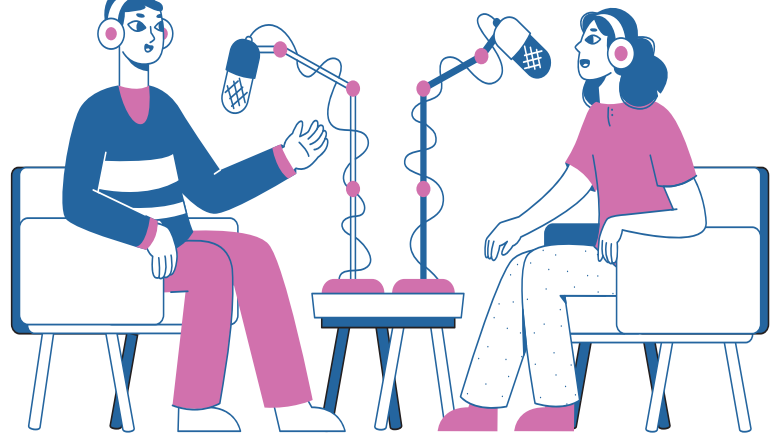


SO, YOU'D LIKE TO **SYNDICATE** YOUR RADIO SHOW ...

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Latest version at <https://irisberkeley.com/syndication.pdf>



Thinking of syndicating your radio show? First of all, that's awesome! When more producers share more content in the noncommercial radio community, everyone flourishes by spreading talent, making more of our collective resources, and bringing a greater diversity of music, voices, and content to our airwaves. Yay, you! Here's a guide full of ideas, tips, and tricks. Pick the ones that work for you, and get started!



Making a local show syndication-ready

If you're reading this, you've probably already got a show on your local community, college, or internet radio station, and you'd like your work to reach a wider audience. The good news is that you already know what makes great radio! The next step is to decide how (and how much) to modify your show to make it simple for other stations to pick up, as well as help it resonate with listeners in communities outside your home broadcast area. These considerations generally fall under three categories: **content, format, and technical**.

Content considerations

- While local references feel great on your home station, they won't resonate with listeners across the country, even if you make it clear you're coming to them from a different locale. **Removing the geography** from your show allows your listeners to imagine that you are in their neighborhood. However, your home station may not be amenable to airing your show without local material like underwriting announcements, concert calendars, weather, etc — in which case you'll want to devise a workflow for either producing two versions of your show, or airing an initial live local version while making it as easy as possible to edit out local content later.
- You'll probably want to **make sure your content is "evergreen"** (not time/date-specific), especially keeping in mind that you won't have any control over when or in what order an affiliate runs your episodes. This is generally fairly simple — avoid references to current months/seasons or upcoming/past holidays, and get in the habit of restating things like "released earlier this year" with alternatives like "released in October of 2025".
- If you'd like listeners to contact you, consider setting up a **show-specific email address** and give that out.
- For music shows, you may want to consider how your approach to racy, politically opinionated, or otherwise **"borderline" lyrics** will resonate at a national level. Regardless of your personal views in the realm of activism vs self-censorship, keep in mind that even an accidental FCC "oops" on your part can potentially cause trouble for every station that airs your show.

Format considerations

- What is a realistic **release cadence** for you? It's easiest for stations to schedule a weekly show, so a weekly cadence will give you maximum reach — but that may be unrealistic for your schedule. It's far better to be less frequent, but consistent; if you don't release consistently, you'll lose trust — and affiliates.

- Each episode of your show will need to be **exactly the same length** so that affiliates' automation systems can expect the same material each time, plus you'll need to leave extra room for each station to add their own ID, underwriting, etc. If you're repackaging a live local show for syndication — especially if you're going to need to edit out local material — this can get tricky to do consistently. One workaround is to include material that can be easily shortened/lengthened in post-production as needed, such as some longer instrumental tracks.
 - For a “half hour” show, your file will need to be exactly 29:00 or 29:30
 - For an “hour-long” show, this is 58:00 or 59:00
 - For longer shows, divide into multiple 58:00 or 59:00 segments — and remember when planning your content that a station may only run your first hour
- You'll also want to create a generic **show promo**. You may already have one of these for your local station that can be modified, but some general considerations:
 - For ease of automation scheduling, this should be exactly 0:30
 - Include your theme song (if you have one) for memorability
 - Include your name, the name of your show, and why the listener will want to tune in to it
 - Start and end with a half second of silence, as well as 5-7 seconds of music tail at the end, so stations can overdub any specific info (like day/time) they wish. When you start adding affiliates, you can offer to customize that last part in your own voice!

