

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

Little Change in Web Staffing ... Both TV and Radio by Bob Papper

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that, overall, full time web staffing slipped slightly in **TV** in the last year, with all market sizes under the top 25 going down 0.1 to 0.3 points. Part time rose a bit, so total web staffing actually went up even as full time staffing slid back. **Radio** web staffing is virtually unchanged from a year ago.

How many people work on the digital side? 2019

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
All TV	2.7	1.2	3.7
Markets 1-25	4.9	2.2	7.4
Markets 26-50	3.8	0.7	4.3
Markets 51-100	2.7	0.9	3.4
Markets 101-150	2.1	1.6	3.6
Markets 151+	1.2	1.1	2.2
All Radio	0.9	0.7	1.6
Major Market	1.7	0.6	2.3
Large Market	1	0.6	1.6
Medium Market	0.8	0.6	1.4
Small Market	0.5	0.8	1.4
Commercial	0.8	0.7	1.5
Non-commercial	1.1	0.6	1.7

Surprisingly, total TV digital staffing is down, with both overall full-time and part-time staffing each sliding by a tenth of a point. There are no consistent patterns across market or staff sizes, and no significant differences by network affiliation or geography.

Radio digital staffing was absolutely flat this past year. Full-time edged up a tenth of a point; part-time fell by the same amount; and the total remained exactly the same. Digital staffing also flattened out by market size. Major and large markets both dropped back a bit, but medium markets went up, and small markets stayed the same. The more stations in a group, the larger the digital staff is likely to be.

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Do other staffers help on the web? 2019

All TV	77.1%
Markets 1-25	61.5
Markets 26-50	74.5
Markets 51-100	72.3
Markets 101-150	85.4
Markets 151+	87.2
All Radio	78.3%
Major Market	68.8
Large Market	81.9
Medium Market	79.3
Small Market	79.9
Commercial	73.5
Non-commercial	86.7

TV news staff participation in the web edged down a point from last year ... having edged up a point and a half the year before. None of the changes were particularly striking.

Radio rose by almost 6 points overall. Major markets dropped sharply, but all other market sizes went up. Non-commercial staff participation on the digital size was higher than at commercial stations, but no other variables made any meaningful difference.

In radio, major markets are those with 1 million or more potential listeners. Large markets are from 250,000 to 1 million. Medium markets are 50,000 to 250,000. Small markets are fewer than 50,000.

Bob Papper is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Journalism at Hofstra University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. This research was supported by the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University and the Radio Television Digital News Association.

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.