

WilliNet Producer's Handbook

Rev. 04/08/2006

I. PROGRAM CONTENT RULES

In the spirit of Public Access and WilliNet's philosophy and mission, programming will not be censored or otherwise altered or restricted by WilliNet and therefore remains the sole responsibility of the Producers are certified and who have signed a Statement of Compliance as a foundation for their understanding and exercise of their responsibilities.

1. The public access producer is responsible for the content of his or her program(s) and for obtaining all releases necessary to cablecast any materials on WilliNet access channels. Material which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law for which appropriate releases have not been obtained may not be cablecast.

2. Presentation of the following material on community access channels is prohibited:

- Any material designed to promote the sale of products, services, trade, business, or persons;
- Material which identifies any product, service, trademark, or brand name other than in an incidental way;
- Any material which is intended to defraud the viewer or is designed to obtain money by false pretenses, representations, or promises;
- Direct or indirect solicitation of funds, (see #6:Fundraising Programs for exception)
- All advertisement of (or information concerning) any lottery or similar scheme offering prizes dependent, in whole or part, upon lot or chance; or any list of the prizes drawn or awarded by means of such lottery, gift enterprise, or scheme, whether said list contains any part or all of such prizes;
- Libelous or slanderous material;
- Material that is obscene or indecent according to local community standards or is otherwise illegal.

- Section 506 of the 1996 Cable Act allows cable operators to refuse to transmit any public access or leased access program which contains obscenity, indecency, or nudity. On June 28, 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision (*Denver Area Educational Telecommunications Consortium, Inc. v. FCC*) which held that cable operators may decline to carry indecent programming on leased access channels, but cannot exercise the same control over programming on public access channels.
3. Willinet's facilities, equipment and staff are available for use by trained volunteers without cost. Therefore, it is expected that producers will not sell or receive payment for the programs they produce. Actual or anticipated differing circumstances must be discussed with Willinet's executive director.
 4. A commercial business, individual or granting agency, may underwrite the costs of an access program or provide props and other assistance and may be recognized with a brief video and/or audio underwriting identification. Each underwriter's I.D. may last no longer than ten (10) seconds. No more than thirty (30) seconds are permitted at the start and again at the end for underwriting I.D.s.
 5. Political Programming:
Willinet encourages:
 - Political programs which are informative in nature by presenting who a candidate is and what a candidate represents in terms of specific ideas, issues, and policies;
 - Candidate forums and presentations which describe a person's or organization's point of view on a given topic;
 - Any imported programming that is at least 15 minutes in length promoting or opposing candidates or ballot issues (The rules governing imported programming also apply);Willinet will not accept:
 - Payment for programming or paid political advertising by or on behalf of candidates for public office, political parties, or ballot issues;

- Any programming for cablecast on Election Day promoting or opposing candidates or ballot issues;
- Political programming less than fifteen (15) minutes in length that differs from the preceding guidelines.

6. Fundraising Programs:

By approval of the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors, Willinet may cablecast fundraising programs only by and for non-profit organizations and only by telethon.

Direct costs incurred may be billed to the sponsoring organization requiring payment before the event. The organization is responsible for providing its own production crew for the event.

7. Imported Programs:

Channel time may be allocated to cablecast imported programs produced outside of Willinet provided the program meets all the stated cablecast rules, standards, and scheduling procedures. The person requesting the channel time is considered the producer of the program.

Under certain circumstances, the producer may be asked to prepare and videotape an introduction to the program associating its subject or content with local issues, interests, individuals, or organizations and to add the required disclaimer.

This rule does not apply to programs produced by NBCTC or other public access centers where cablecast by Willinet is approved or arranged and scheduled by Willinet staff. A typical disclaimer is required on the program from the producing access center.

II. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Each producer of an individual program or series must have on file before cablecast a Statement of Compliance in which the producer acknowledges sole responsibility for the program's content. The statement must also acknowledge that Willinet (and its officers,

directors, employees, and agents) is harmless from liability or legal fees and expenses incurred as a result of cablecasting.

III. PRODUCER'S LIABILITY:

Each producer has the responsibility to know and understand all the WilliNet policies and procedures described by these operating rules.

Producers should only identify themselves as community producers of their own programs and not misrepresent as staff, employees, or representatives of WilliNet, Inc. Every producer assumes financial and legal responsibility beyond insurance coverage for all activities utilizing WilliNet services, including theft of or damage to equipment from misuse or negligence while it is signed out.

