

## John L. Boland

A media executive and journalist, John L. Boland is a leader in the transformation of public broadcasting to serve the rapidly changing needs of the American public in the digital age. He has articulated a vision for 21<sup>st</sup> century public media that combines robust digital radio and television broadcasting with the utilization of new media platforms, and has initiated experiments and inspired innovation at both the local and national levels.

The role of chief content officer (CCO) was created for Boland—the first such position in public media—at KQED Public Broadcasting in Northern California in 2002. Boland then went on to become the first chief content officer of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in 2006. At PBS, Boland broke down the “silos” to combine six previously separate operating divisions—new media, education, television programming, content services, promotion, and communications—into an integrated, multi-platform organization. Under Boland’s leadership, *QUEST*, KQED’s Emmy Award—winning local science, environment and nature series, emerged as a “platform-agnostic” initiative with a multi-disciplinary team that utilizes radio, television, new digital platforms, and educational services to inform and engage the public.

During Boland’s tenure, PBS dramatically increased its emphasis on new digital media with the launch of three state-of-the-art video players designed for use on pbs.org and local station websites; the distribution of PBS content via partnerships with iTunes, YouTube, Hulu, and other online syndicators; the development of custom social media tools for PBS stations and producers, along with aggressive use of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and other platforms to engage the public and promote public media content; and the introduction of the Digital Learning Library to serve teachers through local stations with a single user interface to access all of public media’s educational assets.

The resulting growth in online audience catapulted pbs.org to the number one spot in unique visitors among all television network websites in 2008 and pbskids.org to the top ranking for pre-school children in 2009.

To maximize limited financial resources, Boland initiated a PBS television strategy that included significantly increased promotion to expand the reach of brand-defining specials, like Ken Burns’s *The War* and *The National Parks*; redesign of major series like *Masterpiece* to increase frequency of viewing; and distribution of programs via digital, on-demand platforms to reach new audiences. The redesign and relaunch of *Masterpiece* resulted in a 71% increase in ratings, and *The War* and *The National Parks*, with audiences of 38 million and 33.4 million respectively, achieved the highest ratings of any PBS programs since the mid-1990s.

Boland also oversaw three multi-platform content initiatives in categories that have seen dramatic decreases in commercial media outlets: news and public affairs, the arts, and children’s educational content. Drawing on his journalism background and his experience in radio and print media, Boland designed the news and public affairs initiative with three components: refreshing the PBS television lineup with new and redesigned programs like the new *PBS NewsHour* and the recently announced *Need To Know* Web-TV project; establishing an online news “supervetical” to aggregate content from public radio, TV, and other public service content providers; and an NPR-PBS partnership to support local public radio and television stations in providing news services for their communities.

In a resolution expressing appreciation for his vision and leadership, the PBS Board of Directors credited Boland with development of “a new content strategy that combines experimentation and innovation to reach audiences on digital media platforms, while continuing to strengthen the core PBS television service. John has helped PBS stake its future in the new world of public service media.”

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He served in several executive roles at KQED for more than a decade before joining PBS. As CCO, in addition to being instrumental in the creation of *QUEST*, he maintained KQED's leadership in use of digital media, encouraging early experiments with Internet video on-demand, podcasting, original audio and video content for the Web, content partnerships with other non-profit institutions, and creation of unique KQED blogs. He dramatically increased content creation on all platforms at KQED and fostered KQED's leadership in forming public broadcasting's first multi-institutional podcasting initiative with NPR and several leading public radio stations.

Previously, as KQED's executive vice president & chief operating officer, Boland directed strategic planning, led labor negotiations, established new media as a full-fledged operating unit, coordinated planning for digital conversion of broadcast operations, and helped deliver six consecutive years of record operating results. He also negotiated with Comcast in Northern California one of the first and most comprehensive multi-channel digital cable carriage deals in the nation. Earlier, as vice president, marketing, development & communications, Boland played a key role in the planning for the \$70 million KQED Campaign for the Future, one of the largest fundraising initiatives in public media's history.

Boland began his multi-faceted media career as an award-winning daily newspaper reporter and editor in his native New Jersey and went on to serve as a newspaper publisher and owner, a senior executive with two major international marketing and communications firms, Burson-Marsteller and Hill & Knowlton, and publisher of *San Francisco Focus* (now *San Francisco* magazine).

He has been a resident of the San Francisco Bay Area for more than 25 years. While his primary passion is public service media, he and his partner, James Carroll, also own and operate Dos Reis Ranch, an organic apple orchard in Sebastopol, and Boland swims competitively with the University of San Francisco Masters Team.

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