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POV Launches Two New Tools: Interactive Bot and New Community Network Website

Digital Innovations Coincide with Launch of 30th Season on PBS

June 14, 2017 — New York, N.Y. — POV, American television's longest-running documentary series, launched two digital tools in June, unveiling a multiplatform bot, the POV Assistant, as well as a redesigned [Community Network](#) and Lending Library that further enhance the user experience for the more than 10,000 community organizers, station staffers and educators who use POV's free library of films for public screenings. The two projects coincide with POV's 30th season, premiering June 26 on PBS. They are the latest in the series' innovations on the web and the newest digital platforms; the Webby Award-winning POV Digital created PBS's first series website in 1995 and its first web series in 2002. The two newest digital tools help further POV's mission to make award-winning documentaries as accessible as possible to American audiences.

The POV Assistant is one of public media's first multiplatform bots, delivering information about 30 years of POV documentaries via Facebook Messenger, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa. POV Digital built the POV Assistant to be a dynamic technology that can be adapted to new assistant platforms as they come online.

The POV Assistant pulls from an exhaustive database of information on POV's 30-year history on PBS. It brings content from the POV website and its vast repository for documentary history to life in a conversational format.

The first version of the POV Assistant will offer an array of information, including broadcast schedules, streaming availability and film synopses. POV Digital will continue to add features, such as a search engine that recommends documentaries based on category. Explore the POV Assistant's features now on [Facebook Messenger](#), [Google Assistant](#) and [Amazon Alexa](#). Don't know what to say? Try the following:

What's coming up?
What's streaming?
Tell me about Dalya's Other Country.

In addition to introducing the interactive POV Assistant, POV recently relaunched the POV [Community Network](#) and Lending Library, a platform that community organizers, station staffers, educators and other engaged community members use to gain access to more than 90 POV feature documentaries, shorts and digital projects for free. Films in POV's current 30th anniversary season are available prior to their PBS broadcasts.

Produced by POV's Community Engagement and Education team, the POV [Community Network](#) presents a catalogue of resources that can be used to engage communities and classrooms in dialogue around the most pressing issues of our time, including more than 200 discussion guides, standards-aligned lesson plans with streaming film clips, reading lists and publicity materials. More than 90 films and digital projects are searchable by title or topic, and there is easy one-click access to film trailers.

A core part of POV's activities, the Community Engagement and Education team works with PBS stations, national organizations, community groups, educators and policymakers to organize free screenings and discussions before and after each film's broadcast date, extending the life of each documentary and building a robust, trusted resource library. Through the POV [Community Network](#), POV facilitates more than 700 screening events across the country every year.

"The launch of our POV Assistant and redesign of the Community Network couldn't come at a more appropriate time," said Justine Nagan, executive producer/executive director of POV/American Documentary. "As we enter our 30th broadcast season on PBS, our organization continues to find new and innovative ways to make essential documentaries available to all Americans, whether they watch our films via broadcast, online or at in-person screenings. These tools support audiences and community organizations seeking curated, quality media, and they help filmmakers looking to reach mass audiences of viewers across the country. Such technical investments will have lasting effects for years to come."

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Produced by American Documentary, Inc., POV is public television's premier showcase for nonfiction films. Since 1988, POV has been the home for the world's boldest contemporary filmmakers, celebrating intriguing personal stories that spark conversation and inspire action. Always an innovator, POV discovers fresh new voices and creates interactive experiences that shine a light on social issues and elevate the art of storytelling. With our documentary broadcasts, original online programming and dynamic community engagement campaigns, we are committed to supporting films that capture the imagination and present diverse perspectives.

POV films have won 36 Emmy® Awards, 19 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards®, the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award and the Prix Italia. The POV series has been honored with a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, three IDA Awards for Best Curated Series and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity. Learn more at www.pbs.org/pov/.

POV Community Engagement and Education (www.pbs.org/pov/engage/)

POV's Community Engagement and Education team works with educators, community organizations and PBS stations to present more than 650 free screenings every year. In addition, we distribute free discussion guides and standards-aligned lesson plans for each of our films. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

POV Digital (www.pbs.org/pov/)

Since 1994, POV Digital has driven new storytelling initiatives and interactive production for POV. The department created PBS's first program website and its first web-based documentary (*POV's Borders*) and has won major awards, including a Webby Award (and six nominations) and an Online News Association Award. POV Digital continues to explore the future of independent nonfiction media through its digital productions and the POV Hackathon lab, where media makers and technologists collaborate to reinvent storytelling forms. @povdocs on Twitter.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Corporation for Public Broadcasting and National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding comes from Nancy Blachman and David desJardins, Bertha Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, The Fledgling Fund, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Ettinger Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee, and public television viewers. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KQED San Francisco, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

