

## 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

### Radio Website Profitability Little Changed by Bob Papper

The best news that the latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found on website profitability in radio is a 5-point drop in the percentage of stations reporting a loss. Unfortunately, none of that drop shifted into the profit column; it went into the don't know category. The percentage reporting website profitability held largely steady: down 1 point. There were no gains in profitability by market size; the largest and smallest markets had the biggest drops in the loss category.

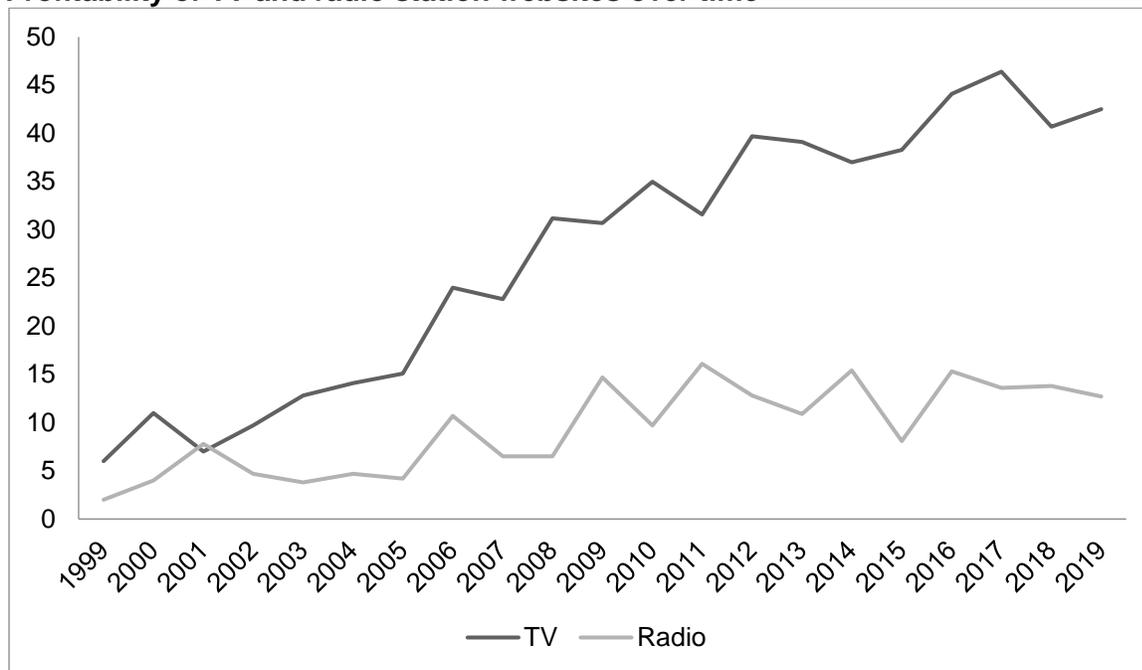
#### Is the radio website making money? 2019

	Profit	Breaking Even	Loss	Don't Know
All Radio	12.7%	17.8%	7.7%	61.8%
Major Market	14.3	12.5	1.8	71.4
Large Market	9.2	13.8	9.2	67.7
Medium Market	16.9	14.4	10.2	58.5
Small Market	9.1	27.3	7.1	56.6

A year ago, the Midwest tended to do better than elsewhere; this year, all areas were about the same except the Northeast – which was lower than all the rest.

## Business of News

Profitability of TV and radio station websites over time



The general upward trajectory in TV is pretty clear; so is radio's up and down ride.

### Paywalls

Over the years, 97 to 98 percent of radio stations have not had a paywall. This year, that edged up to 99.1%. I found no radio paywalls in the largest or smallest markets ... or in the Northeast or the West. Of those without paywalls, 98.4% said they are not considering one. That continues a general upward trend – although there isn't a big upside at this point.

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.