Every producer of programming using WilliNet equipment and facilities retains ownership of the copyright to that program and is responsible for any disputes, which may arise. All programs cablecast by WilliNet must have a certified and trained local producer who assumes individual responsibility for the programming subject to the Cable Act and FCC requirements. The producer is responsible for claims arising out of use of WilliNet equipment and assigned cable channels and promises to indemnify and hold harmless WilliNet, Inc., its Directors, Officers and Staff, Adelphia Cable, and Williamstown authorities against any such claims or any breach of the producer's Statement of Compliance, including but not limited to any claims in the nature of libel, slander, invasion of privacy rights, noncompliance with applicable laws, and unauthorized use of copyrighted material. The Executive Director is available for consultation and advice on all aspects of producer's responsibilities

IV. UNDERWRITING & GRANTS

WilliNet producers are encouraged to obtain underwriting grants that aid in the development, production, promotion, or improvement of their programs. Donations can be in the form of funds or in-kind contributions (goods or services). Since WilliNet does not charge for the use of its facilities, equipment and staff, producers who are

contemplating securing grants for production costs should first discuss their intentions with WilliNet's executive director.

Grant writers may be asked to include WilliNet's overhead costs in the grant's production budget. The remainder of the budget may be used in any legal manner the producer deems necessary to the production.

Since voluntary participation is expected of all users of WilliNet's facilities and equipment for programming to be cable cast on WilliNet channels, it is expected that different circumstances should be discussed in advance with WilliNet's executive director and possibly the WilliNet Board of Directors. (An exception occurs when a production on tape results from other paid employment, such as student work-study.) Producers will not be paid to produce programs.

V. PROGRAM SCHEDULING:

Production Proposal:

A producer must complete a Production Proposal and obtain a contract number for each program or series, which must include approval by WilliNet staff prior to any scheduling of equipment, facilities, or channel time. The following procedures apply:

- Each production proposal must include a description of the program or series for which approval is requested so that WilliNet is aware of program production and can anticipate on-air scheduling requirements.
- Staff will only approve a production proposal if all sections have been completed, adequate crew has been secured and all members of production crew have been certified in their specific areas.

All production proposal rules must be observed. The purpose of these proposals and procedures is to provide pre-production guidance to producers as well as to keep monitor WilliNet equipment usage in relation to actual completion of programs and cablecast time.

Access channel time is available to residents and organizations serving the Town, on a non-discriminatory, first-come, first-served basis. Such channel time is available subject to limitations of playback equipment and staff capacity. Scheduling of channel time will be subject to Willinet's goal of establishing regularly scheduled programming.

A Production Proposal must be filled out and returned to Willinet before any channel time is scheduled.

Scheduling a Series

A series is defined as any production that airs weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Series will be allocated a maximum of 26 programs, after which reapplication is required.

Time Slots:

Regularly scheduled series time slots will be allocated at the discretion of the Willinet staff based upon ample time remaining available for other community programming requests. Reallocation of a time slot will be considered in relation to other scheduling demands. If a series producer fails to produce new, original programming for more than two consecutive cablecasts, the time slot may be reassigned to other users.

Willinet has the option of pre-empting for special programming:

- a weekly series two times per quarter
- a bi-weekly series once per quarter
- a monthly series two times per year

Programs must be in-house at noon on the THURSDAY prior to the week of intended cablecasting. Willinet's program scheduling is prepared *at least* one week advance, and the channel is programmed one week in advance. Programs will not be added to the following week's schedule in a random fashion. Specials which are not submitted by the Thursday deadline will not be scheduled until the following Thursday and will be aired approximately two weeks from the date of submission.

Repeats:

If scheduling permits, a program may be repeated during the following two-week period for a total of three cablecasts including the initial program. All program scheduling is subject to the decision of the staff as to time and day of cablecast. WilliNet staff and board of directors will not be held responsible for inability to meet program schedule or time preference.

VI. CABLECAST STANDARDS

All videotapes used for cablecasting on and by WilliNet must meet certain minimum quality requirements as prescribed by staff. Videotapes must be of such quality that the video and audio signals carry over the cable systems and the tapes are compatible with the WilliNet playback equipment. Any videotapes which are not supplied or purchased through WilliNet must be approved by staff prior to use in equipment. Any program producer not in compliance may be charged a fee for cleaning, maintenance or repair of equipment damaged by the unapproved tape stock.

