**Radio**

Radio news changed little in 2009. The amount of news on the air is just about the same as a year ago, and the typical radio news staff remained at one. If anything, radio news is even more centralized now than it has been, with the typical news director overseeing the news on three stations, and more than 80 percent of radio news directors saying they have additional station responsibilities beyond news.

Average Minutes of Locally-Produced Radio News – 2010

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All radio | Major market | Large market | Medium market | Small market |
| Weekdays: |  |  |  |  |  |
| AM drive | 27.9  | 41.6  | 21.6  | 27.9  | 27.2  |
| Midday | 12.1  | 10.6  | 8.0  | 13.3  | 12.4  |
| PM drive | 14.3  | 13.3  | 9.1  | 16.8  | 13.7  |
| Night | 3.0  | 2.3  | 0.8  | 5.3  | 1.9  |
| Total weekday | 57.3  | 67.8  | 39.5  | 63.3  | 55.2  |
| Saturday: |  |  |  |  |  |
| AM drive | 15.4  | 21.4  | 9.8  | 18.4  | 12.8  |
| Midday | 6.9  | 10.0 | 3.5  | 6.0  | 7.4 |
| PM drive | 4.1  | 0  | 1.0  | 5.9  | 4.4  |
| Night | 2.6  | 0  | 0  | 6.0  | 1.5  |
| Total Saturday | 29.0  | 31.4  | 14.3  | 36.3  | 26.1  |
| Sunday: |  |  |  |  |  |
| AM drive | 7.2  | 4.2  | 3.5  | 8.1  | 8.2  |
| Midday | 5.7  | 9.2  | 1.0  | 5.2  | 5.8  |
| PM drive | 4.0  | 4.5  | 1.0  | 5.9  | 3.0  |
| Night | 2.5  | 0  | 0  | 6.0  | 1.5  |
| Total Sunday | 19.4  | 17.9  | 5.5  | 25.2  | 18.5  |

Overall, the numbers are little changed from a year ago. Total weekday news rose by less than 5 minutes per day. Weekend went up slightly more. Major market stations dropped in news; large markets stayed about the same; medium and small markets rose modestly.

The larger the staff, the more news the station produced. Number of stations in a market made no difference. Commercial stations ran more local news than non-commercial ones; group-owned stations ran a little more news than independents; and stations in the Northeast tended to run more news than stations elsewhere.

Radio Staff Size – 2010

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Avg. full-time | Median full-time | Max full-time | Avg part-time | Med part-time | Max part-time | Avg total staff | Med total staff | Max total staff |
| All radio news | 2.1  | 1.0  | 16  | 1.9  | 1.0  | 16  | 3.3  | 2.0  | 22  |
| Market size: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Major | 3.7  | 1.5  | 16  | 1.5  | 1.0  | 7  | 4.9  | 2.5  | 22  |
| Large | 2.7  | 1.0  | 9  | 1.5  | 1.0  | 4  | 3.4  | 2.5  | 13  |
| Medium | 2.0  | 2.0  | 9  | 2.3  | 2.0  | 10  | 3.4  | 3.0  | 15  |
| Small | 1.2  | 1.0  | 3  | 1.9  | 1.0  | 16 | 2.6  | 2.0  | 17  |

Without a few extraordinary radio news operations that we had last year, the average radio news staff fell back down to 2.1. The median, or typical, radio news operation remained at one. With part time holding at one, the total median staff size -- full plus part time -- fell to just two. Interestingly, the number of stations in the group did not change the number of newspeople -- which almost always remained at one. No difference between group or independent, but stations in the Northeast were more likely to be a little larger.

