

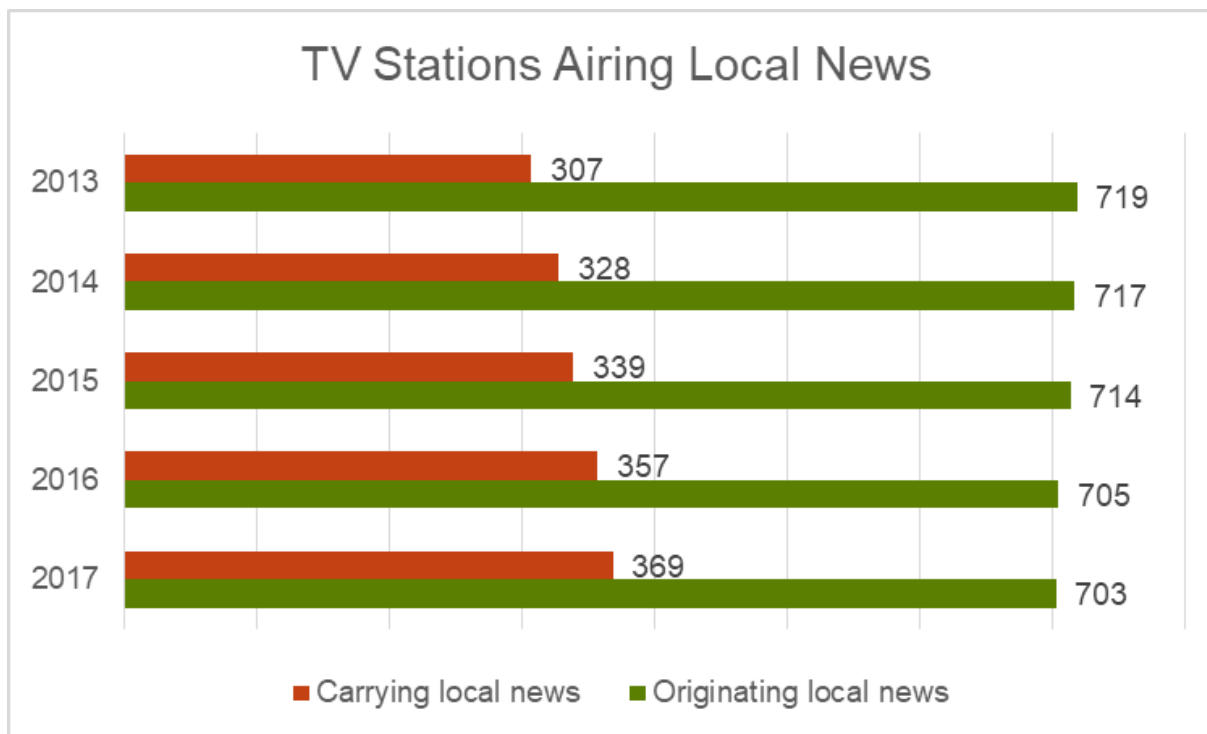
2018 Local News Research

- TV Newsroom consolidation slowed somewhat and local news ran a record high number of stations.
- The hours of local TV news remains at an all-time high.
- Commercial radio stations aired a median of 50% more local news than non-commercial stations, as did stations with 3 or more news staffers vs those with smaller staffs.
- Local radio groups are increasingly coordinating and running local news, while fewer are getting news from outside sources.

Contents:

- TV Stations Carrying News
- Hours of Local TV News
- TV Newscast Changes
- TV News Partnerships
- Radio Stations Carrying Local News
- Locally-Produced Radio News
- Radio News from Outside Services

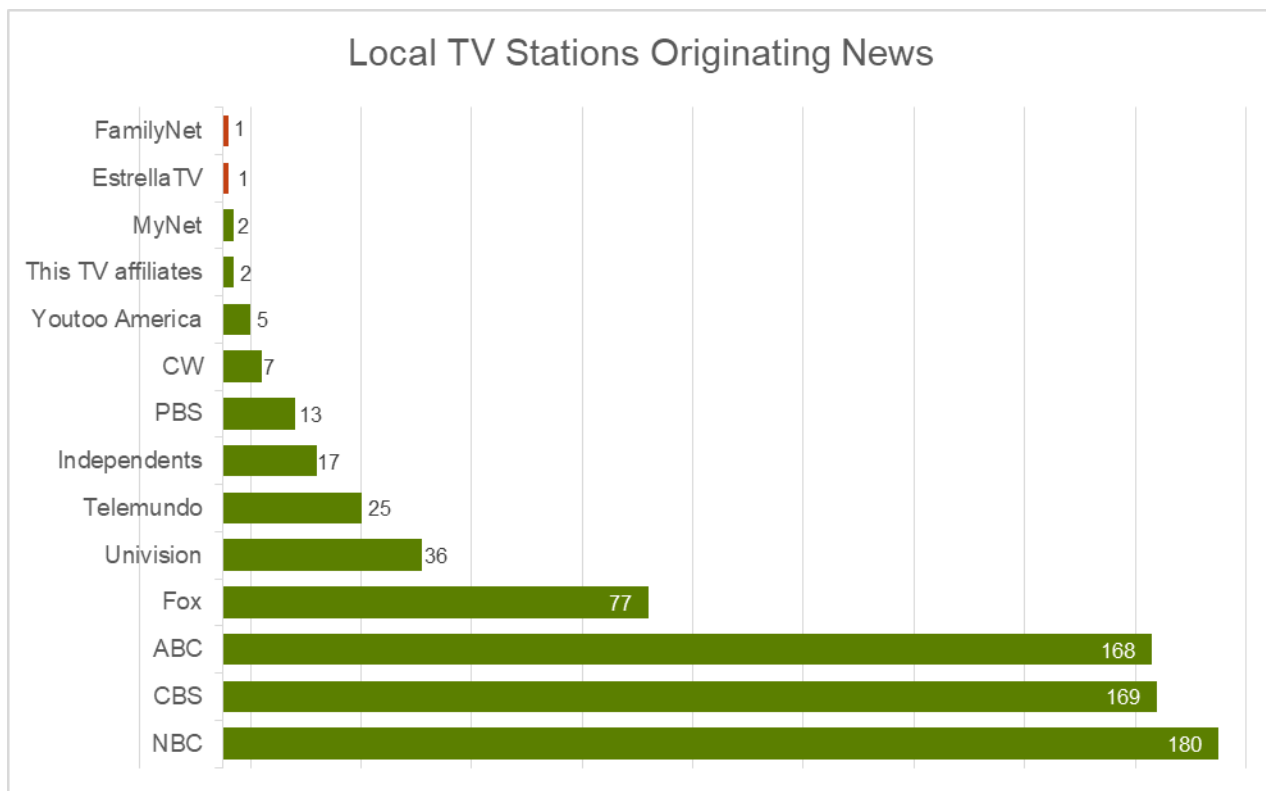
The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that the number of TV stations originating local news slowed its yearly decline this past year, down two to 703. Because of consolidation, the number of TV newsrooms had been falling by an average of seven per year. A year ago, the total number dropped from 714 to 705.



The 703 TV stations run news on those and another 369 stations. The latter number is another new, all-time high, up a dozen from last year's 357. That puts the total number of stations running local news at a record 1,072, up ten from a year ago. This total keeps increasing, but it's doing so because a smaller number of newsrooms are running news on more and more outlets.

Local News by the Numbers

For those keeping score by affiliation, here's how those 703 newsrooms break down:



Up from last year:

- Fox: Up 5
- NBC: Up 3 (after being down for the last two years)
- Youtoo America: Up 4
- Telemundo: Up 2
- Spanish-language independents: Up 2
- EstrellaTV: New to the list
- FamilyNet: New to the list

Down from last year:

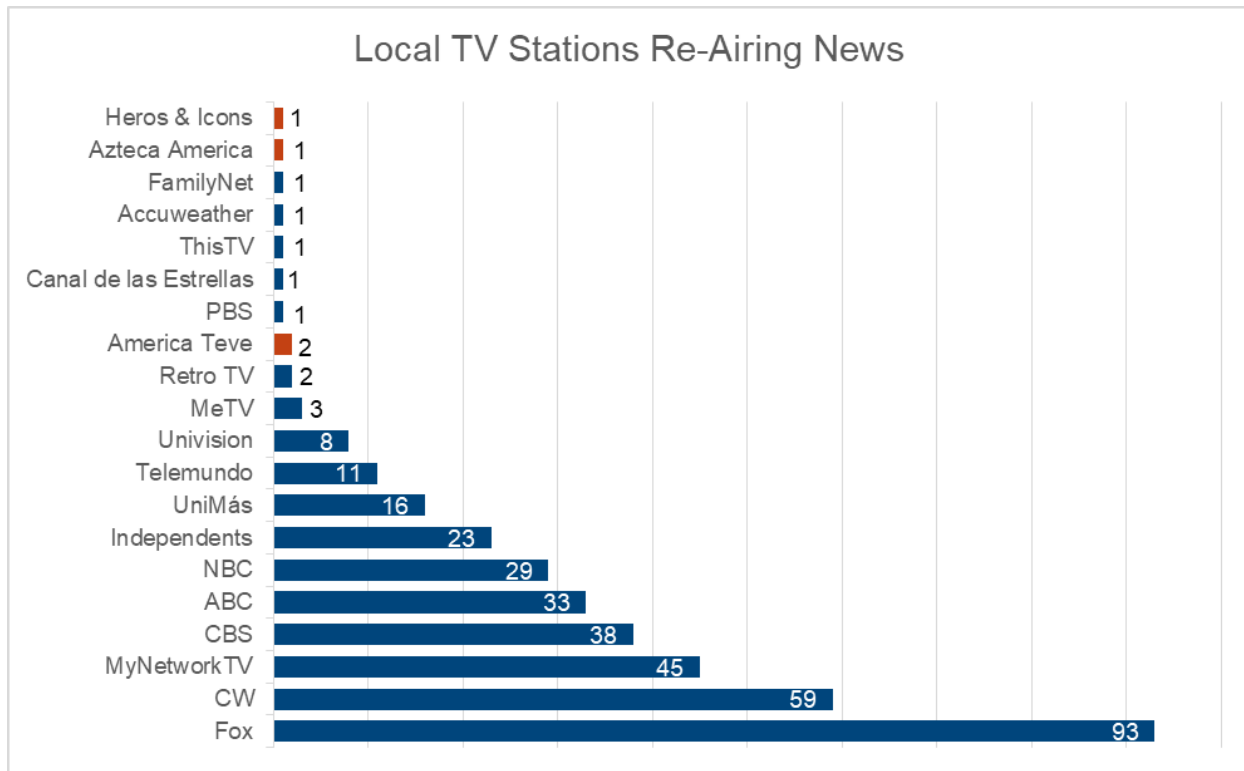
- Independents: Down 9
- CBS: Down 3
- CW: Down 2
- ABC: Down 1

Staying the same: Univision, PBS, This TV, and MyNet

Local TV Stations Originating News		
Number	Affiliation	Change from 2016
180	NBC	+ 3
169	CBS	-3
168	ABC	-1
77	Fox	+5
36	Univision	-
25	Telemundo	+2
17	Independents	-9
13	PBS	-
7	CW	-2
5	Youtoo America	+4
2	This TV affiliates	-
2	MyNet	-
1	EstrellaTV	New
1	FamilyNet	New

Local News by the Numbers

Here's how the 369 stations that get news from another station break down:



The big change from a year ago involves 5 Fox affiliates producing their own news instead of getting it from another station.

