

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 Technology Purchases Moving Up ... but Drone Use Low and Level** by Bob Papper

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that 24% of radio news directors and general managers plan technology purchases this year. That's up 5 points from last year's all-time low ... and puts the number back on track with more recent historical numbers. Non-commercial stations were two and a half times more likely than commercial stations to be making a purchase. The bigger the market size and the bigger the staff size, the more likely the purchase. Stations in the Northeast and West were higher than those in the South and Midwest.

#### **Technology purchases in radio**

Categorizing technology purchases isn't always simple, and there's clearly some overlap among some of the groupings.

22.6%	Studio equipment ... double last year's percentage.
16.1	Field recorders and laptops
14	Streaming software and equipment and
14	Cameras and video equipment ... and, yes, you could reasonably combine these
8.6	New computers (for in-house use) ... about the same as last year
5.4	Remote equipment and software and
5.4	New/upgraded automation equipment
4.3	Newsroom management system and
4.3	Transmission equipment (e.g. transmitters)
3.2	Microphones
2.2	Podcast equipment or software

A number of years ago, the percentage planning some sort of technology purchase used to be around 40. Then it dropped into the low to mid 20s. After last year's plunge to 18.9%, it's an encouraging sign for the industry to see it back up.

### Drone use just edging up in radio

#### Does the radio station have a drone?

	Already own	Planning to buy	Considering	Lease/arrange for one as needed	We just use drone footage from others	No, not involved with drones
All radio	7.1%	0.5%	6.4%	1.8%	2.8%	81.4%
Market						
Major	11.6	0	4.3	4.3	2.9	76.8
Large	6.9	0	8.3	2.8	5.6	76.4
Medium	5.9	1.5	8.1	0.7	1.5	82.2
Small	6	0	4.3	0.9	2.6	86.2
Commercial	7	0.7	6.3	1.9	2.2	81.9
Non-comm	7.4	0	6.6	1.6	4.1	80.3

After a fair movement up a year ago, drone use in radio largely held steady. The percentage of stations owning a drone grew by just under 1 point, but the percentage not involved at all grew by a little more than that. Other than stations with 10 or more news people, stations in major markets and stations in the West, drone use was all in single digits.

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.