org/>

SAP: The Separate Audio Program channel allows TV broadcasters to deliver enhanced services such as second-language soundtracks or **DVS** (Descriptive Video Service).

SBE: The Society of Broadcast Engineers Inc., formed in 1963, represents the profession's interests, operates a professional certification program and holds technical conferences. www.sbe.org

SDTV: Standard Definition Television refers to digital TV broadcasts that provide about as much detail as ordinary analog broadcasts. See **High Definition (HD) Television**.

SECA: The Southern Educational Communications Association, once one of the four major regional public TV networks, was succeeded by the National Educational Telecommunications Association in 1997. See **NETA**.

Sesame Workshop: This nonprofit television program production house, known for 30 years as Children's Television Workshop (CTW), revolutionized children's television with *Sesame Street*.

SIP: Station Independence Program is the former name of what's now called FRP (Fundraising Programming), a PBS office that provides pledge specials, research and promotional material to public TV stations to help with on-air fundraising drives. SIP was established in 1974.

SMPTE: The Society of Motion Picture & Television Engineers is an organization of visual arts professionals that works to establish technical standards for lighting, equipment and film. SMPTE was founded for the movie industry as SMPE in 1916. www.smpete.org

SSA: Noel Smith, as station manager of KNCT-TV, Killeen, Tex., founded the Small Station Association in 1987 to serve as a forum for small public TV stations (with annual budgets of \$2 million or less).

TRAC Media Services: Audience and market data for public television programs were not regularly analyzed until 1979. The Television Rating Analysis Consortium was organized by the Pacific Mountain Network for the purpose. TRAC crunches the numbers for public TV stations and other public broadcasters, and conducts research and development to improve on-air pledging effectiveness. The private company, now independent of PMN, also serves as secretariat for the Public Television Programmers Association (PTPA) and holds several annual events for station programmers.

U:SA: The *University:Station Alliance* was formed in 2000 to strengthen public radio by creating a support system for stations licensed to universities.. The alliance develops grassroots activities to improve the relationships between universities and their stations.

VOD: Video on demand is a service that adds variety to cable and other addressable delivery platforms. The viewer can choose a program among many on a long menu and see it at any time.

VSB: 8-VSB (8 Level Vestigial Side Band) is the modulation scheme chosen by the industry-wide Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service, recommended by ATSC and adopted by the FCC for DTV broadcasting in the U.S.