ARCHITECTS OF COLLABORATION:
HOW NPR CREATED A CULTURE OF INNOVATION
How does public radio fit into your life?
(if at all)
What is innovation?
Episode 500: The Humble Innovation At The Heart Of The Global Economy
SHIPPING: THE MODERN WAY

The container carrying the Planet Money T-shirts is loaded onto a ship in Cartagena, Colombia. A standard container like this one can hold up to 82,880 Jockey T-shirts.
BOXES

The unsung innovation at the heart of the global economy
Innovative = Cost Savings?
Can Limited Resources Lead To Better Innovation?

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2 Comments  NPR Arts & Life

J H 7 months ago

This man’s ideas are great if you want to waste time “innovating” things that aren’t useful.

If a resource is abundant it’s a waste of effort - and wealth - to learn how to be frugal with it.

The smart thing is to get the most out of it in as short a time as possible then learn to be frugal or seek an alternative resource when abundance starts to constrain consumption.

Sctoc 7 months ago

Is the downside of abundance lack of innovation?

Or is it simply a matter of the type innovation that is effected by abundance or scarcity?

Street level innovation thrives during times of scarcity while abundance fuels innovation that enriches the well to do.
Innovative = Useful?
INNOVATE
DEF.
(OXFORD DICTIONARIES)

make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products.

"the company's failure to diversify and innovate competitively"

introduce (something new, especially a product).

"innovating new products, developing existing ones"
“innovate competitively …”
Compared to?
Which companies or organizations do you consider “innovative”? 
Why?
Is NPR innovative?
1970 / NPR is founded on February 26

1971 / First broadcast
NPR goes on the air for the first time with live coverage of United States Senate hearings on the war in Vietnam

1979 / NPR’s first overseas bureau opens in London
NPR begins the first nationwide, satellite-delivered radio distribution network and is designated as the manager of the Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS), distributing content for NPR and other public radio producers.

1994 / NPR.org launches

1985 / Weekend Edition Saturday debuts
1987 / WHYY's Fresh Air with Terry Gross goes national on NPR

1998 / Going global
NPR Worldwide launches, providing public radio programming to Europe, Asia and Africa, and US military stationed abroad

2000 / NPR's first web-only program "All Songs Considered" debuts on NPR.org

2001 / NPR debuts on satellite radio with a mix of programs from NPR and NPR Member Stations

2002 / NPR expands West

2007 / Launch of NPR Music

2008 / First to launch Open API
NPR becomes the first major national media organization to launch a comprehensive Open API (Application Programming Interface) allowing stations and public radio fans an easy way to access, include and share NPR content on other websites and blogs.

2009 / Webby Awards

2009 / NPR launches News apps for iPhone and Android
2010 / NPR Music app for iPhone launches

2011 / NPR Music series Project Song wins Emmy Award

2010 / NPR serves as a launch partner of the iPad; launches NPR app for iPad

2012 / Responsive Design, featuring IAB Rising Star units, launches on NPR.org

2012 / NPR partners with Ford Sync

2012 / NPR Music app for iPad launches
2013 / NPR.org homepage redesign launches, featuring Center Stage Sponsorship integration

2013 / NPR moves to new headquarters building at 1111 North Capitol St. NE

2014 / Mobile and tablet traffic to NPR.org surpasses 50% of total site traffic

2014 / Launch of NPR One, public radio made personal, with industry-leading interactive audio creative

2015 / NPR launches Invisibilia, a hugely popular new program and podcast
Will NPR Save the News?

The most successful hybrid of old and new media comes from the last place you’d expect. How NPR’s digital smarts, nonprofit structure, and good old-fashioned shoe leather just might save the news.
“NPR went from being a faceless organization to one with a website and a face and a better dialogue with the audience.”

Richard Dean
“The Tiny Desk is unique to NPR — it sprang out of who we are here and wanting to share that.”

Anya Grundmann
Introducing NPR One
Public radio made personal.

