Merlin update - Producer headers and footers delayed

A quick update on the updated producer global header and new global media bar and footer. (See Changes to Producer Sites)

One of our goals of the global headers is to provide a universal search experience that provides a better experience for both producers and our customers. While PBS' current implementation of the Google Search experience provides customers with an adequate search experience, it does not leverage the power of Merlin's meta-data layer or COVE video system.

In order to successfully implement this new global header, we feel strongly that the search technology must be improved to include relevant results from Merlin and COVE. As a result, we are holding off on deploying the universal header until the search experience has been improved.

In order to minimize the impact of implementation on producers, we will also delay the release of the media bar and footer until the global header and search development work is complete.

Merlin will be best be leveraged through the use of the meta-data that has been attached to content objects. Current implementations of Google Search Appliance provide us with minimal capabilities to leverage that meta-data. Therefore, PBS is in the process of developing a new search solution in cooperation with Ramp (www.ramp.com). Ramp has a series of product offerings that will provide PBS.org with an enhanced search experience, these features will include:

- Advanced faceted search to enable us to filter results with "contextual" filters. IE, video duration, contextual keywords, programs...
- integrated search for all formats including page search, audio, and video
- automated video transcription which will provide us the with ability to present users with more relevant video results

Our current implementation currently has us targeting this fall for the rollout of search enhancements and header rollout.

We will also maintain our pledge to give producers as much lead time and testing time as possible for producers to test the new code for these global element.