**Social media continues to expand on radio and TV**

by Bob Papper

* What's new in social media
* The most innovative new project
* What's new in mobile

**What's the most important new thing you started doing with social media in 2012?**

This is another area where I asked more open-ended questions than in the past. Almost 200 television news directors answered that question in the latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey, so the challenge was coalescing those answers into something that makes sense. A majority of news directors mentioned Facebook or Twitter or both. But the key words and phrases that kept coming up included *engagement* (possibly the number one social media word this year), *feedback*, *interaction* and *integration*. A survey like this doesn't tend to answer those questions with specifics, but I can see trends and goals, and those were clearly the top conceptual goals. In terms of concrete specifics, news directors wanted to use social media for story ideas and sources.

Perhaps more concretely, this appears to be the year of internal organization (or re-organization), integration, planning and oversight of social media. A bunch of stations hired someone specifically to oversee social media and develop a plan or plans for its use. Way more stations talked about creating specific goals and policies on social media. Clearly, a lot of stations went beyond a concept of integration and actually created detailed plans for how news was to be integrated into Facebook: which people in the newsroom were to post on Facebook or send out tweets and how many. Quite a few news directors talked about going beyond having a Facebook page to actually using it in a deliberate way to achieve specific goals.

Some news directors talked of using contests or more pictures or graphics; just a smattering of mentions for things like politics, sports, weather and traffic .

A fair number of stations purchased or started using specific social media software like Social Media Desk, Social News Desk, HootSuite, TweetDeck and Buddy Media. A much smaller number noted Storify, Instagram, Pinterest or using Google+ or Google Hangouts. Only a few mentioned apps.

I asked radio news directors what they were doing with social media, and the answers look a lot like a year ago. Most radio news directors just responded Facebook and Twitter. Although many went deeper than that, most of the answers involved promoting the station or website or some other form of promotion. A few talked about social media as either an extension of the station or an integrated part of the station, but most of the comments were purely promotion-based.

As with TV, a majority of radio news directors answered the question by including Facebook as part of the answer. At the top of the list: Better use of Facebook, including leads, more and better promotion, more content, more updates, better and more planned engagement. Sounds a lot like the TV answers. That came in more than twice as high as #2: Better and more use of Twitter. That just edged out #3: A new Facebook page. From there, we went to odds and ends, including allowing listener comments, adding or adding more pictures, giveaways and contests, and one news director noted "joining conversation rather than starting them."

A third of radio news directors, 33.0%, said they were doing nothing new. That's nearly double the 17.9% of TV news directors who said they were doing nothing new.

After years of growth, the use of social media appears to have stabilized in both television and radio in the past year, according to the latest findings from the RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey. What's changing is less whether stations are using social media and more in how it's being used.

**Social Networking**

What is your TV station doing with social networking? 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Covering the topic in newscasts | Incorporating it into storytelling | Integrating it on the website | Nothing |
| All TV | 86.0%  | 83.8%  | 90.3%  | 1.4%  |
| Market size: |  |  |  |  |
| 1-25 | 85.4  | 72.9  | 87.5  | 4.2  |
| 26-50 | 87.5  | 87.5  | 85.0  | 2.5  |
| 51-100 | 92.1  | 89.5  | 97.4  | 0  |
| 101-150 | 84.1  | 87.0  | 88.4  | 1.4  |
| 151+ | 77.8  | 77.8  | 88.9  | 0  |
| Staff size: |  |  |  |  |
| 51+ | 86.7  | 85.0  | 91.7  | 1.7  |
| 31 – 50 | 96.9  | 93.8  | 95.4  | 0 |
| 21 – 30 | 82.8  | 84.5  | 89.7  | 1.7  |
| 11 – 20 | 82.9  | 75.6  | 82.9  | 0  |
| 1 – 10 | 58.8  | 64.7  | 76.5  | 11.8  |

These TV numbers are little changed from last year as the use of social media has become near-universal. The smallest shops, with 1 - 10 news staffers, tend to be noticeably behind all the others.