Changes in Radio News, Staff and Budget in the last 12 months and planned for the future – 2010

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Increase | Decrease | Same | Not sure |
| Amount of news the past year | 27.6%  | 12.2%  | 60.2%  | 0  |
| Plan to change amount of news next year | 17.6  | 0.8  | 73.6  | 8.0  |
| Total news staff the past year | 12.8  | 20.0  | 67.2  | 0  |
| Plan to change amount of staff next year | 5.6  | 3.2  | 75.0  | 16.1  |
| Change in news budget from the year before | 9.1  | 18.2  | 45.5  | 27.3  |

Major market, group-owned and non-commercial stations were most likely to have increased the amount of news in the last year. Non-commercial and independent stations are a little more likely to expect to increase the amount of news this year. Non-commercial, group-owned and the larger local groups were the most likely to have increased staff in the last year -- although all those numbers were small. Very few stations plan to either increase or decrease staff this year, although stations in major markets are a little more likely to plan to increase. A little over twice as many stations said the budget went up as compared to a year earlier. But two and a half times as many said the budget went down compared to a year earlier. Non-commercial and major market stations were more likely to say the budget went up. Group-owned stations were more likely to say the budget fell.

Radio News Profitability … 2000 to 2010

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 |
| Showing profit | 13.9% | 11.8% | 21.0% | 29.1% | 18.1% | 19.6% | 22.5% | 25.2% | 15.2% | 17% | 25% |
| Breaking even | 13..9 | 16.7 | 13.7 | 13.1 | 17.6 | 14.4 | 17.1 | 13.8 | 13.9 | 17 | 15 |
| Showing loss | 9.8 | 9.8 | 10.5 | 8.6 | 6.4 | 3.1 | 7.2 | 2.4 | 7.3 | 0 | 7 |
| Don’t know | 62.3 | 61.8 | 54.8 | 49.1 | 58.0 | 62.9 | 53.2 | 58.6 | 63.6 | 66 | 53 |

This year's numbers look a lot like last year's. Group-owned stations were more likely to report a profit on news.

Radio News Profitability by Market Size – 2010

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Showing profit | Breaking even | Showing loss | Don’t know |
| Major market | 0%  | 7.1%  | 7.1%  | 85.7%  |
| Large market | 17.6  | 29.4  | 11.8  | 41.2  |
| Medium market | 13.3  | 13.3  | 8.9  | 64.4  |
| Small market | 15.6  | 11.1  | 11.1  | 62.2  |

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.

Number of Stations Where the Radio News Director Oversees the News – 2010

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No. of Stations | Percentage |
| One | 19.5%  |
| Two | 26.8 |
| Three | 8.7 |
| Four | 8.1 |
| Five | 14.8 |
| Six | 12.1 |
| Seven | 2.7 |
| Eight  | 2.7 |
| Nine+ | 4.7 |
|  |  |
| Overall | Number |
| Average | 3.3 locally + 1.1 elsewhere  |
| Median | 3.0  |
| Maximum | 22 locally + 50 elsewhere  |

Although the change hasn't been steady, radio news directors, over the years, have been overseeing more and more stations. Last year, 30.7 percent of news directors oversaw the news on more than three stations. This year, nearly half, 48.5 percent, do that. The average number is up from 3.0 to 3.3 locally and from 0.7 to 1.1 somewhere else.

Where more than one related station ran news in a market, almost two-thirds of them (66.2 percent) had a centralized newsroom.

What Else Radio News Directors Do – 2010

This year, 81.4 percent of radio news directors said they had other responsibilities at the station beyond news. That's up from last year's 77.9 percent and just behind the all time record of 83.1 percent two years ago. It's highest for news directors who are a staff of one, with a single station in one market and in major markets.

What else radio news directors do

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Other job | Percentage |
| Talk show host | 18.0 %  |
| Program Director | 15.7  |
| Announcing (including sports and weather) | 11.2  |
|  |  |
| Production | 11.2  |
| Operations | 11.2  |
| General Manager | 10.1  |
|  |  |
| Public Affairs | 7.9  |
|  |  |
| Sales | 4.5  |
| Other | 10.1  |

Most of these numbers are up just slightly from the last few years, although sales and other are both down from last year.

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2009 among all 1,770 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 4,000 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,355 television stations (76.6 percent) and 203 radio news directors and general managers representing 301 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.