

**Public Access Cable Channel Operator**

**Proposal for RFP #04-2009**

**Organization: San Francisco Open Media**

**Submitted By**

**Nolan Ehrstrom**

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**COPY**

“To achieve great things, two things are needed:  
a plan, and not quite enough time.”

*-Leonard Bernstein*

**I highly encourage the selection committee to allow me  
to give a brief demonstration outlining the details and  
technology presented in this proposal.**

**Thank You For Your Consideration.**

**IN THIS PROPOSAL**

- Introduction and Summary
- Bulleted Business Model
- Proposed Budget
- Articles of Incorporation
- Form 2A – HRC Contract Participation Form
- Form 3 – HRC Non-discrimination Affidavit
- Form 5 – HRC Employment Form

NOTE: Page 11, #1 of the proposal states that the LBE subconsulting goal is to be determined, therefore Form 2B is omitted and will be available when a goal is determined.

## INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

### San Francisco Open Media

- Allows for a seamless continuation of primary services.
- Has a solid fund raising plan for enhanced service.
- Can archive it's goals with or without the Comcast Grant.

### The Comcast Grant Will

- Allow enhanced level services within 2 months after the grant is received.
- Alleviate the need for underwriting and shared access.
- Allow for a better use of human resources.

In a world where the Internet provides a vast amount of independent, uncensored media, Public Access must fight for relevance. Where many believe that television is a dead medium for communications, the evidence in the recent DIVCA act proves that it is in fact the most important means of communicating to the public. Telecommunication companies launched the largest lobbying campaign in the history of this country for convincing California state legislators that DIVCA would in fact be good for consumers. The unimaginable sums put into the effort prove that television is still quite valuable indeed.

But DIVCA was more than a plan to increase the number of subscribers. Almost completely unknown was the plan to eliminate Public Access. Great efforts were taken to keep the termination fast and quiet. But I am taking an analytical and technical approach to ensure that Public Access will continue to thrive.

### Declaring support of Access SF

Before I begin explaining my proposal, I want to state that I believe that the methods of running public access undertaken by the currently operating Access SF are done so very well. I intend on helping Access SF/SFCTC to the full extent on securing funding to continue operations. However, should their efforts not come to fruition, I am fully willing to step in with this plan. In its most basic form, it is a means of keeping the channels on the air and as independent as possible.

### About me and SF Open Media

I'm a media-centric programmer and Internet development expert with over 12 years of experience. I am currently an engineer at Federated Media in San Francisco, but am willing to leave that excellent company if it means I can have the opportunity to bring this project to fulfillment. My work has largely focused on automated media organization for the internet, however my experience as a professional media producer have given me the skills needed to close the gap between television and the internet, utilizing technologies that far exceed broadcast quality specifications.

In my time with Access SF, I have learned extensively what the needs of the station are. Unfortunately the inevitable cuts mean that what we know as the current Access SF can no longer exist. But it does not mean that the station will shut down or even loose original programming.

My plan to operate Public Access full time is a project called San Francisco Open Media, a name adopted from the Denver Open Media project, since the proposed model will largely be a fusion of the currently operating Access SF with the Denver Open Media philosophy.

The key word here is "Open". It is a station who's content is produced by and chosen by the people of San Francisco. All people wishing to produce and air content will have an equal opportunity to do so regardless of their content or viewpoint as allowed by the full extent of the law. I will simply

act as the person who develops the technology and oversees the process so that it may be as easy as possible for producers to create and air original content.

In addition, the focus will shift from television being a one-way communications medium, to a community centric collaboration between producers and viewers, utilizing my engineering skills to center it around internet technologies.

### **Differences between Access SF and SF Open Media**

Initially, the differences will be great. There will be limited access to the main studio and field equipment while focus is put on keeping the channels on the air and securing funding. Other than automation, upgrades will be halted. When equipment breaks, it will most likely be replaced rather than repaired, in accordance with capitol vs. operating restrictions. And if adequate funding is not secured for the facility, we will have to move to a scaled-down space. All this, however, is only temporary until phase IV begins. At that point, I envision ramping up service back to its previous levels. In addition, if the Comcast grant is secured, that phase will come much sooner.

As far as the overall direction, the focus will be more on new and agile media rather than on the big-box studio environment that was necessary 10 years ago. In doing this, I intend to keep producers on the cutting edge of media and communications. We will allow producers to focus on the quality of their programs rather than on technical aptitude (although technical skills will be taught as well).

Most importantly, in the unlikely event that additional funding cannot be secured, the station will nevertheless continue to grow, just in a much slower manner than would be possible with funding.

### **Why pick a engineer for this operation?**

With an initial budget that only allows for a director and an assistant to operate 2 channels with original content 24/7, it only makes sense to have an engineer at the wheel to develop a platform for full service automation in the first phase of operation, as well as to be there for and support the technical needs of the station once an operating staff has been selected.