WilliNet is solely responsible for the quality of originated signals, inclusive of all programming shown on the Access Channels. WilliNet therefore requires that all programming submitted for air on the channel be of an acceptable technical quality; that the video signal be stable enough to pass through a standard time-base corrector, that the audio be free from hum, distortion, and other artifacts detrimental to audibility, and that the overall video and audio signals be within the limits that the FCC deems acceptable for cablecast. Programming that fails to meet these basic technical requirements will not be acceptable for airing on the WilliNet channels.

VII. TAPE STOCK

WilliNet retains ownership of all Broadcast Master Program Tapes. WilliNet will retain tapes for rebroadcast for one year, after which they may be recycled for camera tapes.

Producers may use WilliNet equipment to dub one copy of their program for their own use. Producers are responsible for reserving dubbing time. There will be a charge for

dubbing more than one copy of a program. Please inquire of staff for the current cost of tape and dubbing.

VIII. LABELING TAPES FOR CABLECAST:

Prior to cablecasting, all videotapes and their boxes must be clearly labeled with the following information:

- Title of Program and Producer's name
- Total length of program (minutes and seconds)
- Date of completion
- VITC start

A WilliNet staff member will fill in the airdate and time once it has been confirmed. Please review WilliNet's POLICIES FOR TAPE USE before submitting any tapes for cablecast.

IX. PREPARATION OF TAPES FOR CABLECAST:

All programs must be formatted as follows:

- 30 seconds of color bars
- 30 seconds of black
- WilliNet logo
- Disclaimer
- Opening Credits – Program – Closing Credits – Disclaimer

Disclaimer:

The following written copy must precede all programs:

“The following program has been submitted by (Presenter/Producer).

(Submitter's name, town, state)

WilliNet is not responsible for its content.”

X. RESERVATIONS

Reservations for equipment and facilities can be made in person or by telephone and are entered into the Reservation Book located in the WilliNet office. Staff must confirm all reservations. It is the producer's responsibility to confirm a reservation beforehand. Users must be prompt for reservations. Staff is not responsible to hold a reservation if the user arrives more than 15 minutes late. Three late arrivals or two no-shows will result in loss of WilliNet privileges.

XI. FIELD PRODUCTION

- In order to check out equipment, a user must have a certificate of training for that particular piece of equipment.
- Only a WilliNet staff person designated by the Executive Director may check equipment in and out.
- Users are responsible for loss or damage due to negligence or abuse while the equipment is checked out. All costs of repair or replacement beyond insurance coverage must be paid in full before any further equipment use will be allowed.
- Producers should set up and test all equipment prior to removing it from the facility. Failure to do so will be the user's responsibility and the return of damaged or broken equipment will be the responsibility of that person.
- Cameras can generally be checked out for one 24-hour weekday period only. One camera is allowed for use per person per weekend. No more than two cameras may be reserved for the same project.
- Reservations must be made at least one week in advance either in person or by telephone with the Executive Director.
- Any problems with the equipment or damage found must be noted on the equipment sign-out sheet and reported to WilliNet staff. Please be as specific as possible about the nature of the problems and the conditions under which they occurred in order to facilitate repairs.

XII. STUDIO PRODUCTION

- Prior to use of the studio or control room, a producer and all crewmembers must be trained in studio production.

- Studio production requires WilliNet staff supervision, unless the producer or another crewmember is certified for studio supervision.
- Producer is responsible for leaving the studio in the same or better condition than when it was first occupied. This includes removing trash, papers, and other refuse, wrapping and storing cables, organizing equipment, storing microphones, and returning set materials to storage.
- In general, a minimum of one-week notification for scheduling of a studio production is requested.

XIII. EDITING AND POST PRODUCTION

- Prior to use of editing facilities, the editor must have completed a basic training course in editing and/or character generation.
- Only editors who can demonstrate proficiency in editing may use editing facilities without the assistance of WilliNet staff.
- The user who schedules the editing time is responsible for leaving the Edit Suite in the same or better condition than when it was first occupied.
- The hook-ups and cabling in the edit suites must not be changed, except by the Technical Director. Special hook-ups must be pre-authorized. Please request any special hook-ups or staff assistance at the time the reservation is made.
- Producers may schedule editing time up to one month in advance. If you need to change your reservation, please cancel at least 48 hours in advance of your scheduled time. Reservations and cancellations may be made either in person or over the telephone with a staff member.
- Producers working on any one project may reserve no more than one block of four hours at any one time in editing or control room. Additional editing time may be booked after the first block has been used.