The survey shows no daily weekday local news on the following affiliates:

Number	Affiliation	Change from 2016
158	PBS	-5 *
60	ion stations	+1
43	MyNet	-5
29	CW	-5 **
9	Univision	-1
7	Telemundo	-1
6	Fox	-1
6	UniMás	-
4	CBS	-1
2	ABC	-
2	NBC	-1

* Stations that gave up their frequencies

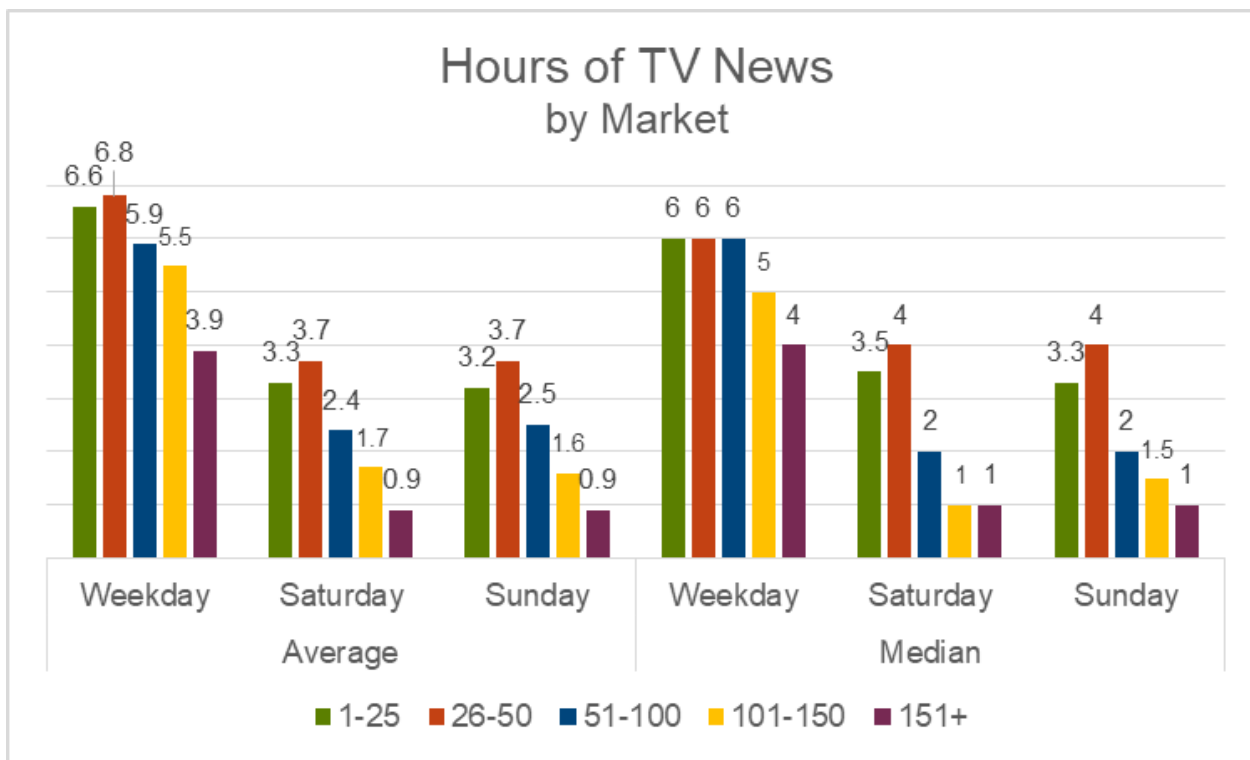
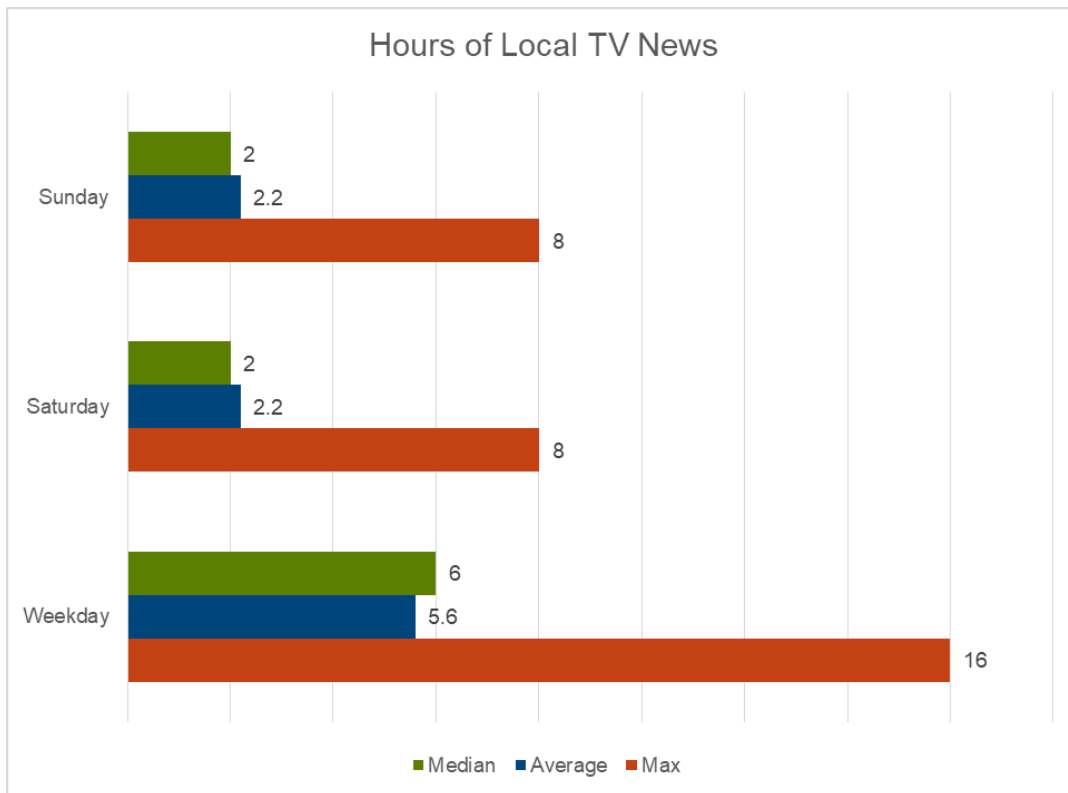
** Down 13 over the last 3 years

Number	Affiliation	Change from 2016
93	Fox	-6
59	CW	+6
45	MyNetworkTV	+4
38	CBS	+1
33	ABC	+1
29	NBC	+2
23	Independents	+3
16	UniMás	-
11	Telemundo	+1
8	Univision	+2
3	MeTV	-2
2	Retro TV	-
2	America Teve	New
1	PBS	-1
1	Canal de las Estrellas	-
1	ThisTV	-
1	Accuweather	-
1	FamilyNet	-
1	Azteca America	New
1	Heros & Icons	New