Additionally, I have gained extensive business skills from running a multimedia production company "Little Wing Media" for 5 years. I see this opportunity not only as what I seriously want to do, but also as an obligation to our freedom of speech. And honestly, I would not be submitting this proposal if I wasn't completely confident that I could execute it to perfection without hesitation. We have an opportunity to seize a moment when everything in telecommunications is changing, and we can realistically see coming out as a precedent setting leader in the advocacy for the public voice.

### **Demonstration**

All the technology needed to drive the proposed platform is currently operating on a single computer that I have set up to prove that all the concepts presented here are feasible. The automated encoding features are already running on "The Street" web site for Access SF citizen journalism ([accessf.org/street](http://accessf.org/street)). I would be more than glad to give a rough demonstration of the platform's capabilities and explain how it will be successfully implemented to the selection committee.

## References

I have provided similar services to the following companies.

Richard Ralke, BBHR Inc, vacationrentals411.com  
9001 Canoga Ave, Canoga Park, CA 91304  
(818) 772-9200 [rrlasc@aol.com](mailto:rrlasc@aol.com)

Ken Ceizler, System Jo  
2934 1/2 Beverly Glen Circle #274, Bel Air, CA 90077  
(818) 591-7756 [kceizler@roadrunner.com](mailto:kceizler@roadrunner.com)

Jill StClaire, JSC Marketing, LLC  
P.O. Box 208, Ferndale, CA 95536  
(707) 445-2526 [jill@jscmarketing.com](mailto:jill@jscmarketing.com)

Zane Blaney, Executive Director, Access SF  
1720 Market St, San Francisco, CA 94102  
415-575-4949 [zane@accessf.org](mailto:zane@accessf.org)

## FOUNDATION MODEL & DETAILS

### Major Phases, assuming No comcast grant.

- Phase I: Automation (July 2009 – November 2009)
  - Keep the channel on the air with minimal resources.
  - Transition active producers so they can continue to produce original content.
  - Maintain relationships with Board of Directors and affiliated organizations.
  - Develop web portal for the community, producers, and administrators.
  - Continue primary development on platform.
  - Integrate software hooks with master control and CG.
  - Extensive testing and simulations
- Phase II: Fundraising (November 2009 – June 2010)
  - Focus on obtaining Grants, Underwriting, and donations.
  - Market developed platform to other community television stations as a service.
  - Implement high-priority feature requests as feedback comes in.
  - Re-open the Main Studio for normal booking.
  - Roll out facilities and field equipment automated reservation system
- Phase III: Outreach (June 2010 – November 2010)
  - Community involvement: form and re-form partnerships with area organizations and individuals.
  - Begin training new producers volunteers, and interns.
  - Implement Web Service Hooks
- Phase IV: Expansion & Awareness (November 2010 – April 2011)
  - Hire new staff to provide enhanced operations.
  - Continue fundraising and outreach with new staff.
  - Focus on education and providing quality content.
  - Fight for the public voice in mass media.
  - Outreach to build and strengthen viewer base.

### Operation Basics

- Platform advantages
  - Flexible. Able to operate around and cope with budget and policy changes.
  - Scalable. Able to be built upon and features added based on available funding.
  - Portable. Able to move quickly in the event of facility changes.
  - Durable. Built upon proven, stable open-source technology.
- Fundraising
  - Platform will be licensed to other stations in need of automation.
    - The initial goals is to license to 10 stations at a rate of \$500 per month for the trial period.
    - Once the platform is in its second version, we will expand that to many more stations.
  - Renting studio out while we have the location.
  - Possibly leased access to other Non Profits pending approval.
  - Underwriting & Sponsorships
    - Non-traditional sponsorships will be tapped due to this stations global outreach and internet-centric platform.
    - Examples include Craigslist Foundation, Wikimedia Foundation, Google, etc.

- Establishing a Board of Directors
  - The existing board of directors will be offered a seat in the new board. Others will be elected as needed.
  - The board of directors will be offered the opportunity to take an active roll in the operations of the station in addition to the traditional direction and oversight activities.
  - This includes approval and filtering of content submitted to the station via the Admin portal.
  - Additional fundraising and grant writing in addition to the contract grant writer.
  - Oversee software license contracts with other station operators.
  
- Facility Location
  - Continue operation in current location until lease expires.
  - If funding cannot continue for current facility:
    - Attempt to relocate to city-owned property.
  - Note: The space could be much smaller if only playback and the live (flash) studio are to be supported. However, moving to another location would make bringing back the extended level of service much more challenging.
  
