



MEDIA

PBS to Stream Live Coverage of Miami Book Fair

By ELIZABETH JENSEN NOV. 9, 2014

PBS is venturing into territory that C-Span's Book TV has previously had largely to itself, with plans to stream live coverage of three days of Miami Dade College's Miami Book Fair International in November.

C-Span has been a partner since the fair's inception in 1984, but its focus is on nonfiction. PBS envisions something broader, what producers describe as Olympic-style coverage of the extensive event. It runs Nov. 16 to 23 and will feature more than 500 authors, with attendance expected to top 200,000.

Jeffrey Brown, culture correspondent of "PBS NewsHour," and the author Kelly Corrigan will host, jumping from any one of the dozen-plus simultaneous live events to taped interviews and conversations in the studio. Authors as diverse as the novelists Richard Ford and Emma Straub, the young adult author Judy Blume, the musician Questlove and the poet Mark Strand will be included.

The book industry has not "always been as aggressive about creating a media opportunity around their business," said Rich Fahle, the executive producer of the PBS coverage, who previously worked on Book TV's introduction and at Borders, the book retailer.

"We were looking for something a little bit different, with more energy," he said, adding that the fair was "an amazing collection of people and stories in one place."

Surveys show a high correlation between book buyers and public media consumers, said Rich Homberg, chief executive of Detroit Public Television, which developed the idea and is producing the coverage, supported in large part with a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

“Our audience loves ideas, they love books,” he said.

Mitchell Kaplan, a co-founder of the book fair, said the fair “jumped on it” when Detroit Public Television broached the idea. He said organizers hoped to work with the American Booksellers Association to make some of the coverage available for independent booksellers’ websites.

PBS.org, local station websites and BookViewNow.org, among others, will stream the live webcast, from 4 to 9 p.m. Nov. 21 and noon to 6 p.m. Nov. 22 and 23. PBS’s World channel will broadcast half-hour daily highlight programs on three evenings. All coverage will be archived and made available afterward on demand through PBS’s video apps, as well as on the websites.

Ira Rubenstein, senior vice president for PBS Digital, said he expected audiences in the thousands, not hundreds of thousands, for the live streams, but once “you cut it up and archive it on demand, that’s where you’ll see continued growth and use of it.”

A version of this article appears in print on November 10, 2014, on page B5 of the New York edition with the headline: PBS to Stream Live Coverage of Miami Book Fair.