Technical considerations

This can feel a little daunting if you're used to doing your show live, but becomes routine quickly. **If you're reading this guide for the first time, feel free to skip over this section** until you're ready to get into the tech weeds! The gist is that radio broadcast automation systems are designed for audio files with certain specifications, so you'll want to record and format your files with these in mind:

1. Start by recording your audio editor's **master file** in stereo, at 44.1 kHz. Adjust the loudness of individual elements in your master file (music tracks, voiceovers) so your *combined* audio peaks at no louder than -6 dB.
2. For files **distributed via AudioPort or direct cloud drive/FTP download** (see “Where to list your show” below), export your master file as a 320kbps MP3, stereo, continuous bit rate. (This last bit is important! Files exported as variable bit rate don't play in many radio automation systems.)
3. For files **distributed via PRX**, you'll need to follow a three-step process:
 - Use your audio editor's “match loudness” function to the following specs:
 - -24 LUFS
 - ± 2 LU
 - Audio peaks ≤ -3 dBFS for sample peaks or ≤ -2 dBTP for true peaks
 - Save the resulting file as a WAV
 - Run that WAV through PRX's custom encoder (<https://help.prx.org/hc/en-us/articles/202988200-Converters-for-Creating-a-MP2>) to create an MP2 file that meets PRX's upload requirements

Finally, although it's not strictly necessary, it's highly recommended to include a **spreadsheet** with each episode containing information about each music track you play: artist, title, album, year, and publisher. This is so stations who must report what they play to the SoundExchange performing rights organization can easily do so. Use a similar naming convention to your episode files (example: *ModeJets-257-Playlist.csv*).

TIP: Create a checklist of all the tech steps in your workflow, so you can complete it each time you produce an episode to make sure you don't forget anything! You can even go so far as to include *all* the steps it takes for you to put an individual episode together, such as scheduling social media posts, uploading to syndication services or cloud storage, etc.

Distributing your show

In the US, many if not most stations find and download their syndicated content from two sources: **Public Radio Exchange** and Pacifica's **AudioPort**. You'll also want to offer **direct download** methods for stations who don't use these services, especially if you're hoping to attract stations outside the US.

If you don't have time to invest right away in offering all four of these download methods, consider starting with direct download from a cloud drive plus one of either PRX or AudioPort. You can always expand later as your show grows its audience.

Public Radio Exchange (PRX)

- Online at <https://exchange.prx.org>
- \$50/year to join as an independent producer
- Easy-to-use web interface for uploading episodes, but must be done manually each time
- Can charge for episodes based on a tiered per-minute rate system
- Publicly viewable series and episode landing pages (example: <https://exchange.prx.org/series/42347-modern-jetset>)
- Affiliates must manually download individual episodes unless you set up automated delivery, which can be expensive; see <https://help.prx.org/hc/en-us/articles/202988680-Automated-Delivery-Overview-for-Producers>
- You can see who downloads your show, which makes outreach to potential new affiliates easier

AudioPort

- Online at <https://audioport.org>
- Free to join as an independent producer, or your home station may allow you to use their account
- Website has a higher learning curve than PRX, but not difficult; must be done manually each time
- Cannot charge affiliates for programming
- Publicly viewable producer pages (example: <http://audioport.org/index.php?op=producer-info&uid=2866>), but viewing individual episodes requires a login
- Generates RSS feeds for shows, so affiliates can feed this link to automation systems to automatically ingest episodes
- You can see who downloads your show, which makes outreach to potential new affiliates easier

Direct download: Cloud drive

- For stations without access to PRX or AudioPort (especially outside the US)
- Many free/paid services exist: Google Drive, Dropbox, self-hosted, etc
- No ability to see who downloads your show (unless you set up something for this yourself)
- You'll need to consistently name your files in a way that gives downloaders a clear idea of the episode number and/or suggested air date while still being short enough (and free of special characters) to not break an automation system (examples: *ModeJets-288.mp3* or *MODE-20250715.mp3*)
- Affiliates must manually download shows on an episode-by-episode basis

Direct download: FTP

- For stations without access to PRX or AudioPort (especially outside the US), but who aren't able or willing to download manually
- Setting up an FTP server can take some technical effort, but once set up isn't hard to use; ask a techie friend or use this as an opportunity to learn a new skill!
- Not necessary to set this up right off the bat, but keep in mind that as you grow your affiliate list, stations may start asking for it



Should you charge for your show?

Let's get the real talk out of the way first — unless you're aiming for truly national prominence with a show running on every big-city station everywhere, all the time, you're probably not going to be able to make a living off this. Beyond that, it's a value calculus that you're going to have to make for yourself, weighing:

- The financial benefits of a fairly simple but small income stream (think \$30-\$75 per episode, per station)
- ... versus the substantial difference in reach you'll have if you offer the show for free (keep in mind that AudioPort only allows free distribution, or that your favorite small station may not have a syndication budget)
- ... as well as how you might feel about the role of monetization in public media in general
- Also, for distribution anywhere other than PRX, you'll need to find a way to manage payment transactions yourself, as well as have difficult conversations with stations who may not pay consistently or on time

Bottom line: **Your decision will be based on your goals.** Do you want your show to someday air “everywhere”, or is it more important to make some money from your hard work? Something in between? Only you know.



