

2019 RTDNA/Hofstra University Newsroom Survey

Business of News

An introductory note, if you will. 2019 marks my 25th year conducting the RTDNA (before that, RTNDA) Annual Survey. First at Ball State University and now at Hofstra University. It has been my privilege to do this, and I want to thank RTDNA, Ball State and Hofstra for the support and opportunity to keep this going. Most of all, I want to thank all of you who spend what I know is way too much time poring over the way too many questions that I ask on this survey. Thank you.
- Bob Papper

MMJ Use is Actually Dropping by Bob Papper

They're called one-man-bands, multimedia (MMJ), backpack journalists and other names, and I've tracked their growth for more than a decade. Last year that relentless growth went from 2 to 3 points a year down to 1. This year, the RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that it reversed, and MMJ use is down by about 4 points. Both "mostly used" and "use some" are down 2 points each, and "not much" and "no" are up 3 points and 1 point, respectively.

Percentage of TV Newsrooms Reporting Using One-Man-Bands - 2019

	Yes, Mostly Use OMB	Yes, Use Some OMB	Yes, But Not Use Much	No, Do Not Use
All TV	54.9%	26.4%	11.2%	7.6%
Market size:				
1-25	19	38.1	23.8	19
26-50	23.8	45.2	14.3	16.7
51-100	58.7	28	8	5.3
101-150	71.4	17.5	7.9	3.2
151+	81.8	10.9	7.3	0
Staff size:				
51+	25.4	44.8	16.4	13.4
31-50	61.6	27.4	5.5	5.5
21-30	75.5	14.3	10.2	0
11-20	85.7	8.6	5.7	0
1-10	76.5	5.9	0	17.6

The "do not use" category rose for every market size except 151+, and "mostly use" dropped for markets 1-25, 51 – 100 and 101-150. Three of the five staff sizes dropped (51+, 21 – 30 and 1-10).

The tipping point for news reporter vs. MMJ is in markets 51 to 100. Bigger markets have more news reporters than MMJs, and markets smaller than that are overwhelmingly MMJs. In 51 to 100, the margin is 54 to 46 in favor of MMJs.

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About the Survey

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2018 among all 1,685 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,481 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,310 television stations (77.7%) and 645 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,938 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting it from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.