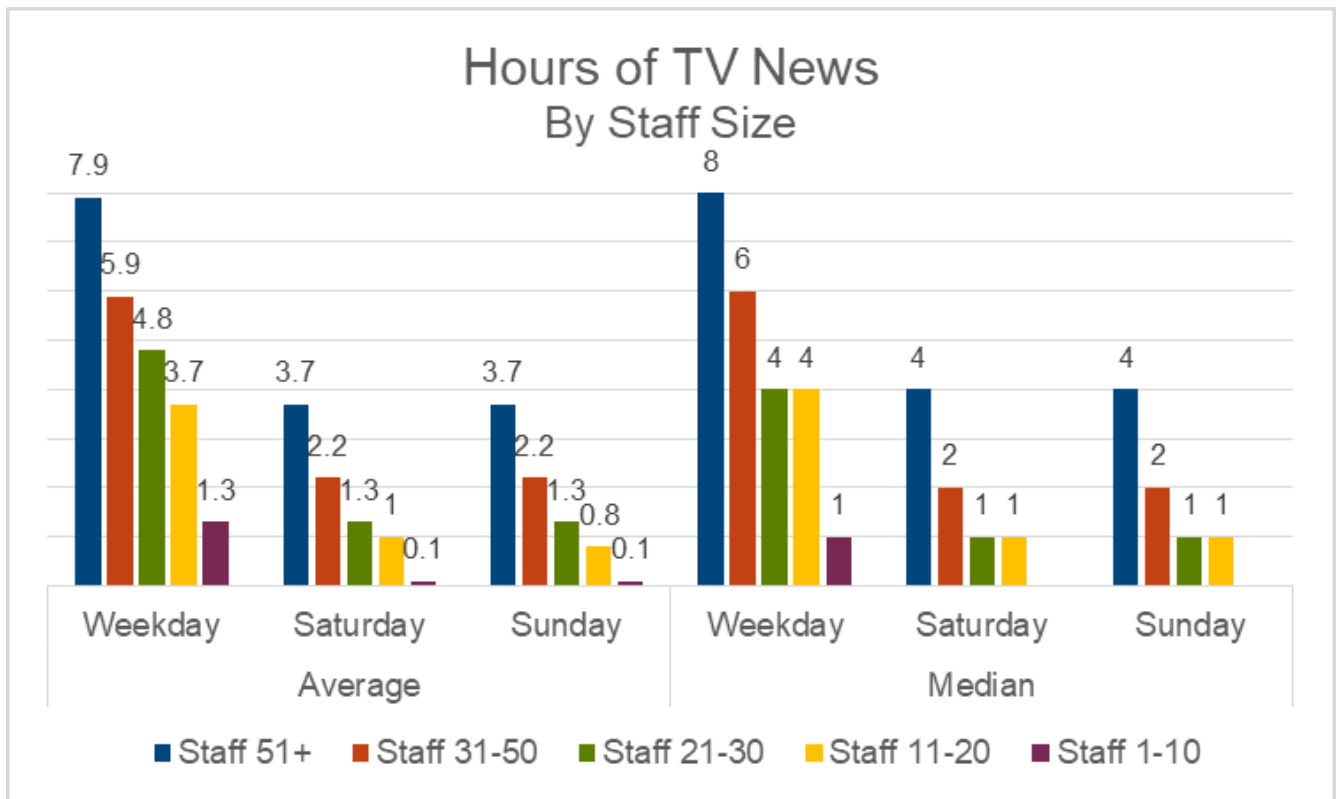
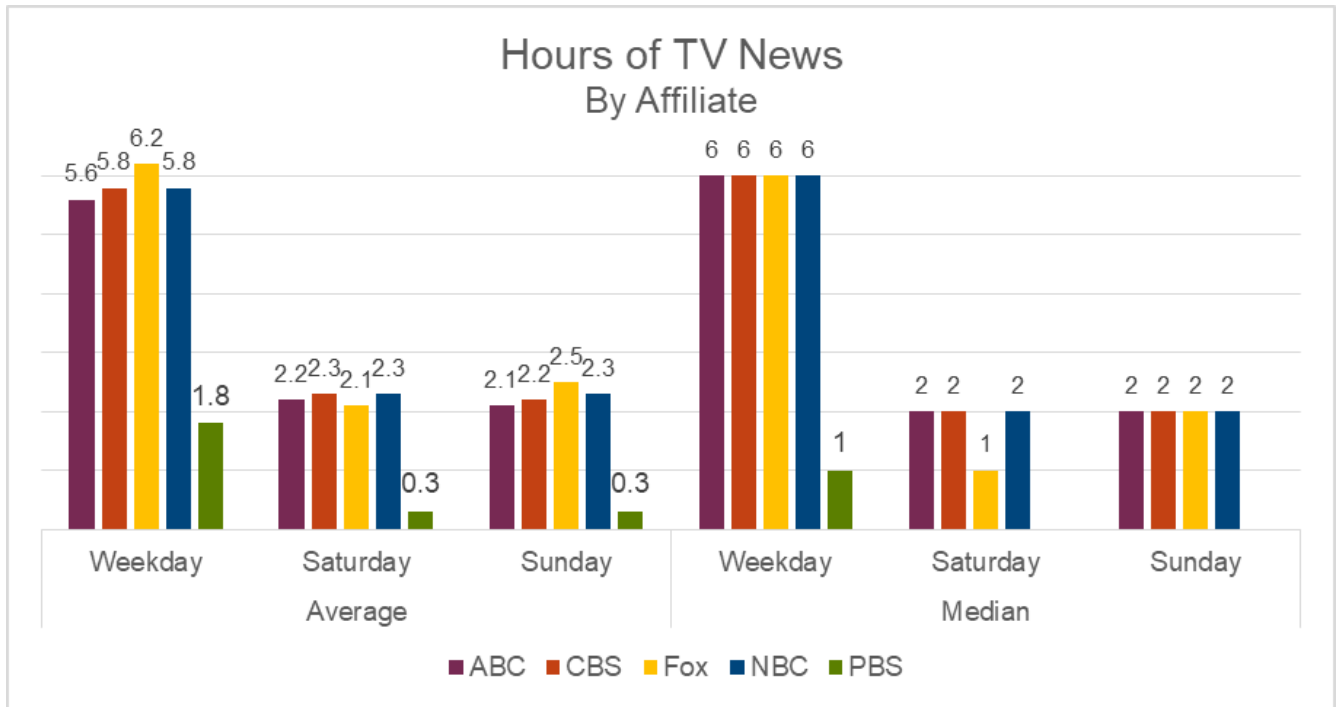
Local News by the Numbers

Hours of Local TV News

The amount of local news on TV stayed essentially the same this year as last year's record high. The average on weekdays slid by 12 minutes with Saturday and Sunday up by 12 minutes each. The medians for weekday and weekend remained exactly the same. The numbers would have edged up except for some retrenchment in the smallest markets.



Local News by the Numbers

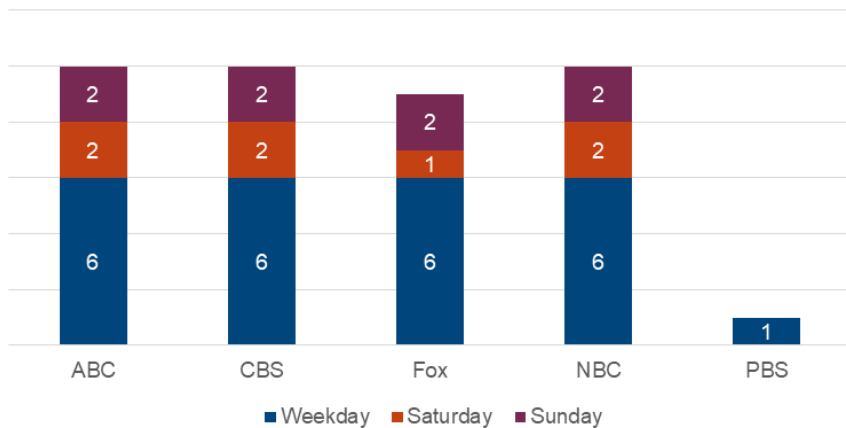


Local News by the Numbers

	Average weekday	Median weekday	Weekday maximum	Average Saturday	Median Saturday	Saturday maximum	Average Sunday	Median Sunday	Sunday maximum
All TV news	5.6	6	16	2.2	2	8	2.2	2	8
Big four affiliates (ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox)	5.8	6	16	2.3	2	7	2.2	2	8
Other commercial	4.5	2.8	15.5	2.2	1	8	2	1	8
Affiliation	Average weekday	Median weekday	Weekday maximum	Average Saturday	Median Saturday	Saturday maximum	Average Sunday	Median Sunday	Sunday maximum
ABC	5.6	6	16	2.2	2	7	2.1	2	7
CBS	5.8	6	11	2.3	2	6	2.2	2	6
Fox	6.2	6	12.5	2.1	1	6.5	2.5	2	7
NBC	5.8	6	12	2.3	2	6	2.3	2	8
PBS	1.8	1	8	0.3	0	2	0.3	0	2
Market Size	Average weekday	Median weekday	Weekday maximum	Average Saturday	Median Saturday	Saturday maximum	Average Sunday	Median Sunday	Sunday maximum
1-25	6.6	6	15.5	3.3	3.5	8	3.2	3.3	7.5
26-50	6.8	6	12	3.7	4	8	3.7	4	8
51-100	5.9	6	12	2.4	2	6	2.5	2	8
101-150	5.5	5	10	1.7	1	5	1.6	1.5	5
151+	3.9	4	16	0.9	1	4	0.9	1	8
Staff Size	Average weekday	Median weekday	Weekday maximum	Average Saturday	Median Saturday	Saturday maximum	Average Sunday	Median Sunday	Sunday maximum
Staff 51+	7.9	8	15.5	3.7	4	8	3.7	4	8
Staff 31-50	5.9	6	10	2.2	2	5	2.2	2	6
Staff 21-30	4.8	4	10	1.3	1	5	1.3	1	5
Staff 11-20	3.7	4	16	1	1	4	0.8	1	2
Staff 1-10	1.3	1	2	0.1	0	1	0.1	0	1

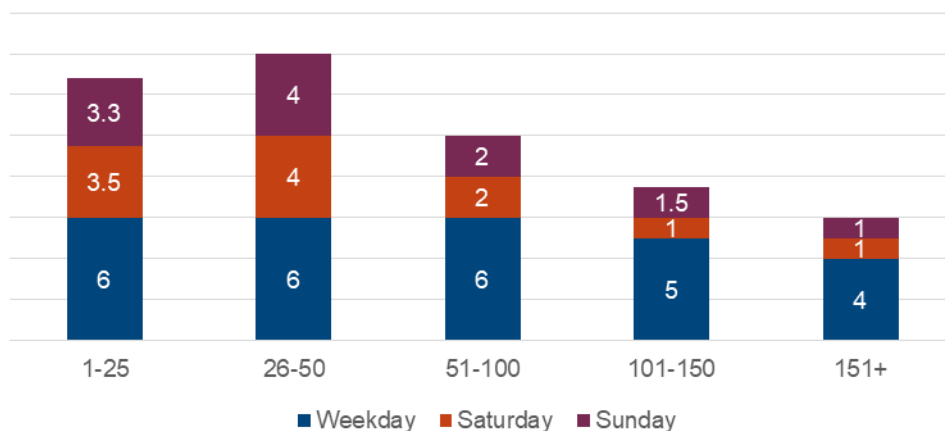
Local News by the Numbers

Median Hours of Local News By Affiliate

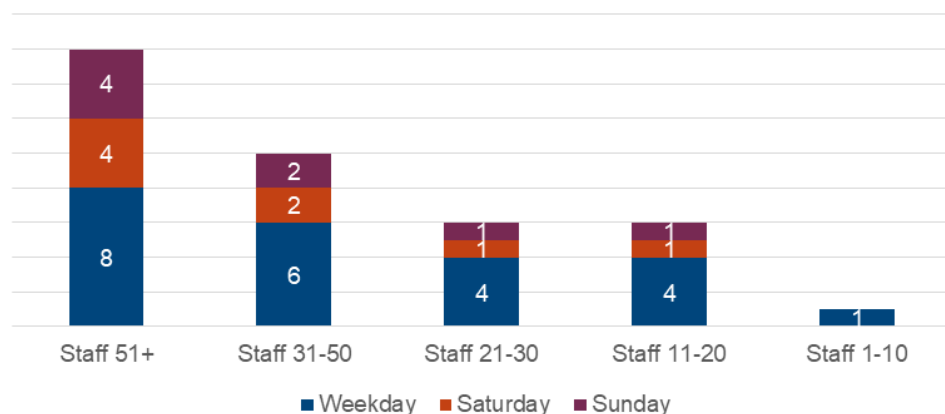


Generally, the bigger the market and the bigger the news staff, the more news a TV station is likely to run, as always.