XIV. ACCESS RULES & ON-SITE BEHAVIOR

- Community access studio, equipment, and channel time are available on a first-come, first-served basis to any person, group, or organization in the town of Williamstown.

- WilliNet equipment and facilities may not be used for private or commercial purposes. Programs produced with WilliNet equipment/facilities must first be cablecast on WilliNet access channels prior to airing on other public access stations. Anyone wishing to use the access system must first be oriented to the philosophy of access, access rules & operating procedures, and have signed all required documents and forms.
- Producers or users under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian agree to all access rules & operating procedures, and to sign all required documents and forms.
- Anyone using WilliNet equipment and facilities must first take appropriate workshops to learn the proper use and operation of equipment, or have equivalent prior experience as determined by WilliNet staff.
- Producers are required to follow the directions of WilliNet staff.
- Proper clothing (shirt and shoes) is required on WilliNet premises.
- Food & drink must be kept away from equipment. All users are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.
- Possession or use of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or weapons on WilliNet premises is not permitted.
- WilliNet is a public facility open to all town residents and appropriate conduct must be observed on site. Horse play, loud speech, lewd behavior or profane language is not permitted on the premises. A production containing such acts and behaviors must be taped outside of WilliNet facilities or be approved in advance by the Executive Director.
- Productions that contain material or subject matter inappropriate for children will be cablecast after 11 pm and must include a 20 second viewer discretion disclaimer at the beginning of the program stating: "This program may contain material that is inappropriate for some viewers and young children. Viewer discretion is advised. All comments and questions should be directed to (name and phone number or email of producer).

- No illegal acts are to be cablecast. This includes, but is not limited to, obscenity (depictions of explicit sexual or excretory functions), libel/slander, acts against state or local law or statute, etc.
- Abusive, threatening or harassing behavior toward WilliNet staff or volunteers is prohibited.

XV. SUSPENSION & APPEALS PROCESS

Producers, users or volunteers in violation of WilliNet policies and rules as outlined in the WilliNet Producer's Handbook will be suspended from submitting programs or using WilliNet facilities for a period not to exceed one (1) year from the date of their suspension. The WilliNet Board of Directors will provide offenders with written notice of their suspension enumerating the reasons for the Board's decision.

Producers, users or volunteers may appeal a suspension by submitting a written statement to the WilliNet Board of Directors not later than one month from the date of notice of suspension. The WilliNet Board of Directors will hear the appeal of the suspended individual within one month of receiving his or her written statement.

XVI. PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS

WilliNet offers workshops in the following facets of video production:

- Field Production – Operation and care of take-out video production equipment.
- Studio Production – Operation and care of studio video production equipment, responsibilities for various crew positions and procedures.
- Editing – The use of digital and analog editing equipment and software for various stages of post production.

The goal of WilliNet workshops is to teach basic operation of video equipment and editing techniques to residents with an interest in producing their own television programs. A minimum of one production workshop in any given area is required for all potential producers, users or volunteers, with the exception of those who have past experience, as determined by WilliNet staff.

XVII. CARE & HANDLING OF WILLINET EQUIPMENT

Users are responsible for securing cameras in cases properly, setting up and breaking down equipment, wrapping microphone and electrical cables, and proscribed use of studio production and editing equipment. Producers, users and volunteers are responsible for the return of all equipment in the same condition as when it left the premises. It is the absolute responsibility for producers, users and volunteers to verify the correct function of equipment prior to taking it off premises. Equipment must be returned to a WilliNet staff member and should never be left unattended outside the WilliNet studio.

Changes to wiring or switches in WilliNet studio and editing facilities are prohibited without express staff permission or supervision.

No attempt shall be made to repair equipment and any repair costs resulting from damage caused by such attempts will be charged to the user and a loss of equipment borrowing privileges may result.

All defects or problems with equipment must be reported to WilliNet staff immediately upon its discovery.

XVIII. MISCELLENEOUS

All materials for productions, other than those supplied by WilliNet, must be supplied by the producer, user or volunteer and removed after the production or upon request.

Personal belongings left on WilliNet premises is not the responsibility of WilliNet, its staff, Board of Directors or volunteers.