

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

### **New Efforts in Radio Websites - 2019 by Bob Papper**

In radio, the percentage of news directors and general managers saying they started something important online rose by 5 points – back into the majority (53.8%). Non-commercial stations continued to run nearly 50% higher than commercial stations in doing something new. And, again, staff size made the difference with staff sizes of 1 or 2 people in the high 30s up to 83.8% doing something new at 10 or more news staffers. The bigger the market, the more likely to be doing something new online, but the differences were much smaller.

Nearly 200 news directors and general managers listed what they were doing – double last year's number.

At the top of the list came content, again, but this time 51% of managers noted that that's what they were doing new. What did that involve?

- More and better content
- Video and pictures ... lots of people noted that
- Material just for the web, including surveys and polls
- Specialty coverage on the web ... especially sports (at commercial stations) and election coverage
- Podcasts ... new or more ... noted by 20% of the content category
- Soundbites

Next – well behind at 20.3% -- came social media.

- Mostly that involved more or greater emphasis on
- Facebook Live ... which could also have been put into the content category above since it commonly involved news event coverage or special reports or newscasts
- Instagram
- General interaction with the audience, including an e-newsletter

At 16.7% came management/oversight/design

- Managers noted better design, more graphics, more images
- More care, concern and rules for oversight and posting
- Hiring someone (or more people) to work just on digital content

## News Innovation

- Some just noted finally having a new or “real” website
- One of my favorite comments: “Monitoring/blocking listener comments to keep things civil”

Technical came in next at 7.3% of the comments.

- Mostly that involved people noting more streaming and more apps
- Enabling Alexa

Other came in at 4.7%.

- Mostly, that involved contests, advertising and sales

### Who has web sites? 2019

All Radio	96.5%
Market Size	
Major	94.1
Large	100
Medium	97.1
Small	94.9
Commercial	95.6
Non-commercial	98.4

It's been 8 years since the last time a TV station didn't have a website, but radio still hasn't hit 100%. This year's percentage is down a point from a year ago. Only the very largest stations hit 100%, but no category (e.g. number of stations, market size, geography) was below 92%. Note that the question does NOT relate to all radio stations ... only those with local news.

### How many web sites include local news? 2019

All Radio	82.8%
Market Size	
Major	81.2
Large	87.5
Medium	81.1
Small	82.7
Commercial	79.9
Non-commercial	89.1

While all TV stations that run local news post that local news on the web, that's still not the case with radio. Radio numbers, which had moved up two and a half points two years ago, gave up two of those points last year, and picked them back up again this time around. No grouping hit 100% -- not even stations with 10 or more news people. Generally, as staff size went up, so did the percentage of stations running local news on the web. Local groups of 3 or more stations were higher than smaller operations.

## News Innovation

### Radio websites

In the past, I've asked about all the elements stations included in their website, like video, stills, calendars, etc. But as websites matured, changes had become few and mostly inconsequential. Starting last year, I just asked if stations had "added or eliminated anything meaningful" from the station website. Nearly 80% (78.9) said no, and that was true for most of the sub-groups. That's just about the same as a year ago.

So what did the 21% do that was new and different?

As with last year, it wasn't so much different as different for their particular website. Overwhelmingly, most of the answers involved more and/or better content. That included more local news, specialized coverage, video, podcasts, data visualization and jail bookings. A few noted a new or re-designed website and technical things such as better audio and a live player or streaming.

There were a few website deletions: survey software that didn't work well, RSS feeds that slowed down the website and content cuts because of staff cuts.

### Percentage of web content that's only on the web - 2019

<b>All Radio</b>	17.7%
Major market	18.7
Large market	14.9
Medium market	18
Small market	18.7
Commercial	21.8
Non-commercial	10.2

After a big drop a year ago, unique web content edged up a point and a half this time around. The percentages are surprisingly flat across market sizes, but non-commercial stations are lagging well behind commercial ones.

### Percentage of web content that's user-generated - 2019

<b>All Radio</b>	14.5%
Major market	3.1
Large market	11.7
Medium market	14
Small market	23.7
Commercial	17.7
Non-commercial	8.7

Note that as market size falls, user generated content increases. Non-commercial stations lag well behind commercial ones, and that could be a major factor in the percentage of content purely on the web and not on air. Other variables made no consistent difference, although stations in the West were well behind all other areas.

### Web traffic

Note that 73% of radio news directors and general managers didn't know the website traffic numbers. The response on this is thin, so view these numbers cautiously.

#### Radio station website traffic during the past 30 days - 2019

	Page Views (in thousands)	Unique Visitors (in thousands)
All Radio	289.7	87.4
Market Size		
Major market	374.8	177.5
Large Market	162.7	53.6
Medium market	397.8	80.8
Small market	186.3	39.2
Commercial	355.1	75.7
Non-commercial	191.6	99.7

Web staffing numbers and newsroom participation in working on the web are included in the staffing article. Web profitability and paywalls are discussed in the business of news articles.

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.

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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.