Median Hours of Local News By Market



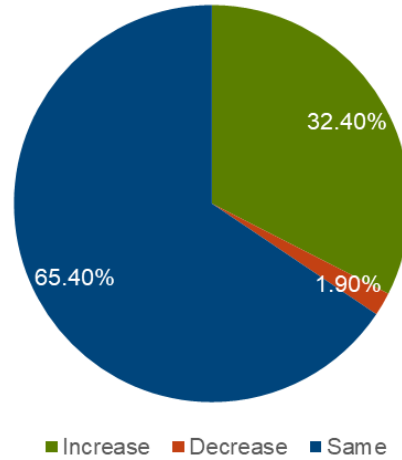
Median Hours of Local News By Staff Size



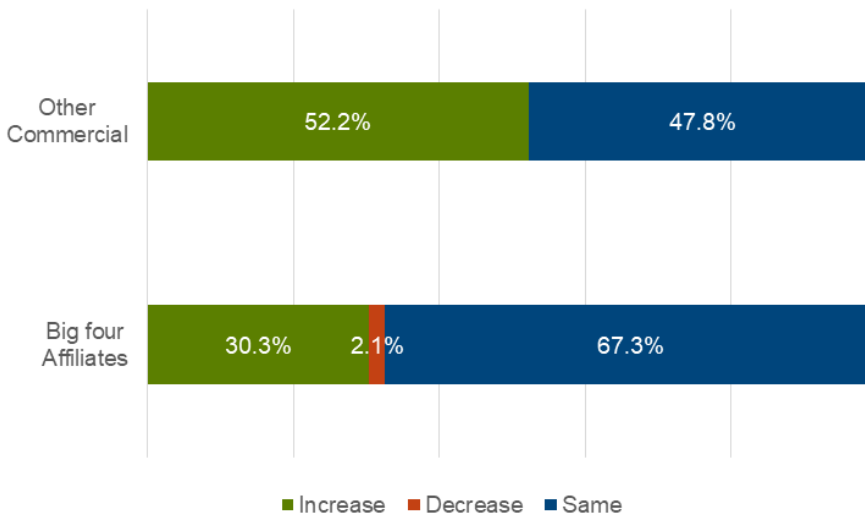
Local News by the Numbers

How have stations changed the amount of local TV news they're broadcasting?

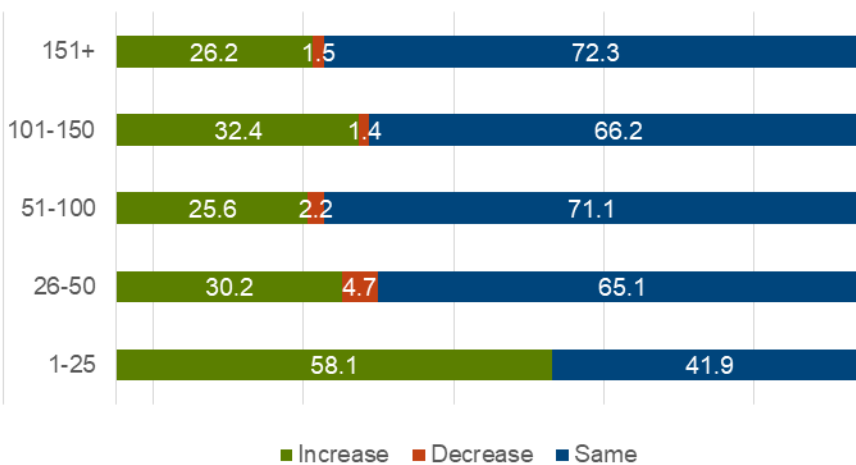
The number of hours of news did not change in the past year at nearly two-thirds of all stations, although a majority of top 25 market stations increased the amount of news. Almost no one cut back. Fox affiliates were more likely to add news, and stations in the Midwest were a bit less likely to increase news.



Changes by Affiliation

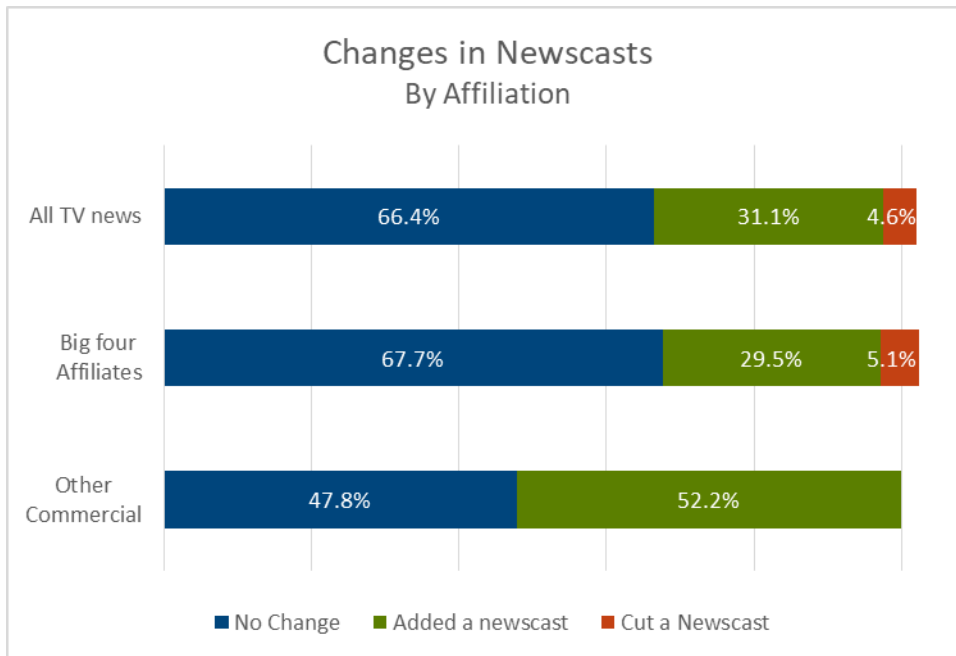


Changes by Market



Local News by the Numbers

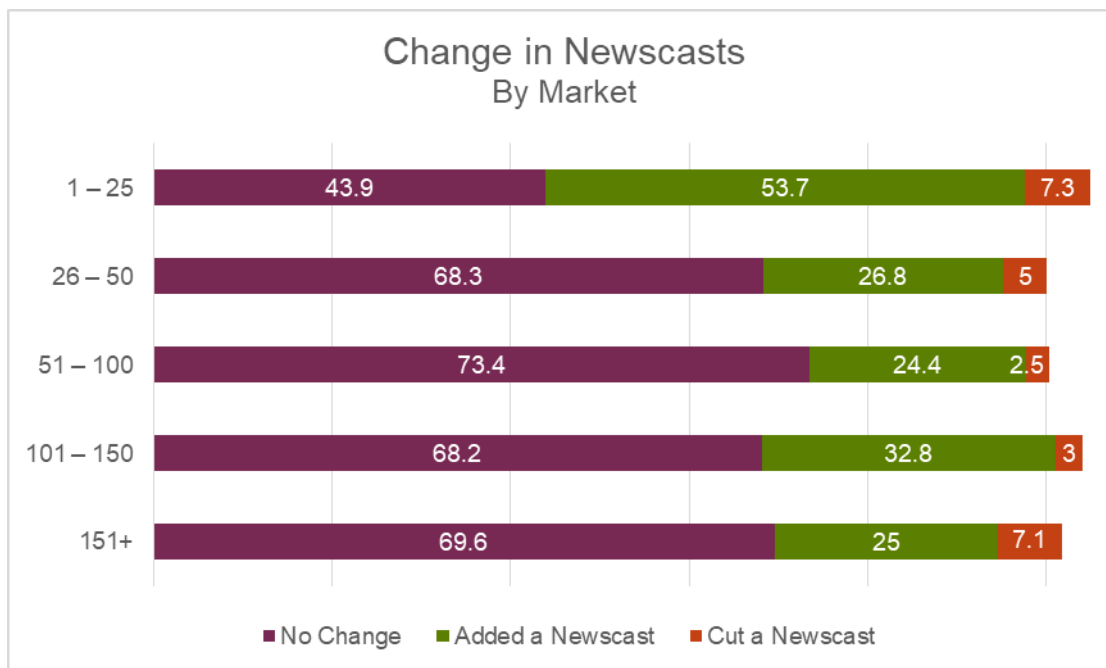
Changes in TV newscasts in the past year



Overall, two-thirds of TV stations neither added nor cut any newscasts. That's up almost 10 points from a year ago.

For the third year in a row, added newscasts were all over the schedule. For the third year in a row, weekdays from 4 pm to 6 pm led the way, just edging out weekday late evening newscasts, weekdays 6 pm to 7 pm and middays between 11 am to 1 pm. Right

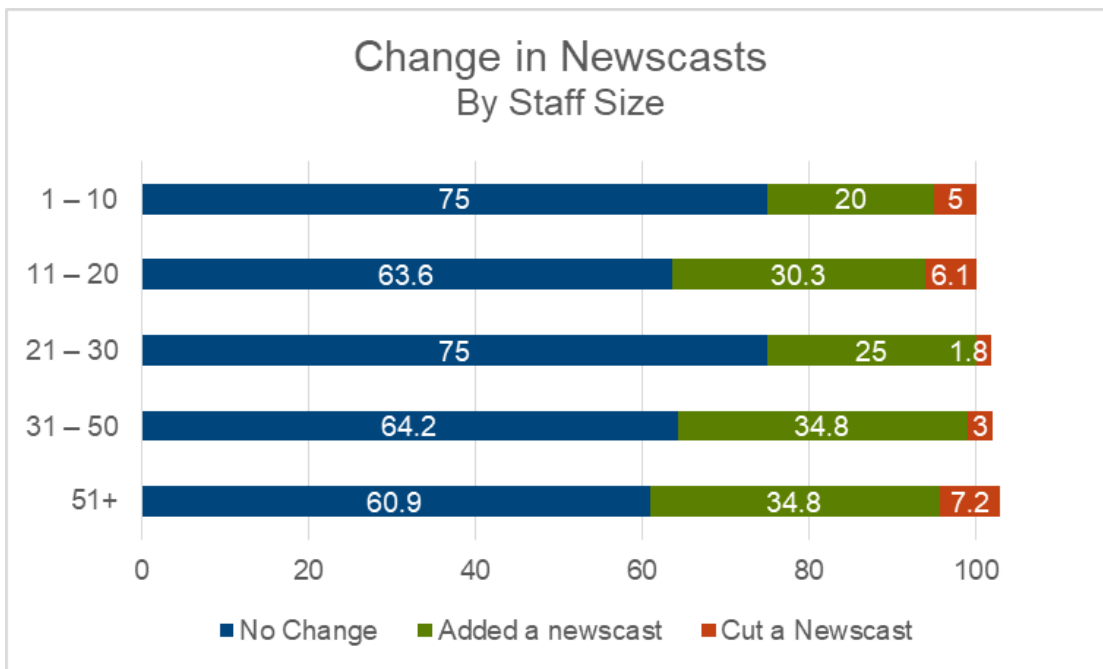
behind came weekday mornings from 6 am to 8 am and then weekend mornings. Even 8 pm to 9 pm got a couple votes.



