

## Prospect Park pulls the plug on online soaps

Written by Linda Marshall-Smith  
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It is with a heavy heart that Soapdom reports today that Prospect Park, the visionary media production/distribution company seeking to bring not only full length soap opera programming to the internet via The Online Network, but comedy and primetime-esque shows as well, has pulled the plug after five months.

When ABC Daytime cancelled All My Children and One Life to Live earlier this year, it was the visionaries of Prospect Park who stepped up and said, we can do this online. It gave renewed hope to soap fans, created more buzz and discussion about the soap opera genre than I've seen in the 12.5 years that I have been covering the industry, and was revolutionary in paving the way for a new distribution channel for quality programming. It is so short-sighted on the part of the unions, guilds and other financial and technical entities not to have jumped on board for this groundbreaking venture.

Soapdom is honored to have met some of the amazing people at Prospect Park. We respect and applaud their vision and their efforts in attempting to get this off the ground, and can only hope that maybe, one day down the line, Prospect Park's vision will still become a reality.

Below is a statement from Rich Frank and Jeff Kwatinetz of Prospect Park..

After five months of negotiations with various guilds, hundreds of presentations to potential financial and technology partners, and a hope that we could pioneer a new network for the future, it is with great disappointment that we are suspending our aspirations to revive "One Life to Live" and "All My Children" via online distribution. It is now becoming clear that mounting issues make our ability to meet our deadlines to get OLTL on the air in a reasonable time period following its January 13, 2012 ABC finale impossible.

We believed the timing was right to launch an Online TV Network anchored by these two iconic soap operas, but we always knew it would be an uphill battle to create something historical, and unfortunately we couldn't ultimately secure the backing and clear all the hurdles in time. We believe we exhausted all reasonable options apparent to us, but despite enormous personal, as well as financial cost to ourselves, we failed to find a solution.

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While we narrowed in on a financial infrastructure, the contractual demands of the guilds, which regulate our industry, coupled with the program's inherent economic challenges ultimately led to this final decision. In the end, the constraints of the current marketplace, including the evolution and impact of new media on our industry simply proved too great a match for even our passion.

In our opinion, new models like this can only work with the cooperation of many people striving to make them happen, and we would like to thank and praise the numerous people who tried to help and showed us incredible support. We are extremely grateful to the fans and media who showed great support to us through this process, to ABC who did everything in their control to help, and we are especially grateful for the support and encouragement from many of the Soaps' cast and crew themselves.

We hope that our efforts are not lost, and that we somehow created a dialogue and movement on the feasibility of first run, network quality content online.

Of special note, we would like to thank Frank Valentini (Executive Producer), Ron Carlivati (Head Writer of OLTL), Agnes Nixon, many of the cast of OLTL including Michael Easton, Ted King, Kelley Missal, Melissa Archer, and of course Erika Slezak all of whom signed on quickly and did all they could to help, as well as our own Christine Sacani. Cameron Mathison and Lindsay Hartley also get our sincerest thanks for their support. We feel terrible we couldn't come through for them and we were very much looking forward to working together.