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Independent Production Fund renews web series funding program for 2011

The Board of Directors of the Independent Production Fund undertook an evaluation of its Web Series Pilot Program and determined that funding support should be maintained in 2011, in order to continue to explore this innovative, story-driven dramatic form and its potential business models. "The creativity of the web series format is exciting and inspiring, but there are a few mysteries yet to solve in this experimental format" noted IPF Chair, Charles Ohayon, "Time is needed to develop appropriate marketing, distribution and business models".

There has been very strong industry interest in this unique funding Program and much anticipation for its renewal. The IPF is the only Canadian Fund that supports linear online dramatic content. The 2010 Pilot Program invested $1.2 M in the production of 11 drama series in English and in French, created for audiences from pre-schoolers to adults, representing 942 minutes of linear drama as well as interactive activities and social media strategies. Budgets ranged from $300 a minute to $5,000 a minute. The funded projects were selected from amongst 166 submissions made by Canadian producers and writers from across the country. The IPF created its own web series dashboard for the series it funds, Wip, available at www.ipf.ca/webseries.

The deadline for Requests for Proposals for the 2011 Web Series Program is March 1, 2011. The selected short-list of finalist projects will be available by March 28 and complete production applications will be required by May 2. Funding decisions will be announced in mid-June. Eligible projects must have a Canadian web host and URL, and be original content designed primarily for the web. Guidelines are available at www.ipf.ca.

In the past 20 years, the IPF has invested $51M in the production of 229 drama series for television, 11 web series and 300 professional development activities. The IPF works in close collaboration with the Cogeco Program Development Fund. Therefore, television drama series for private broadcasters will continue to be eligible to apply to the IPF, and the Board may recommend that applications be transferred to the Cogeco Fund, if there is insufficient funding available at the IPF.

The Independent Production Fund is a private, charitable Foundation with a $35M endowment. It uses the interest from this endowment as well as recoupment from successful projects, for its industry investments. An independent Board of Directors representing various aspects of the industry is responsible for all funding decisions.

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