

Please note the new partnership on this research as it becomes the RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey. I am privileged to have joined the outstanding faculty at Syracuse. That's the name you'll see on the research from here on ... and that's what you'll see on the painfully long survey questionnaire later this fall.

Bob Papper

More Stations Run Local News Than Ever Before ... But One Fewer Station Producing It by Bob Papper

The latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey found that the number of TV stations originating local news slid by one from 2019 ... down to 705. Over the last decade and more, industry consolidation led to the number of local TV newsrooms dropping an average of seven per year. Three years ago, the number went down by nine. But two years ago, the drop was two ... down to 703, and last year it actually went up to 706, before edging down to 705 this year. But we haven't felt the full effect of proposed and ongoing mergers and acquisitions. We'll keep tabs right here.

Those 705 TV stations run news on those and another 393 stations. That last number is up 30 from a year ago. Could be more players going after a piece of what's likely to be a larger-than-life political pie.

That puts the total number of stations running local news at 1,098. That's up 26 from the previous all-time high reached two years ago.

For those keeping score by affiliation, here's how those 705 newsrooms break down:

- 181 NBC affiliates ... down 1 ... after last year's increase by 3
- 170 CBS affiliates ... up 1
- 164 ABC affiliates ... down 4
- 78 Fox affiliates ... up 1
- 35 Univision affiliates ... same
- 26 Telemundo affiliates ... same
- 18 Independents (four of which are Hispanic) ... up 1 (English language)
- 13 PBS affiliates ... down 1
- 9 CW affiliates ... up 2
- 4 Youtoo America ... down 1
- 3 MyNet ... up 1
- 2 This TV affiliates ... same
- 1 EstrellaTV ... same
- 1 FamilyNet ... same

A surprising amount of changes for just one year – including all the big four affiliates.
Up from last year: CBS, Fox, Independents, CW and MyNet.
Down from last year: NBC, ABC (the biggest drop), PBS, and Youtoo America.

And here's how those 393 stations that get news from another station break down:

- 96 Fox affiliates ... up 2
- 66 CW affiliates ... up 5
- 48 MyNetworkTV affiliates ... up 4
- 45 CBS affiliates ... up 6
- 40 -ABC affiliates ... up 7 ... the big winner
- 31 -NBC affiliates ... up 4
- 24 Independents ... up 3
- 12 Telemundo affiliates ... down 2
- 12 UniMás ... up 3
- 8 Univision affiliates ... down 1
- 2 MeTV affiliates ... down 1
- 1 PBS affiliate ... same
- 1 Canal de las Estrellas ... same
- 1 ThisTV ... same
- 1 FamilyNet ... same
- 1 America Teve ... same
- 1 Azteca America ... same
- 1 CoziTV ... new this year
- 1 Milenio ... new this year

Disappearing from this year's list: two Retro stations and one Accuweather station.

Almost everything went up, with the big four adding a combined 19 stations and CW and MyNet adding a combined 9. Interestingly, Hispanic stations stayed the same, overall.

Without getting into the whole list, I show no daily local news on the following affiliates:

- 156 PBS affiliates
- 67 ion stations
- 35 MyNet affiliates
- 24 MeTV
- 22 CW affiliates
- 14 UniMás affiliates
- 10 Univision affiliates
- 7 Telemundo affiliates
- 6 Fox affiliates
- 3 CBS affiliates
- 3 NBC affiliates
- 2 ABC affiliates

About the Survey

The RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey, funded in part by the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University, was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2019 among all 1,702 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,427 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,313 television stations (77.1%) and 673 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,996 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 Papper

Bob Papper is Adjunct Professor of Broadcast and Digital Journalism at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news.