

## Public Broadcasting

- Except for the United States, it has traditionally been the dominant form of broadcasting in much of the world.
- Public broadcasters may receive all or a substantial part of their funding from government sources, either from the general tax revenues or from licence fees.
- Many public broadcasters supplement this with contributions from corporations, in return for underwriting spots.
- This allows public broadcasters to air programs that are less saleable to the mass market, such as public affairs shows, documentaries, and educational programs.
- With the growth in commercial radio and television throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, arts and education programming was being largely ignored by the major networks and radio broadcasters in favor of entertainment programming designed to lure advertisers.
- The mass media marketplace is tremendously competitive, and as such, it can be difficult for a public service broadcaster to survive amongst commercial interests.
- Locally run nonprofit television and radio stations attempted to fill the gap, but their smaller budgets made it difficult for them to produce the high-tech programming the public was coming to expect.
- In 1965, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a nonprofit foundation, created a commission to study the problem and assist a legislative lobbying effort to provide public funding for what the commission dubbed *public broadcasting*.
- In 1967, the Public Broadcasting Act (the “Act”) was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson.
- The Act created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”), which was charged with using federal funds to help promote programming that involves creative risks the networks are unwilling to take, and to provide educational and informative materials targeted primarily for audiences underrepresented in mainstream broadcasting, like children and minorities.
- In order to fulfill its mission, the CPB formed the Public Broadcasting Service (“PBS”) in 1969 and National Public Radio (“NPR”) in 1970.
- Without PBS and NPR, such shows as *Sesame Street*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, *The McNeil/Lehrer Report*, *Cosmos*, *Great Performances*, *A Prairie Home Companion*, and *All Things Considered* would not have been able to help educate America's children and information-hungry adults.