Only a dozen news directors noted newscasts they had cut, with few cuts to note. Weekdays from 4 pm to 6 pm topped the list at four, followed by weekdays late evening and then miscellaneous others.

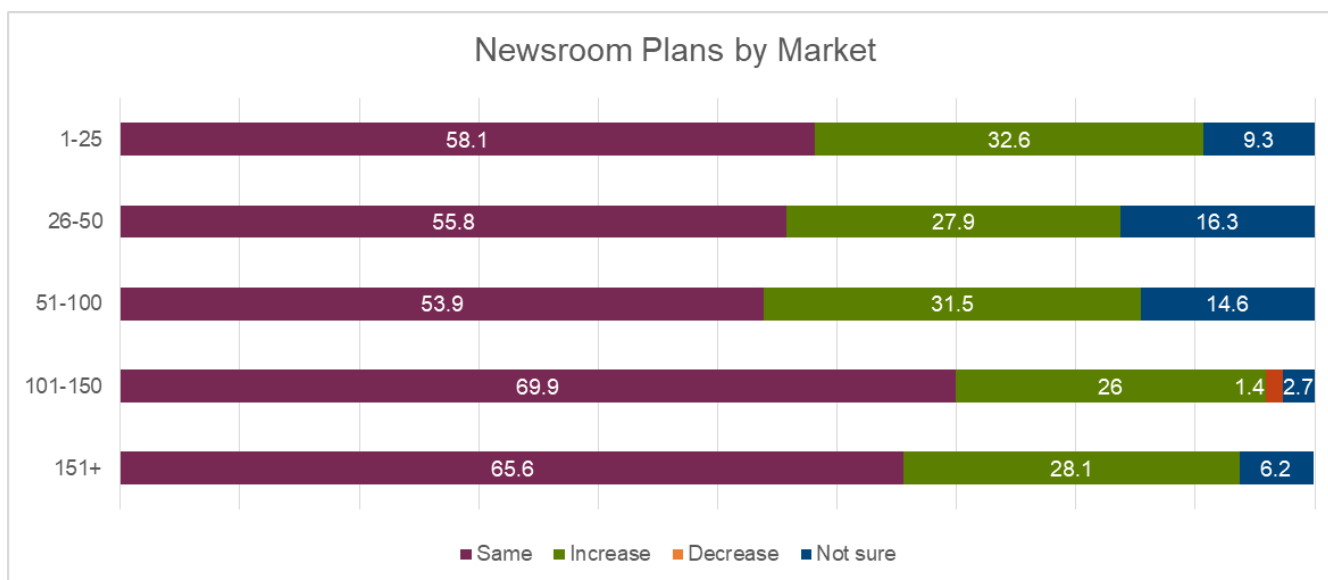
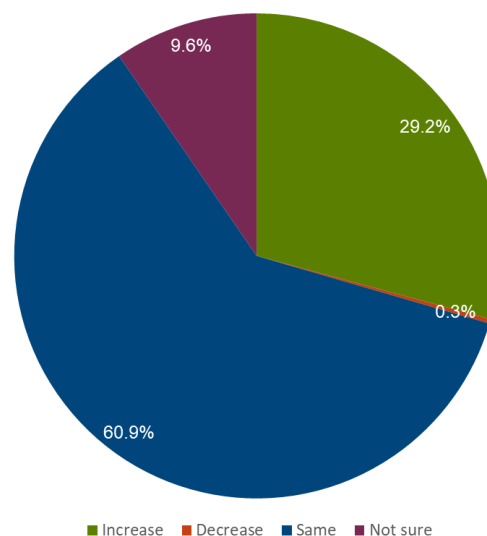
Note that totals will not add up to 100% because some stations both added and cut.

Local News by the Numbers



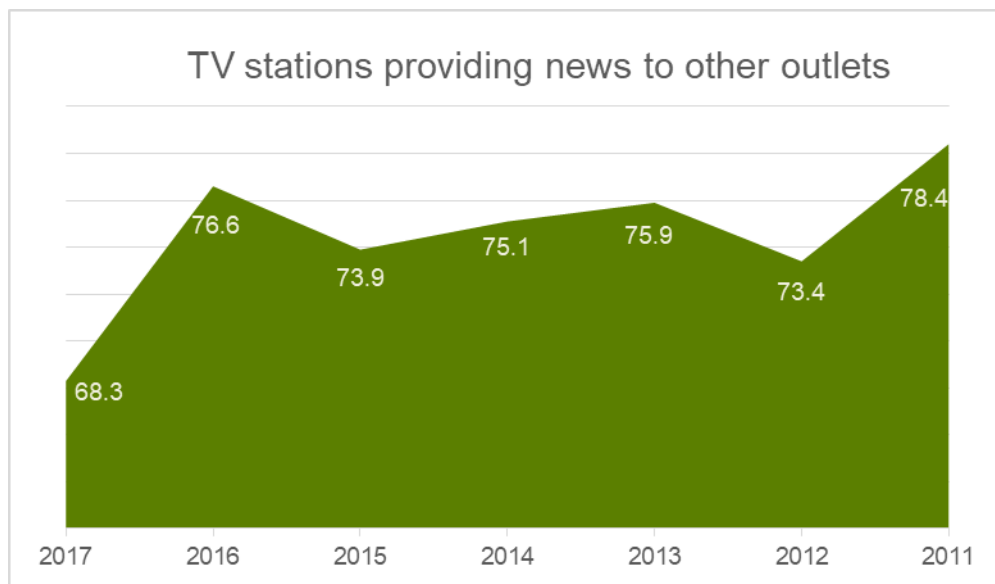
News plans for the next year

Historically, this data has been a pretty good predictor. It was off three years ago – underestimating growth – but has been on target since. For the coming year, the majority of stations expect no change, but the percentage of stations expecting to add news is up 5 points from a year ago. As with last year, Fox affiliates are most likely to expect to add news. That turned out to be accurate a year ago, so we can probably expect a repeat this coming year.

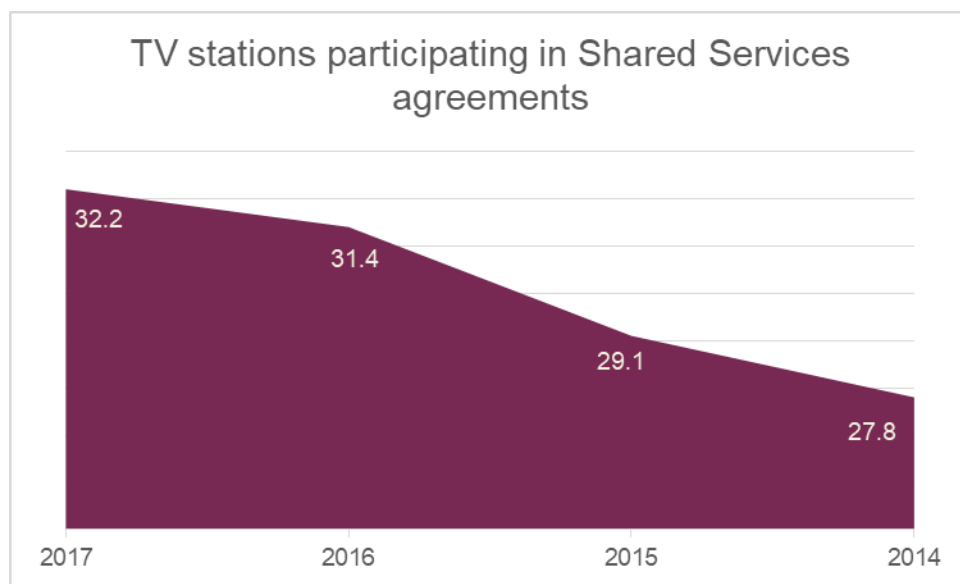


TV News Partnerships

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey continues to show that the TV news business isn't limited to TV anymore, but the numbers continue to show a stabilization in the outside reach of a TV newsroom; maybe even a decline. The percentage of stations involved with other media is down from a year ago. Last year, 76.6% of TV stations provided news to others; this year, that percentage dropped to 68.3%. The percentage has been about three-quarters for the last nine years, peaking at 78.4% in 2011. We'll find out next year if this is just an anomaly or a real trend.