Available on the App Store | Get it on Google Play | Download from Windows Store
Let’s assume we are perceived as innovative …
How did our culture support innovation?
“Drive best-in-class product development efforts to extend the utility, reach and perceived customer value of the NPR Digital experience.”
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creative director
associate creative director
user research
interaction designers
product designers
design /ux
product mgmt
SCRUM master
development
editorial
analytics
sponsorship
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COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

- Understand Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Write Problem Statements
- Gather Evidence
- Declare Assumptions
- Identify Hypotheses
- Sketch!
- Develop & Run Experiments
**PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

- From Lean UX Practice
- Use a template
- “Current product was designed to ____________”
- “We’ve observed that it isn’t doing ____________”
- “This is the impact: ________________”
- “How can we measurably improve so that ________________?”
ASSUMPTIONS AS CULTURE

- Present Evidence
- Every Team Member Offers Them
- Kill the Arguments
EXPERIMENTS & A TEMPLATE

- Problems we're trying to address
- What we want to learn and why
- Hypothesis
- Experiment details
- Measures
- Results & what we learned
- Conclusions / next steps
INNOVATION ACCOUNTANT

- We hired one.
METHOD CARDS

- Artifacts to Inspire Design
- Introduced by IDEO in 2003
- Widely distribute to all who create.
SERENDIPITY DAYS

- To tap the creative ideas of the overall team; create a vehicle for exploring cool, interesting ideas that might or might not go anywhere; and have fun.
Jan. 28: on this day: the word “serendipity” is coined

It was on this day in 1754 that the word “serendipity” was first coined. It’s defined by Merriam-Webster as “the faculty or phenomenon of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for.” It was recently listed by a U.K. translation company as one of the English language’s 10 most difficult words to translate. Other words to make their list include plenipotentiary, gobbledygook, poppycock, whimsy, spam, and kitsch.
innovation = the unexpected?
ZEN OUT DAYS

- "The hypothesis is that 2-3 days of non-project work will allow you to use your brain in a different way and (hopefully) refresh and energize you."
- Kim Bryant, Director of Operations & Project Management
FLOW STATE

- “... to really do well something that requires a lot of concentration ... so existence is temporarily suspended ... when that happens, the music just flows out ...”
- I call this type of experience the flow experience.”
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
We’ve accumulated practices that could help us continue to innovate …
and we may always need to care about being *perceived* as innovative …
based on definitions we do not control.
but ...
Our own evolving definition is what’s most important.
Let’s go back to my 1st question …
and I’ll change how I ask the question.
Does NPR *currently* fit into your life because of innovation?
Does NPR fit into your life *despite* innovation?
Is NPR currently absent from your life because of a lack of innovation?
Is NPR not part of your life because …?
What would make us innovative *now and into the future*?
Whoa.
Who helps people make sense of things?
IAs do!
A good IA helps people to understand their surroundings and find what they’re looking for – in the real world as well as online.

Practicing information architecture involves facilitating the people and organizations we work with to consider their structures and language thoughtfully.
You (& I) have the responsibility (& skills!) to define & communicate what innovation means.
Start with your history & your values.
National Public Radio will serve the individual: it will promote personal growth; it will regard the individual differences among men with respect and joy rather than derision and hate; it will celebrate the human experience as infinitely varied rather than vacuous and banal; it will encourage a sense of active constructive participation, rather than apathetic helplessness.

(written in 1970)
The mission of NPR, in partnership with its member stations, is to create a more informed public, one challenged and invigorated by a deeper understanding and appreciation of events, ideas, and culture within the United States and across the globe. To this end, NPR reports, produces, acquires and distributes news, information and other content that meet the highest standards of public service in journalism and cultural expression.
NPR ETHICS GUIDE

ETHICS.NPR.ORG

01 Accuracy
02 Fairness
03 Completeness
04 Honesty
05 Independence

06 Impartiality
07 Transparency
08 Accountability
09 Respect
10 Excellence
“We’re going to talk to our listeners the way we talk to our friends.”

Bill Siemering

“It’s the voice that puts you in the presence of a person and a life. Listening to the voices of NPR and the people we interview is to hear the sound of decades passing.”

Susan Stamberg
Our greatest innovations should:

enable behaviors leading to more human connection
and greater understanding
especially re: people or topics you didn’t know you cared about.
(The “you” here is not only our current audience.)
INNOVATION
SCOTT’S GUIDELINES FOR NPR

01
Focus on Behaviors We Can Change

02
Enable Readiness With Products/Services

03
Influence Daily Routine

04
Quantify Our “Missed Audience”

05
Increase Tribal & Cultural Awareness

06
Show Evidence of Our Ethics In Our Products

07
Accept: We Do Not Control Context

08
Form Trust Through Voice
What will you
structure / order / create
to help others make sense of things?
THANK YOU.

QUESTIONS?

Please Contact:
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