

Year of Extremes



The RTNDA/Ball State University Annual Survey of women and minorities in the newsroom shows the highest highs and the lowest lows.

By Bob Papper

Overall, television news recorded the highest level of minorities in the newsroom—22.2 percent—that we’ve ever reported in the RTNDA/Ball State University Annual Survey, and the percentage of minority TV news directors—13.2 percent—is the second highest ever. At the same time, the percentage of minorities in radio—6.4 percent—sunk to the lowest rate ever, and the percentage of minority radio news directors—4.4 percent—ties the lowest share we’ve recorded.

Among non-Hispanic TV news departments, the percentage of minorities—20.4 percent—is the second highest ever, behind only 2001, which was 21.6 percent. The percentage of news directors at non-Hispanic stations, 8.6 percent, is also the second highest ever, slightly behind 2000, which was 9.0 percent.

Despite the progress in television news this year, the bigger picture remains unchanged. In the past 16 years, the minority population in the U.S. has risen 7.7 percent. The minority workforce in TV news is up 4.4 percent. The minority radio news workforce is down by the exact same amount.

Minority Population vs. Minority Broadcast Workforce

	2006	2005	2000	1995	1990
Minority Population in U.S.	33.6%	33.2%	30.9%	27.9%	25.9%
Minority TV Workforce	22.2	21.2	21.0	17.1	17.8
Minority Radio Workforce	6.4	7.9	10.0	14.7	10.8

Broadcast News Workforce

	2006	2005	2000	1995
TV News				
Caucasian	77.8%	78.8%	79.0%	82.9%
African American	9.5	10.3	11.0	10.1
Hispanic	9.6	8.7	7.0	4.2
Asian American	2.7	1.9	3.0	2.2
Native American	0.5	0.3	<1.0	0.6
Radio News				
Caucasian	93.6%	92.1%	90.0%	85.3%
African American	2.5	0.7	5.0	5.7
Hispanic	1.9	6.0	3.0	7.5
Asian American	1.8	0.7	1.0	0.6
Native American	0.2	0.5	1.0	1.0

The percentage of minorities in TV news rose a full point in the past year. At 22.2 percent, it’s the highest level we’ve ever recorded in the survey. The growth came almost entirely from an increase in Hispanics (up 0.9 percent) and Asian Americans (up 0.8 percent). Native Americans edged up by 0.2 percent, and all of those increases more than offset a 0.8 percent drop in African Americans.

Among non-Hispanic stations, the minority workforce rose to 20.4 percent, the second highest level since 2000, when we first looked at the figures both with and without Hispanic stations. The figure is up 0.9 percent in the past year. At non-Hispanic stations, the minority breakdown is 9.7 percent African American, 7.7 percent Hispanic, 2.6 percent Asian American and 0.4 percent Native American. Overall, 72.5 percent of the TV news workforce at Hispanic stations is Hispanic. Another 19.3 percent are white, 3.8 percent Asian, 2.6 percent black and 1.8 percent Indian.

As always, the distribution of male/female among ethnic groups is fairly close, except for whites, where men outnumber women 5:3. As always, Asian is the only group where women outnumber the men. Interestingly, at Hispanic stations, the ratio of men to women is generally close—except for Hispanics themselves, where men outnumber women almost 2:1.

The percentage of minorities in radio news dropped to its lowest level ever recorded in the survey: 6.4 percent. Blacks and Asian Americans actually recorded gains, but Native Americans fell, and Hispanics plummeted.

Broadcast News Directors

	2006	2005	2000	1995
TV News Directors				
Caucasian	86.8%	88.0%	86.0%	92.1%
African American	4.2	3.9	3	1.6
Hispanic	6.0	5.8	9	3.8
Asian American	1.2	1.3	2	1.5
Native American	1.8	1.0	<1	1.0
Radio News Directors				
Caucasian	95.6%	89.0%	94.0%	91.4%
African American	1.9	0.0	3	5.4
Hispanic	1.3	8.8	2	2.4
Asian American	0.6	0	0	0
Native American	0.6	2.2	1	0.8

At 13.2 percent, the share of minority TV news directors is the second highest ever—behind 14 percent in 2000—but 1.2 percent ahead of last year. All groups rose, except Asian Americans, which edged down by 0.1 percent. At non-Hispanic stations, the minority percentage rose half a percent to 8.6 percent. African Americans were the largest group of minority news directors at non-Hispanic stations at 4.2 percent. That's up 0.4 percent from a year ago. Native Americans came in second at 1.9 percent—almost double last year's 1 percent. Asian Americans rose from last year's 0.7 percent to this year's 1.3 percent—almost identical to the high of 1.4 percent recorded two years ago. But Hispanic news directors at non-Hispanic stations dropped in half—from 2.8 percent last year to 1.3 percent this year.