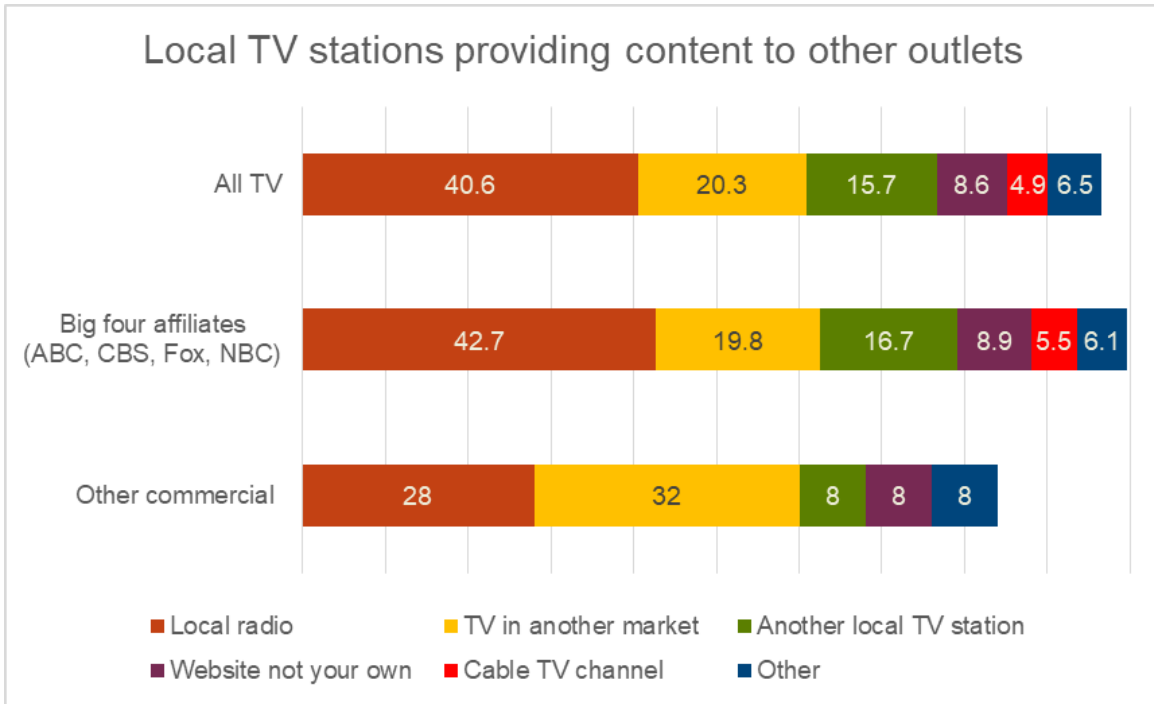
All told, 32.2% of TV stations reported being involved in a Shared Services (or similar) arrangement with another station. That's up nearly a point from a year ago, following increases of 2.3 last year and 1.3 the year before. By market size, 26 to 50 continues to lag way behind all the other market clusters. More than 40% of stations in markets 101+ are involved in a Shared Services or similar arrangement (40.8% for markets 100 to 150 and 45.5% for markets 151+).



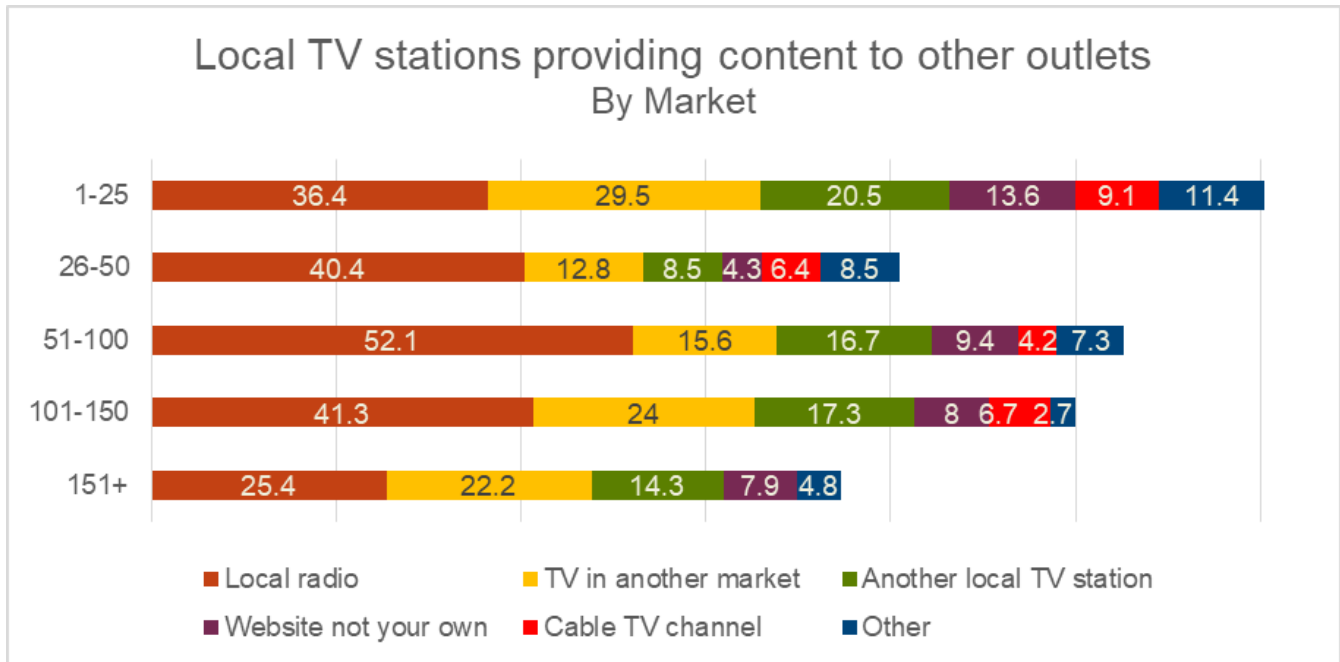
Local News by the Numbers

Of the stations involved in a Shared Services (or similar) arrangement, the average station supplied content to 1.7 other stations, down very slightly from last year, but the median (most common) number continues to be one. The maximum number of TV stations in a local cluster was 5 – that’s up one from a year ago.

As indicated, there are now 703 local TV newsrooms that run news on those and another 369 stations. The 703 total is down two from a year ago, but the latter number is a new all-time high -- up from last year's 357. That puts the total number of stations running local news at a record 1,072.



Local News by the Numbers



Every category decreased this year compared to last year, except slightly more stations are supplying news to a cable TV channel. Patterns were hard to come by, although stations in top 25 markets shared more in every category, but those increases were overcome by largely uniform drops in all other market sizes. There were also no consistent patterns by staff size, affiliation or geography.

Most of the “other” responses were either other stations within the company or local newspapers. Then there were scattered responses like Amazon’s Alexa, Roku and a station’s own digital channel.

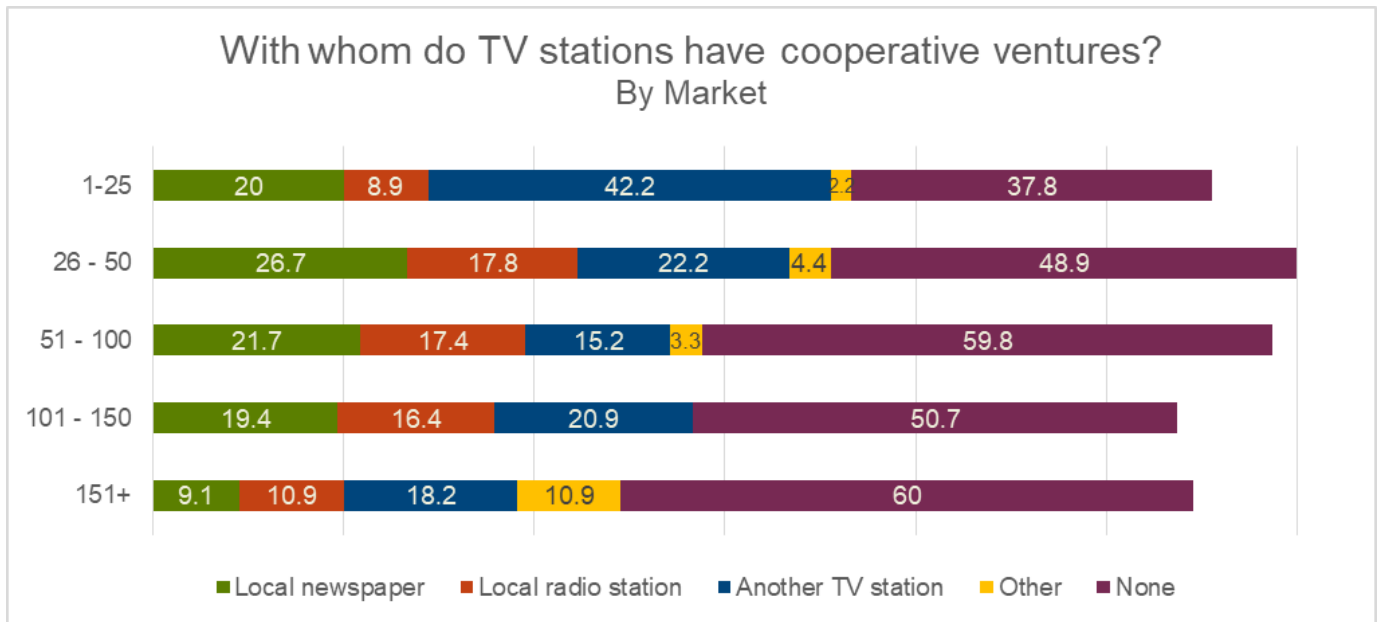
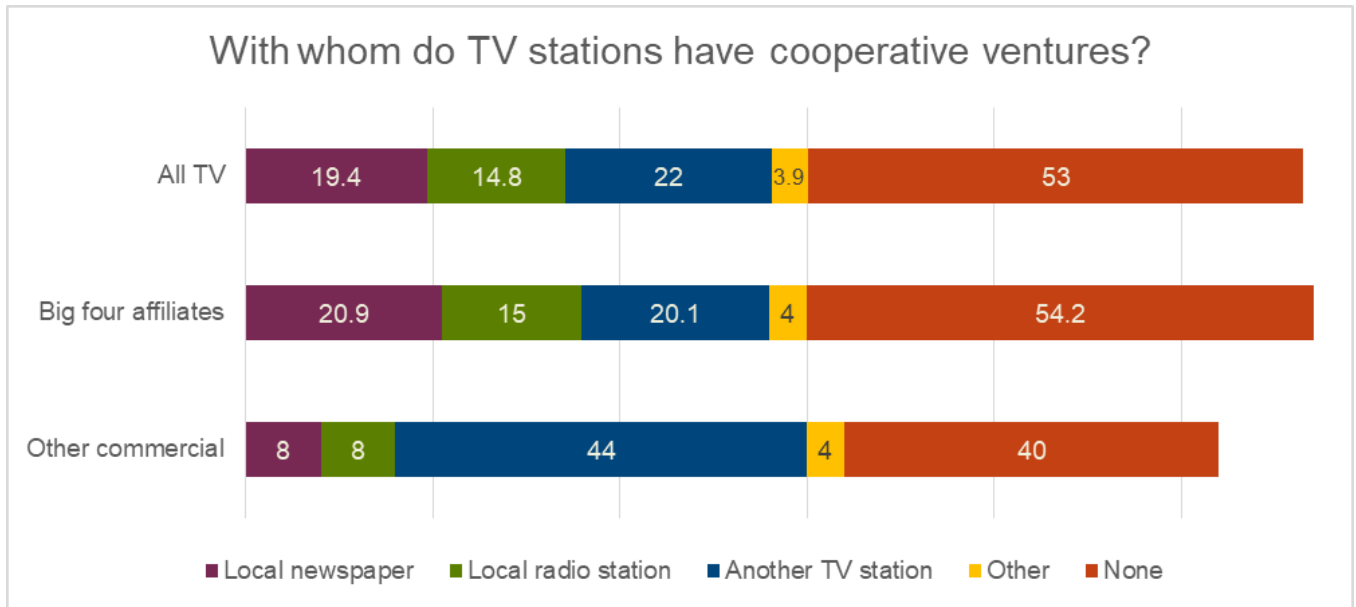
Stations and cooperative ventures

The data above deals with TV stations supplying news to other media. Now we’ll look at cooperative ventures among media outlets.