- Policies will be adopted from existing Access SF policies and will include the following advantages.
  - Additional policies can be added and amended by a majority vote by producers and community members in a monthly producers meeting.
  - Program scheduling is done using a time slot algorithm that ensures fair and equal access to all producers who can successfully fulfill their slots.
  - Streamlined access. Some programs will require less paperwork and are designed to get more producers with original content.
  - Items can be FLAGGED by views as offensive or illegal, at which time, a decision will be made to remove the content. (the 'craigslist' flagging methodology)
  
- Service will be similar to
  - Current TV
  - Denver Open Media/Civic Pixel (only our service will be stable)

## Production and Technology Overview

- Technology advantages
  - Almost the entire operation of the studio is automated.
    - Ingest server for encoding media accepts nearly every format including DVD, MiniDV, and SD Cards.
    - Additionally, producers may upload content via the producer portal from anywhere with a high-speed internet connection.
    - Scheduling is completely automated using predefined scheduling policies.
    - PSAs and Slides between shows are entered through the website by either uploading a slide, or using a predefined template with 3 lines of text, all entered through the community portal.
    - DVDs of archived shows or downloading via the Community Portal.
  - Typeless environment for streamlined production.
  - Operated via an advanced, custom web portal built on open source software.
- Bulletin boards and PSAs.
  - Incorporated in to fill time between shows.
  - Automatically generated through the community portal.
- Scalability
  - High Definition digital upstream when channel becomes available.
  - Initially, the Internet backhaul will be an inexpensive business class DSL or Cable pipe. When demand rises, a T1, T3, or OC1 connection will be necessary.
- Quality requirements from producers (No YouTube content here)
  - Content moderated by the community as well as active directors via administrator portal.
  - For uploaded content, a run time vs. file size ratio will be set to help ensure a high quality video.
- Web Portal Features
  - Producer Portal
    - Prepare for live shows.
    - Schedule slots for both live and recorded content.
    - Schedule rerun when producer can't make live show.
    - Manage media for live productions.
    - Conduct a live broadcast via webcam.
    - Official documents and How-Tos.
    - Order copies of live shows.
    - Chat room during live productions.
    - Transcript shows for archival and search engine optimization purposes.
  - Administrator Portal
    - Moderate uploaded media and comments
    - Oversee automated scheduling and add scheduling policies.
    - Edit documents and How-Tos.
- Community Portal
  - Allows anyone to view or download any program or video aired on the station.

- Vote on programs for re-runs and 'best of' lists.
  - Comment on videos and shows.
  - Chat with live shows.
  - Communicate with producers.
- An Example: Automation for Live Productions in the Flash Studio
    - All live productions can be operated by one person. The process is as follows:
    - Producer arrives in the studio 10 minutes before production airs
    - Producer logs into the producer portal in the studio.
    - Enters number of guests, names of guests, and titles
    - Selects previously ingested media for playback during show.
    - Selects "start show"
    - Waits for countdown timer to reach zero.
    - Show cuts off automatically when allocated time ends.
    - Live productions can also be broadcast from a webcam where a reliable high speed internet connection is available.
    - No switching is necessary. The switcher works automatically based on input from the microphones and automatically decides who is talking.

### **Additional Programming Information**

- Block Scheduled Programs – Programs with a defined time.
  - Live Series: A weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly live half-hour program at a defined time slot for the duration of a season
  - Regular Series: A weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly half-hour or full hour program at a defined time slot for the duration of a season.
  - Syndicate Programs: Currently running satellite programs will continue to keep their time slot. New programs will be added from internet sources such as arvhice.org. Syndicate programs will be added, removed, and rescheduled based on user votes on the Community Portal.
  - Clip Series: A series of short clips (max 7 minutes) as selected and voted in the community portal. Will make up a half-hour program.
  - Specials: Live or pre-recorded, Scheduled As-Needed.
  - Reruns: Some reruns are automatically selected based on the need to fill the schedule. Most rerun slots will be automatically assigned based on number of votes.
- Filler Programs – Fills the time between Block Scheduled Programs
  - PSA Slides – Uploaded via Community Portal. Impressions tracked in the user's profile.
  - The Street – A citizen journalism project currently running on Access SF with 60 second video clips
  - Station Announcements and information
- Archiving
  - All programs that run through the station are recorded and compressed automatically.
  - They will be available via a searchable interface in the Community Portal.
  - Eventually, past productions will be archived as well.