Marketing your show

Once you've got five or more shows (plus that generic promo) recorded, mastered to the right technical specifications, and uploaded to your distribution channels, it's time to let stations know you're ready to go. How much effort you put into this depends on the time you have and how much you enjoy marketing, but keep in mind: At least at first, **marketing and outreach count just as much as the content itself.** Over time, as more stations run your show, word of mouth will spread on its own — but you'll need to work to get to that point.

No matter how you reach out to a station, **put yourself in the program director's shoes.** How can you pitch your show as a valuable addition to their existing schedule? How can you make it easy to understand ...

- How often it comes out, including release day/time
- How long it is and how much “extra space” there is in an hour for their own station-specific content
- What it sounds like: music genres, themes, overall vibe
- What sort of content it pairs well with, demographics it appeals to, or times of day when it shines
- Why your show is different/better than the myriad other shows they're pitched each week

Below are some suggested places to start. Feeling stuck? Search the internet for how other producers market their shows, or dig around PRX and AudioPort for things you like and borrow liberally.

PRX and AudioPort landing pages

You'll have these anyway if you're listing your show on these services, so it's worth the effort to make them **easy to understand, visually appealing, and consistent.** If you're a program director trying to decide if a show is worth adding, you'll notice if series/producer pages and episode pages have that extra polish that comes from things like:

- Clearly written descriptions both for the series and individual episodes (e.g. featured artists, themes)
- An eye-catching show logo (this ends up on stations' schedule pages, so design something good!)
- For series pages, a compelling description of your show and its benefits (see above)
- For episode pages, a spreadsheet with SoundExchange data (artist, title, album, year, publisher) for all songs

For all of the above, **consistency is king** — if information is in the same format, in the same place, with the same file names, *every episode*, this builds trust.

Show website

Having a website for your show is a **great resource not only for prospective affiliates, but also the listeners you already have!** Even if you're not a web designer, there are plenty of services out there to help you build a simple, attractive site inexpensively or for free. A few tips:

- Consider buying a domain name (example: <https://modernjetset.com>) that references the name of your show; this also gives you a memorable email address that you can call out on the show itself (e.g. mail@modernjetset.com)
- Make sure your website includes all the same info you're including in your PRX and/or AudioPort series pages: Show description, series benefits, how they can download your show (PRX, Audioport, direct download, etc), and how to contact you
- If you'd like to enable listeners or prospective affiliates to hear episodes directly from your website, uploading them to Mixcloud (<https://mixcloud.com>, \$120/year) makes it simple to embed those episodes directly into your site — and allows Mixcloud listeners to discover your show, too
- As you accumulate affiliates, add them to your website as a list of stations, including links to their websites and days/times (if you are willing to keep them updated — schedules often shift!)

Social media

Social media isn't for everyone in today's landscape, but if you're comfortable with being present on someone else's platform, it's **often well worth the investment** — particularly when it comes to building community among your listeners. Choose a commonly used platform among the demographic you're trying to reach (this generally means Instagram or Facebook) and set up a strategy both for posting regularly and for monitoring for and responding to comments. You'll generally gain more engagement and have more impact if you ...

- Post regularly to highlight individual episodes of your show, including what content listeners will hear (specific artists, genres, etc) and where they can listen (website? Mixcloud? station list on your website?)
- Tag stations and featured artists so they have the ability to re-post
- Like and/or reply to all comments
- Follow and re-post content from stations, artists, labels, and fellow content creators to help grow the community media social ecosystem overall — people you amplify will amplify you in return!

Direct outreach

Nothing can take the place of **direct outreach to station staff** who can help get your show on the air! You may already have networks you can reach out to — if so, don't be afraid to put yourself out there. If you don't, just start sending emails and see who you connect with! Noncommercial radio is a friendly community. Some general tips:

- Keep track of who you reach out to and when — this can be as simple as a spreadsheet with station names, contact names/emails, dates contacted, and any notes. You never know when a station you approached months ago will get back in touch, and you'll want to easily be able to pick up the thread.
- Create a "boilerplate" email template so you're not starting over each time you want to contact a station. Don't make it too generic (we can all see through that), but write something that can be customized easily — for instance, leave some room in your template for a suggested time to air your show ("My Great Show would be a good complement to the world music programming you're running every Thursday night").
- Not sure where to start looking for stations? There's always the Wikipedia list of US community radio stations (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_community_radio_stations_in_the_United_States), or find similar shows to yours on PRX/AudioPort and see who they list among their affiliates.
- Finally, when a station does decide to pick up your show, thank them! A handwritten note goes a long way, as does an offer to customize your generic show promo with their station's name, day, and time.