We started asking about cooperative ventures in 2008 as stations responded to recessionary pressures by sharing costs to save money. Most stations participated. The question has always been, would that continue when the economy improved?

The answer is yes, but noticeably less so. This is the fourth year in a row where a minority of stations have been involved in a cooperative venture, but the percentage is up 3 from a year ago to 47%. Cooperative ventures with newspapers are identical to a year ago; local radio agreements are down 2 and agreements with other TV stations are up 6.

Local News by the Numbers

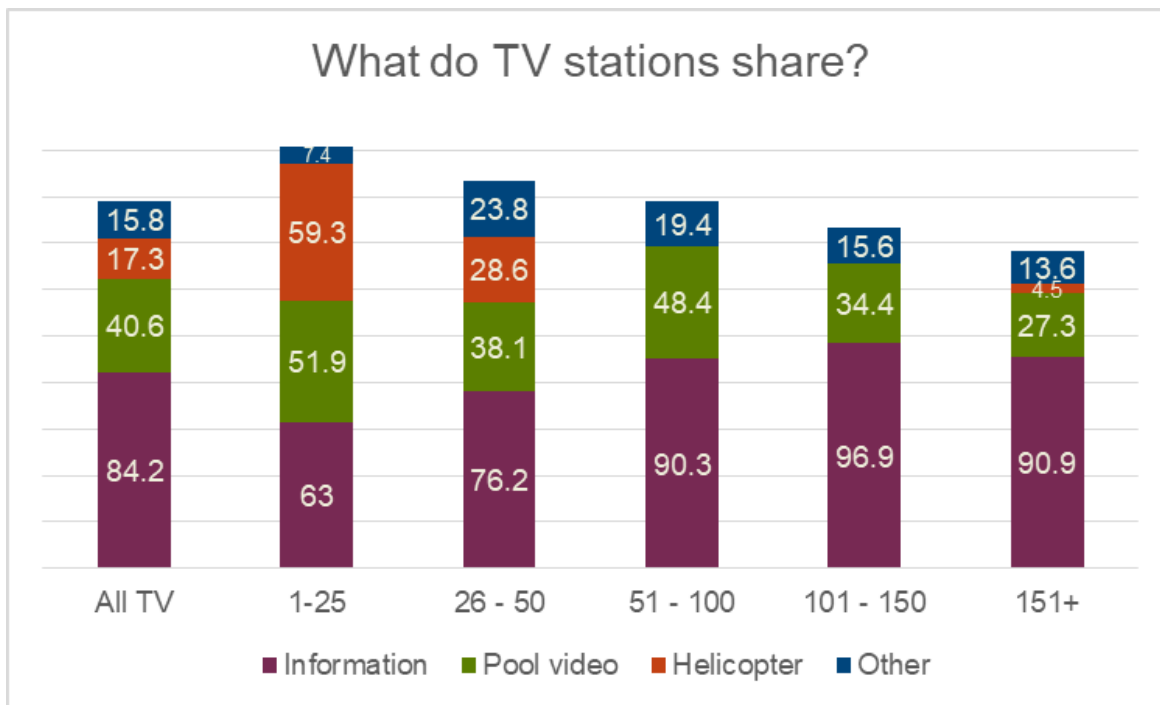


"Other" included other stations in a group, a website, a network or a non-profit investigative organization.

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because some stations have cooperation agreements with multiple types of other outlets.

Local News by the Numbers

For those stations that are involved with cooperative agreements, I asked:



Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because some stations share multiple resources.

Every category of sharing increased this year, after mostly heading down a year ago. Pool video went up 8 points; information went up 3; and helicopter rose close to 1. Most of the "other" category involved video, photos, weather and stories.

The percentage of stations *not* involved in a cooperative venture but planning or discussing one remained in single digits at 9.4%. That's up slightly from a year ago. Those planning or discussing were most often in the biggest markets, especially at non big four network affiliates.

New local programming to replace syndicated shows

Five years ago, I asked whether stations were broadcasting or developing new local programming to replace syndicated shows. And, if so, what? Almost three-quarters (72.7%) said no, but 18.4% said they're already broadcasting such shows and half that number (9%) said they were developing them.

It was clearly a top 50 market enterprise among stations with 31 or more news employees, but the development of new shows was also reaching into other markets and stations. At the top of the program list: local soft news/lifestyle type shows. Just behind that, regular newscasts. Farther back: Programs resembling advertising vehicles, including product placement and paid segments. Also, local sports and some miscellaneous semi-syndicated material. Then it was just a smattering here and there: "news you can use," health and exercise, public affairs, cooking, retirement or senior living, documentaries. Several stations said they're still looking at options or just in development.

That was then. Five years later, the numbers haven't changed significantly. The percentage saying no dropped from 72.7% to 69.8%. That's not much change. And the same percentage

Local News by the Numbers

said they were already broadcasting programs (18%). The others (12.2%) are developing those new shows.

The biggest difference in five years is that the group already broadcasting or developing new programs initially involved almost all bigger stations in top 50 markets. Today, it's surprisingly even across the board, except for the very smallest newsrooms.

Of the better part of a hundred shows already on or in development, 27% were lifestyle shows (of which several news directors noted they included a strong sales element); 17% were local sports; 14% were news/talk/interview; 9% were news programs; the rest varied from entertainment, education, political, arts and culture, agriculture and company-produced programs or program concepts.

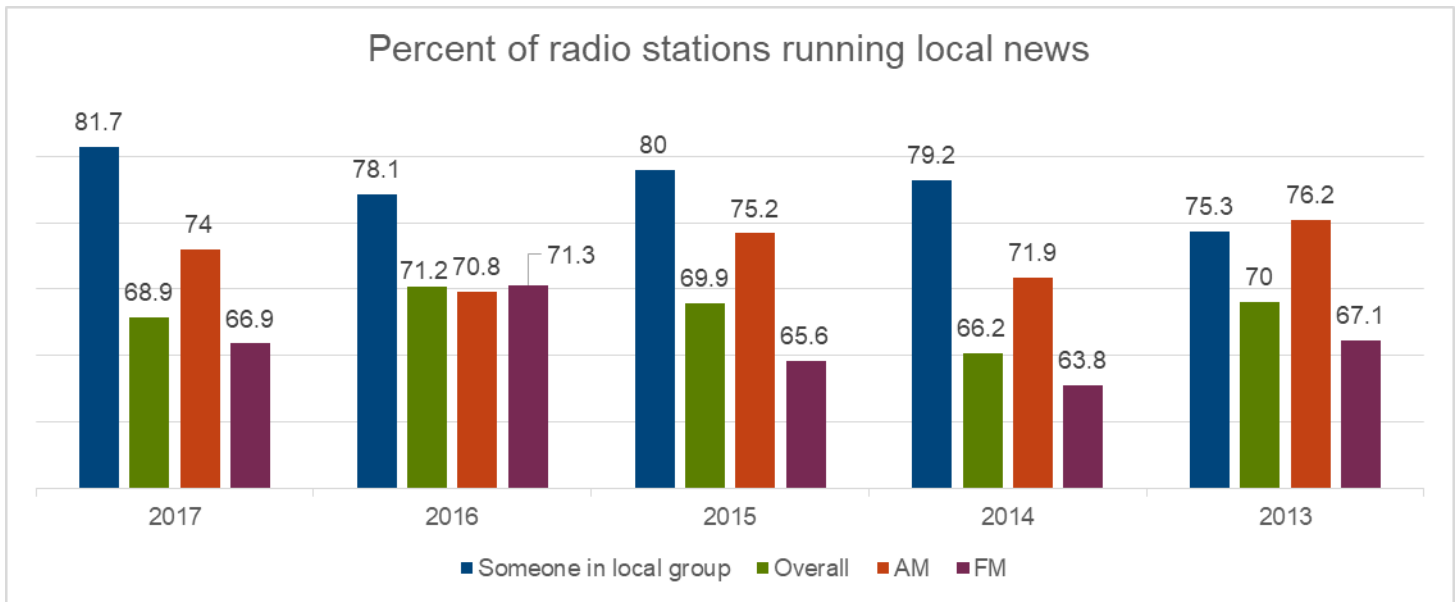
Overall, 57% said the news department was not producing or going to produce those programs; 28% said they were; and 15% said it hadn't been decided yet.

Local News by the Numbers

Radio Stations Carrying Local News

In radio, 79.3% of radio news directors and general managers say their station or station group is locally owned. The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that, overall, 68.9% of all radio stations in the survey report running local news, including 74% of AM stations and 66.9% of FM stations. That's down about two points overall. AM stations went up by about 3, but FM dropped just over 4 points.

Overall in the survey, 81.7% of local radio groups report that at least one station in the group runs local news. That's 3 points up from last year – which had been down 2 points from the year before.