Overall, minority TV news directors were fairly evenly distributed across all market sizes except the biggest. There were about 50 percent more minority news directors in the top 25 markets than in any other market group. Two-thirds of those were Hispanic news directors, primarily at Hispanic stations.

Generally, the percentage of minority TV news directors rose as the size of the news staff fell. Staffs with 1–20 newspeople were far more likely to have a minority news director than the other three staff size groups. There were not large differences by network affiliation, although ABC and NBC affiliates were a little less likely to have minority news directors. Minority news directors were not distributed evenly across the country. The South led all regions—by a large margin—followed by the West, with both the Midwest and Northeast way behind.

The percentage of minority radio news directors ties for the lowest we've ever recorded. The smaller the market, the less likely the station had a minority news director, but even at its peak—in the biggest markets—the percentage was just 5.9 percent. As with TV, minority news directors were most likely to be in the South and least likely to be in the Midwest. There was no consistent pattern by staff size.

Women in Local News

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of Workforce	Average Number of Women on Staff
All Television News				
Network Affiliates	98.9	23.4	40.1	15.5
Independents	66.7	30.0	49.1	6.3
DMA 1–25	97.7	33.9	38.1	22.1
DMA 26–50	93.9	22.8	40.0	20.6
DMA 51–100	98.8	17.1	39.1	14.7
DMA 101–150	97.9	23.4	42.3	11.1
DMA 151+	94.0	24.1	41.4	7.7
Staff 51+	100.0	18.5	40.0	31.0
Staff 31–50	100.0	26.8	39.6	15.3
Staff 21–30	100.0	20.8	39.3	10.1
Staff 11–20	98.3	25.0	41.8	6.6
Staff 1–10	76.5	30.3	42.8	2.3
All Radio News				
Major Market	73.3	22.2	31.0	1.5
Large Market	68.4	18.2	35.7	1.6
Medium Market	48.7	22.8	24.7	0.9
Small Market	32.1	18.6	16.6	0.4

Television: Reversing a two-year drop, the percentage of women TV news directors rose to 25.2 percent, tying the third highest level ever. The biggest markets, 1–25, had the highest incidence of women news directors. But the biggest news staffs, 51+, had the lowest incidence of women news directors, at 18.5 percent. At 30.3 percent, women were most likely to be news directors at stations with staffs of 1–10. There was little difference based on which network a station was affiliated with; “other” commercial was a little higher, at 30 percent, but there were few other meaningful differences. Women were a little more likely to be in the West than any other area, but the difference was small. Overall, there has been relatively little change in the percentage of women in TV news in quite a few years.

Radio: The percentage of women radio news directors dropped from last year's 24.7 percent to this year's 20.4 percent. All market sizes fell except the smallest. Women news directors were more likely to be found in noncommercial radio stations, in stations in the Midwest and almost three times as likely to be at group-owned stations rather than independents. There was no pattern based on staff size or number of stations in the group. The percentages for women in the workforce are largely unchanged from what they've been. Major markets are those with 1 million or more 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.



Newspapers vs. Broadcast

The 2006 survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that minority journalists make up 13.87 percent of newsroom employees at daily newspapers, up from last year's 13.42 percent. African Americans were 5.6 percent of the total, Hispanics 4.5 percent, Asian Americans 3.2 percent, and Native Americans 0.6 percent. Women increased slightly to 37.7 percent.

In contrast, minority journalists make up 22.2 percent of television newsrooms. African Americans are 9.5 percent of the total, Hispanics 9.6 percent, Asian Americans 2.7 percent, and Native Americans 0.5 percent. If we look just at English-language TV news operations, the minority population is 20.4 percent. African Americans are 9.7 percent, Hispanics are 7.7 percent, Asian Americans are 2.6 percent, and Native Americans are 0.4 percent. Women make up 40.0 percent of the television news workforce.

Minorities in Local News

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of Workforce	Average Number of Minorities on Staff
All Television	90.2%	13.2%	22.2%	8.0
Network Affiliates	92.0	9.0	19.9	7.7
Independents	66.7	12.5	22.4	2.9
DMA 1–25	95.3	20.0	32.9	19.1
DMA 26–50	93.9	13.0	21.9	11.3
DMA 51–100	92.5	10.8	19.1	7.2
DMA 101–150	89.5	12.4	17.9	4.7
DMA 151+	80.0	11.5	15.9	3.0
Staff 51+	100.0	9.1	23.1	17.9
Staff 31–50	97.6	6.2	20.9	8.1
Staff 21–30	87.7	12.7	21.9	5.6
Staff 11–20	86.2	21.6	20.8	3.3
Staff 1–10	67.6	22.6	31.7	1.7
All Radio	12.4%	4.4%	6.4%	0.2
Major Market	46.7	5.9	13.1	0.7
Large Market	21.1	4.8	8.2	0.4
Medium Market	5.1	3.7	6.3	0.2
Small Market	5.4	2.9	2.6	0.1