## Additional Technical Information

- Platform is built on open source technology
  - OS: Ubuntu and CentOS
  - Lamp Stack (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP)
  - Red5 Streaming Server
  - FFMpeg transcoding
  - ImageMagick for processing slides.
  - VLC/MPlayer Engine for Playback
  - Some pre-built PHP and Bash classes.
  - Flowplayer
  - Everything else (basically the entire platform) will be custom engineered using PHP and shell scripting.
  - MySQL relational database will be the driving force behind scheduling, archiving, media management, and user management.
- Encoding: Three types of encoding are used when the producer ingests media.
  - Primary: mpeg2 – only kept for 1 month then removed to conserve space.
  - Web: h.264 optimized for web streaming.
  - Archive: h.264 compressed with little loss of quality from the original mpeg2, but uses far less space.
- Live (Flash) studio
  - 3 High Definition cameras and lighting equipment already purchased by SFCTC (HD signal will be down-converted until an HD upstream is available)
  - Audio, switching, recording, playback and CG will all be automated with minimal producer input.
- Live Field Package
  - Laptop with camera, setup for live streaming anywhere there is a reliable high-speed internet connection.
- Web Service Hooks/APIs for expanded viewership.
  - YouTube
  - Veoh
  - Blip
  - Ustream.tv
  - Stickam.com
  - ZapToIt
- Platform licensing
  - Other stations will have similar hardware and software setups.
  - Platform code will be under subversion control (SVN) and easily get 'pushed' to remote clients upon major releases.
  - Additional troubleshooting and setups will be done through a secure shell.

## SF Open Media Budget – Initial Phases

### Capitol Expenses (annual)

Broadcast Equipment	\$24,000.00
Networking Equipment	\$4,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28,000.00</b>

### Revenue

City of San Francisco	\$170,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$170,000.00</b>

### Operating Expenses Per Month

(Costs are minimal considering only 2 employees)

Director/Developer	\$5,000.00
Administrative Assist/Receptionist	\$3,000.00
Utilities	\$1,500.00
Insurance	\$1,200.00
Internet Backhaul	\$1,250.00
Contract Grant Writer or Consultant	\$750.00
Contract Accountant	\$550.00
Contract Custodial	\$400.00
Other	\$510.00
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$14,160.00</b>
<b>Annual</b>	<b>\$169,920.00</b>

## SF Open Media Budget – Assuming Comcast Grant

### Capitol Expenses (annual)

Broadcast Servers 6 @ 4k each	\$24,000.00
Networking Equipment	\$3,000.00
Automated Broadcast Equipment	\$45,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$72,000.00</b>

### Projected Revenue

City of San Francisco	\$120,000.00
Comcast Grant	\$380,000.00
Platform License Fees	\$20,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$520,000.00</b>

### Operating Expenses Per Month

Assuming city funding for facility rental costs or relocate to city owned space

Director/Developer	\$7,000.00
Assistant Director	\$5,000.00
Administrative Assistant	\$3,000.00
Receptionist	\$3,000.00
Training/workshop facilitator	\$5,000.00
Contractors	\$6,000.00
Utilities	\$2,200.00
Insurance	\$3,900.00
Internet Backhaul	\$2,000.00
Custodial	\$1,000.00
Equipment Repair	\$2,000.00
Misc	\$3,000.00
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$43,100.00</b>
<b>Annual</b>	<b>\$517,200.00</b>

## SF Open Media Budget – Phases 3-4 – No Comcast Grant

### Capitol Expenses (annual)

Broadcast Servers 6 @ 4k each	\$24,000.00
Networking Equipment	\$3,000.00
Automated Broadcast Equipment	\$45,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$72,000.00</b>

### Projected Revenue

City of San Francisco	\$120,000.00
Grants & Underwriting	\$100,000.00
Platform License Fees	\$60,000.00
Leased Access to Non-Profits	\$10,000.00
Donations	\$10,000.00
Facility Rentals	\$30,000.00
Production Services	\$25,000.00

**Total \$355,000.00**

### Operating Expenses Per Month

Assuming city funding for facility rental costs or relocate to city owned space.

Director/Developer	\$7,000.00
Full Time Staff (2 inc taxes/benefits)	\$10,000.00
Contractors	\$4,000.00
Utilities	\$1,000.00
Insurance	\$3,000.00
Internet Backhaul	\$2,000.00
Custodial	\$500.00
Equipment Repair	\$1,000.00
Misc	\$1,000.00

Monthly Total \$29,500.00

**Annual \$354,000.00**

# ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

I

The name of the corporation is San Francisco Open Media

II

A. This corporation is a nonprofit **Public Benefit Corporation** and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law for:

**public purposes.**

B. The specific purpose of this corporation is to Operate A Public Access Station in San Francisco

III

The name and address in the State of California of this corporation's initial agent for service of process is:

Name Nolan Ehrstrom

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City San Francisco State **CALIFORNIA** Zip Code 94103

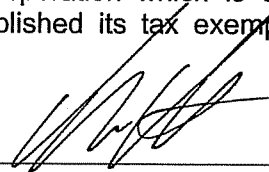
IV

A. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for **charitable** purposes within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

B. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

V

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to **charitable** purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer or member thereof or to the benefit of any private person. Upon the dissolution or winding up of the corporation, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of this corporation shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for **charitable** purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).



Nolan Ehrstrom, Incorporator