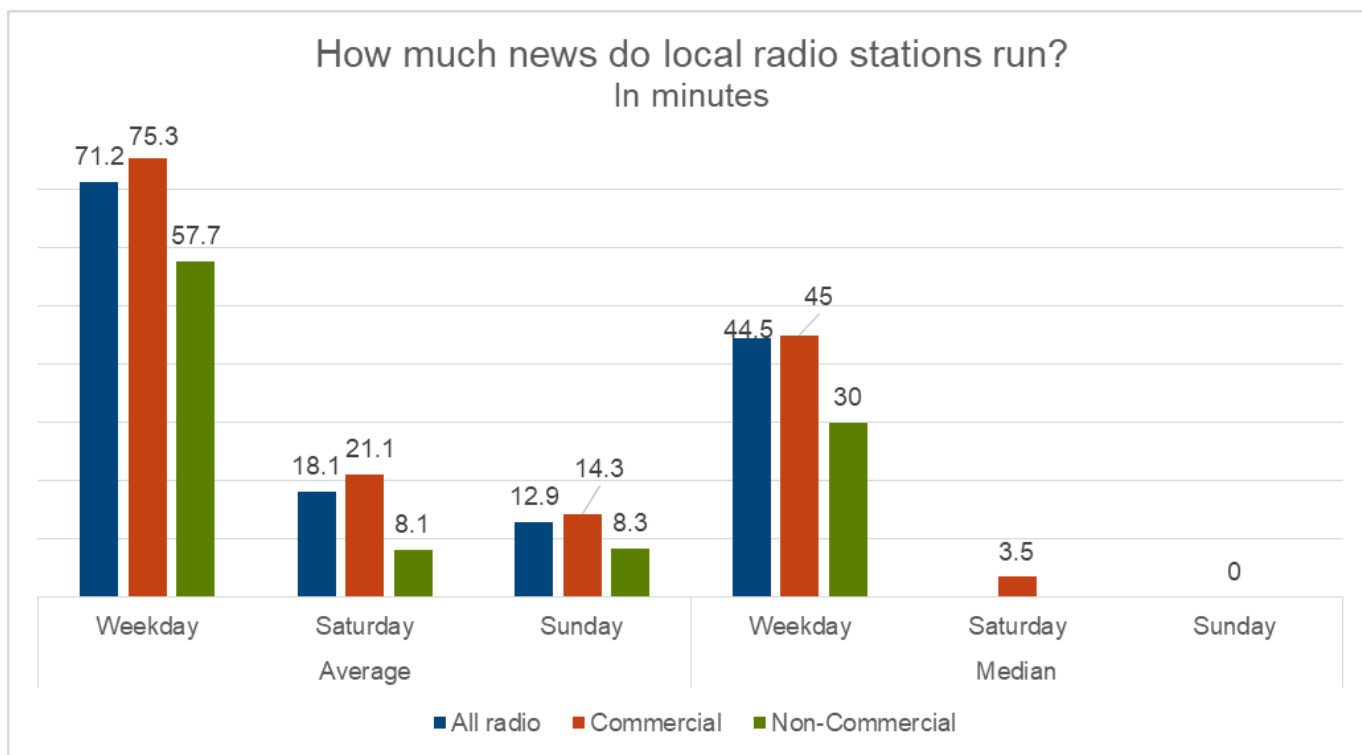
Most stations in our survey that run local news are not primarily news or talk stations; they're music stations. Of the 433 stations that run local news – and told us what their programming was – just 18.5% included all news (2.3%), news and information (1.8%), news/talk (14.1%) and business news (0.2%).

Locally-Produced Radio News

	Weekday average	Weekday median	Saturday average	Saturday median	Sunday average	Sunday median
All radio	71.2	44.5	18.1	0	12.9	0
Commercial	75.3	45	21.1	3.5	14.3	0
Non-Commercial	57.7	30	8.1	0	8.3	0
Market	Weekday average	Weekday median	Saturday average	Saturday median	Sunday average	Sunday median
Major market	107.2	60	21.3	0	21.9	0
Large market	103.4	60	14.8	0	7.5	0
Medium market	67	40	16.7	0	14.1	0
Small market	46.8	30	19.9	5	10.5	0

Local News by the Numbers

Weekdays dropped in average amount of news while weekends went up. But medians (or typical numbers) tend to tell more accurate stories. Median weekday times went up for major market stations (usually the influence of all news stations) while all other market sizes went down. Medians for almost all groups (and overall) for the weekend remained at zero local news. The overall amount of local news dropped by about 12 minutes per weekday. That's about how much it went up in major markets, but large markets slipped by about 2, and medium markets dropped by 20 with small markets dropping by 18.



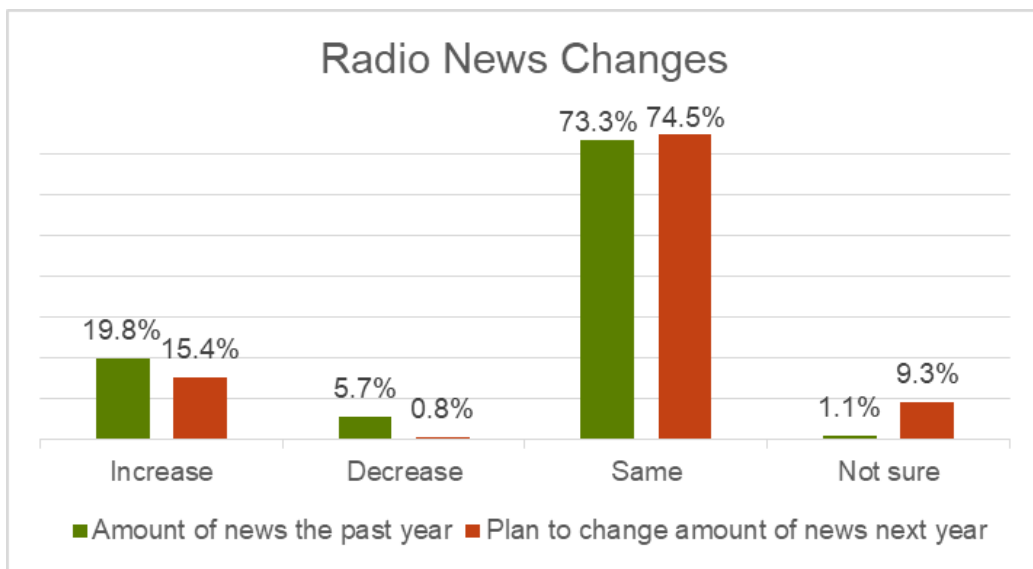
Generally, the bigger the staff, the more news a station runs, although the real dividing line was two versus three or more news staffers. Overall, stations with 3 or more full time news staffers ran about 50% more news than stations with one or two full-timers. Geography made no difference.

Historically, commercial stations run more local news than non-commercial stations. Last year, the numbers were identical, but this year we're back to a big edge for commercial stations, with the median amount of local news 50% higher at commercial stations compared to non-commercial ones.

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.

Local News by the Numbers

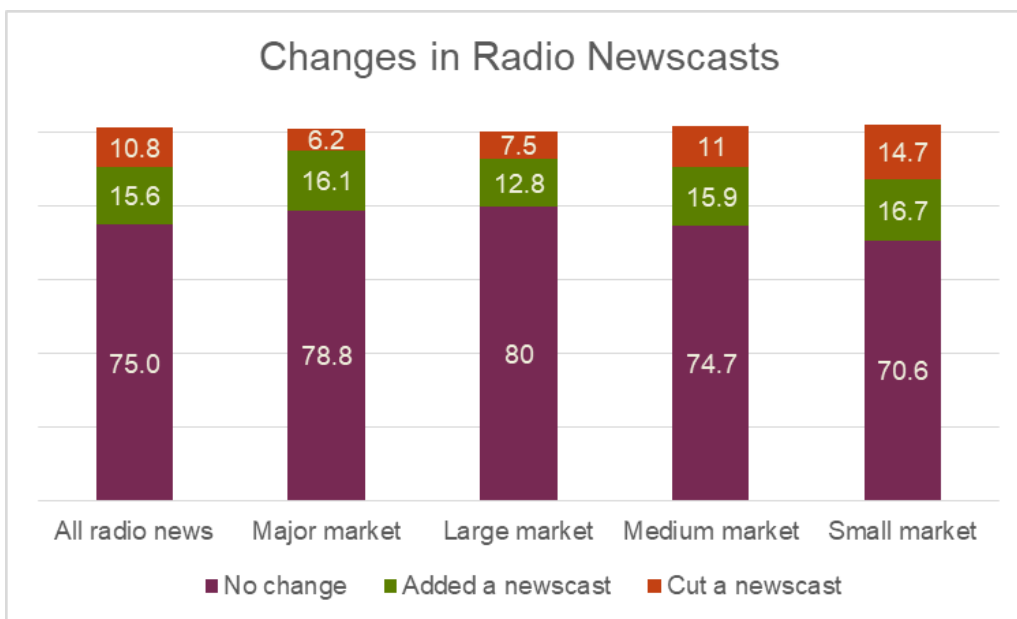
Changes in Radio News



These numbers aren't terribly different from last year, although the percentage saying they increased the amount of local news fell by about a point. That's the third year in a row for small but consistent drops. Non-commercial stations were, again, more likely to increase news – up 8 points over commercial stations. That's just about the same as a year ago.

Over time, the planned amount of news has been a better and better predictor of the coming year. Projected news for this year is just about the same as a year ago: down by nearly a point.

Non-commercial news directors are twice as likely to expect to increase local news as commercial news directors. They always say that, but this time it's a little less so. Generally, the bigger the news staff, the more expectation of increasing local news. No other variables made a consistent difference.



Local News by the Numbers

Commercial stations were about 50% more likely than non-commercial stations to have added a newscast in the past year, but both groups were in low double digit numbers. The overall percentage of stations adding a newscast dropped more than 3 points from a year ago, and the numbers are low across the board. Most of the additions came at varying times of the weekday morning.

Cutting a newscast was a different story. The number there dropped nearly 3 points from a year ago, but market size clearly made the difference. The smaller the market, the more likely that a newscast was cut. Commercial stations were a little more likely to cut than non-commercial ones.

Cuts were slightly more likely in the afternoon than in the morning.

Note that added, cut and no change will not add up to 100% because some stations both added and cut.

Fewer radio stations get news from an outside provider

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that fewer than one in five radio stations, 18.5%, report getting local news from an outside service. That's down 3.1 from a year ago, which was down 1.3 from the year before that.

Commercial stations were again lower than non-commercial ones (17.6% vs. 21%). The bigger the market, the more likely that a station used an outside news service -- 29.5% in the largest markets down to 12.5% in the smallest. No other variable made any consistent difference, although stations in the Midwest were much lower than all other areas.

Radio Stations' Outside News Providers		
Percent	Source	Change from 2016
24.5	24/7 News Source *	More than doubled
17	Various local TV stations	+ 3 points
15.1	Various local newspapers	- 6 points
11.3	Associated Press	-10 points
7.5	Various statewide radio networks	-3 points
5.7	VirtualNewsCenter	Down slightly
3.8	The internet	Up slightly
1.9	Remote News Service	New
13.2	Variety or don't know	

* Formerly Metro Networks and Total Traffic Networks

About the Survey

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 among all 1,683 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2%) and 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 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.

About Bob

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.