

Starting with this report, this research becomes the RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey ... and 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

## **Most Still Innovating in Mobile in TV by Bob Papper**

The number of TV news directors saying they did something new in mobile this year dropped about five points from a year ago to 52.8% in the latest RTDNA/Newhouse School at Syracuse University Survey. Once again, other than the smallest stations (1 to 10 news people) and non-commercial stations, the percentages for every sub-group are virtually the same: market size, all but one staff size, affiliation and geography.

### **What's the most important new thing you started doing with mobile in 2019?**

The answers to the question on what's new in mobile covered a broader range than in the past and were harder to classify.

As usual, apps came in on top at 45.3% of all mentions, but the range of comments far exceeded past years. More app alerts covered half of the app category. An app alert every day for weather, "elevated geo-targeting," more targeted, to drive people to the newscasts on air, to drive people to the station website, just more. New, improved or more weather apps were mentioned more than any other specialty area, then just new or better apps and OTT (over the top) apps.

In their own words:

- Increasing and focusing on text alerts
- More frequent, targeted push alerts
- More postings of stories, interaction by anchors.
- More push alerts to drive traffic to website, app
- Sending more push notifications and catering the app tiles to reflect local interests

- We have been far more aggressive with push alerts, both for breaking content and to promote to local news programming.

Content came next at 17% of the mentions. Other than digital-only content – including positive news, entertainment, video and programs – most content involved single topics or issues: a podcast, a franchise, border information, more UGC (user-generated content).

In their own words:

- Mobile centric “quickcasts”
- Mobile streaming and app-only content
- New weather app powered by Baron. School closings now on news and weather app. Lots more streaming events on app.
- Unique content, dedicated push strategy
- We do an “Instaminute” on Instagram - one minute of strong visual content followed by a push to our news on TV

Streaming came in at 15.1%. Most just noted live streaming on apps – including news and newscasts. A few mentioned Facebook Live.

- Streaming on-demand, in the process of folding our weather/traffic app into our main news app

Strategy issues came next at 11.3%. Again, many of the notes were a little vague: altering the push alert strategy (to what?), categorizing push notifications, focus on text alerts (how?), more selective use of alerts, but most answers simply said push alert strategy.

In their own words:

- Altering the push alert strategy for severe weather to geo-targeted groups
- Geo-targeted push alerts
- Snapchat filters in key geo-fenced areas
- Subject-specific push alerts
- Targeted in-app weather forecasts by location

Tied at 5.7%: promotion and technical issues. Promotion included promoting the apps better and more promotion. Technical mostly included stations switching to a new app provider to make the apps more user-friendly.

In their own words:

- Additional on-air promotion of our weather app
- We just promote our apps more and better than we used to
- Changed app provider to add push capability

- Cleaned up the layout of our website for big web and mobile display.

## **Apps**

The percentage of TV stations with apps came in at 95.7% -- up more than two points from last year. Most of the stations not having apps were non-commercial, other commercial and/or had under 11 news staffers. Every big four network affiliate with 11 or more news people had at least one app.

Once again, both the average (1.9) and median (2) number of apps per station were about two. The top station had 10 apps, and every market size had stations with 4 or more apps.

99.5% of TV stations did not charge for an app, and not a single big four network affiliate charged for an app.

## **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.