Television: The bigger the market, the more likely the station to have minorities on the TV news staff and the higher the percentage of minority staffers—reaching a peak of 32.9 percent in the top 25 markets. Staff size made little difference in the percentage of minorities on staff, although the percentage of stations with minorities on staff was noticeably lower for those stations with the smallest number of news employees (1–10). There were no meaningful differences from one network affiliation to another, but the traditional network affiliates had a much greater likelihood of having minorities than either other commercial stations or noncommercial stations. The Northeast and Midwest had half as many minorities as the South or West, and stations in the Midwest had a noticeably lower incidence of having any minorities on staff.

Radio: The percentage of radio newsrooms with minorities fell from last year's 17.1 percent to this year's 12.4 percent. Only major market radio stations rose. Noncommercial stations were more likely to have minorities than commercial ones, and stations in the Northeast were more likely to have minorities than other parts of the country.

For More Information on Diversity Issues

RTNDF Newsroom Diversity Campaign

Contact: Irving Washington
Phone: 202.467.5218
www.rtna.org/diversity/index.shtml
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American Women in Radio and Television

Phone: 703.506.3290
www.awrt.org
info@awrt.org

Asian American Journalists Association

Phone: 415.346.2051
www.aaja.org
national@aaja.org

Association for Women in Communication

Phone: 703.370.7436
www.womcom.org
info@womcom.org

Emma L. Bowen Foundation for Minority Interests in Media

Phone: 202.637.4494
www.emmabowenfoundation.com/
phylis.eagle-oldson@corporate.ge.com

International Women's Media Foundation

Phone: 202.496.1992
www.iwvmf.org
info@iwvmf.org

National Association of Black Journalists

Phone: 301.445.7100
www.nabj.org
nabj@nabj.org

National Association of Hispanic Journalists

Phone: 202.662.7145
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nahj@nahj.org

National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association

Phone: 202.588.9888
www.nlgja.org
info@nlgja.org

Native American Journalists Association

Phone: 605.677.5282
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UNITY: Journalists of Color

Phone: 703.854.3585
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About the Survey

The RTNDA/Ball State University Annual Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2005 among all 1,617 operating, nonsatellite television stations. Calls are still being made to all U.S. radio stations, with surveys sent to all radio news directors in addition to a random sample of 1,200 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,120 television stations (69.3 percent) and, so far, 181 radio news directors and general managers representing 602 radio stations. Data for women TV news directors are a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.

Bob Papper is professor of telecommunications at Ball State University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. Data entry and tabulation were done by the Bureau of Business Research at Ball State. This research was supported by the Department of Telecommunications at Ball State University and RTNDA.

General Managers

TV	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
All Television	92.9%	7.1%	84.8%	15.2%
Network Affiliates	95.4	4.6	83.9	16.1
Independents	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
DMA 1–25	78.4	21.6	92.3	7.7
DMA 26–50	94.1	6.9	82.7	17.3
DMA 51–100	95.5	4.5	83.1	16.9
DMA 101–150	97.2	3.8	77.8	22.2
DMA 151+	92.9	7.1	95.2	4.8
Radio	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
All Radio	97.5%	2.5%	87.8%	12.2%

Television: The percentage of minority general managers at TV stations that run local news was virtually unchanged in the past year, edging up from 6.8 to 7.1 percent. Only 5 percent of non-Hispanic stations had minority general managers. Half of those GMs (2.7 percent) were African American; most of the rest (1.9 percent) were Hispanic, and the rest were Asian Americans. Minority GMs were most likely in markets 1–25, but that was mostly Hispanic stations. Otherwise, there were no meaningful differences by market size, network affiliation or geography. The one exception is that there were fewer minority general managers in the Midwest than anywhere else.

The percentage of women GMs at stations that run local news fell from 17 to 15.2 percent. Women GMs were least likely to be found in both the very biggest (1–25) and the very smallest (151+) markets. They were also least likely to be found at stations with the smallest staffs (1–10). ABC and Fox affiliates were most likely to have women general managers, followed by CBS and PBS affiliates. NBC came in below that, and we didn't find any women GMs at "other" commercial stations.

Radio: The percentage of minority general managers at radio stations managed to drop again this year to just 2.5 percent, down from last year's 3.4 percent. The largest group was in the very largest markets, and all were in the South. At 12.2, the percentage of women GMs plunged from last year's 20.9 percent—even below the level from two years ago. (13.4 percent).