What is your radio station doing with social networking? 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Covering the topic in newscasts | Incorporating it into storytelling | Integrating it on the website | Nothing |
| All Radio | 36.2%  | 26.0%  | 54.1%  | 29.5%  |
| Market size: |  |  |  |  |
| Major | 40.9  | 47.8  | 73.9  | 21.7  |
| Large | 34.5  | 27.6  | 55.2  | 20.7  |
| Medium | 40.4  | 18.5  | 51.9  | 29.6  |
| Small | 28.6  | 22.5  | 45.0  | 40.0  |

Two years ago, radio soared in its use of social media; last year it edged up, and this year it slid back. But not overall. The percentage of stations reporting that they did nothing is virtually identical to last year. But each of the specific choices fell, and they fell across almost every category.

Overall, non-commercial stations were a lot more involved with social media than commercial stations. That wasn't the case a year ago. Generally, staff size and market size were most closely correlated with social media activity (bigger meant more). Stations in the Northeast lagged the rest of the country.

**Facebook**

Does the TV station or newsroom have a Facebook page? 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Station only | Newsroom only | Both | No |
| All TV | 28.0%  | 31.9%  | 39.7%  | 0.4%  |
| Market |  |  |  |  |
| 1 - 25 | 26.0  | 22.0  | 50.0  | 2.0  |
| 26 - 50 | 22.5  | 27.5  | 50.0  | 0  |
| 51 - 100 | 31.6  | 31.6  | 36.8  | 0  |
| 101 - 150 | 32.9  | 37.1  | 30.0  | 0  |
| 151+ | 21.7  | 39.1  | 39.1  | 0  |
| Staff size |  |  |  |  |
| 51+ | 25.0  | 23.3  | 51.7  | 0  |
| 31 - 50 | 25.8  | 37.9  | 36.4  | 0  |
| 21 - 30 | 32.8  | 36.2  | 31.0  | 0  |
| 11 - 20 | 24.4  | 39.0  | 36.6  | 0  |
| 1 - 10 | 37.5  | 12.5  | 43.8  | 6.2  |

I did find an independent commercial TV station without a Facebook page, but that was the only holdout. Interestingly, the models of station only, newsroom only or both have held fairly steady -- and they're all relatively close. So which kind of station tends to prefer each model? Station only tends to be in smaller newsrooms in both the largest and smallest markets, and a bit more likely among CBS affiliates and stations in the Midwest. The newsroom only model tends to be found in smaller markets (the smaller the market, the more likely that this is the model used), a bit more likely with NBC affiliates and stations in the Northeast and West. Both station and newsroom Facebook pages tends to be in the biggest markets (1 - 50), stations with the biggest staffs, Fox affiliates and stations in the South and Midwest.

Does the radio station or newsroom have a Facebook page? 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Station only | Newsroom only | Both | No |
| All Radio | 69.0%  | 1.9%  | 17.7%  | 11.4%  |
| Market |  |  |  |  |
| Major | 56.5  | 0  | 26.1  | 17.4  |
| Large | 68.8  | 3.1  | 21.9  | 6.2  |
| Medium | 78.6  | 3.6  | 12.5  | 5.4  |
| Small | 63.8  | 0  | 17.0  | 19.1  |

Radio use of Facebook increased almost 5 points from last year (which had seen a 10 point rise from the year before).

**Twitter**

Is the TV newsroom actively involved with Twitter? 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Constantly | Daily | Periodically | No |
| All TV | 53.0%  | 33.8%  | 10.7%  | 2.5%  |
| Market |  |  |  |  |
| 1 - 25 | 68.0  | 26.0  | 2.0  | 4.0  |
| 26 - 50 | 65.9  | 22.0  | 12.2  | 0  |
| 51 - 100 | 55.3  | 32.9  | 11.8  | 0  |
| 101 - 150 | 44.1  | 44.1  | 8.8  | 2.9  |
| 151+ | 34.8  | 39.1  | 19.6  | 6.5  |
| Staff size |  |  |  |  |
| 51+ | 75.0  | 21.7  | 3.3  | 0  |
| 31 - 50 | 50.8  | 38.5  | 10.8  | 0 |
| 21 - 30 | 39.7  | 48.3  | 10.3  | 1.7  |
| 11 - 20 | 39.0  | 34.1  | 22.0  | 4.9  |
| 1 - 10 | 35.3  | 11.8  | 29.4  | 23.5  |

TV Twitter numbers continued to edge up, as periodic users moved into Daily and Constantly, and the non-Twitter universe was cut in half from a year ago. As in the past, use goes up as staff size goes up, with the converse being true as well.

Is the radio newsroom actively involved with Twitter? 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Constantly | Daily | Periodically | No |
| All Radio | 12.7%  | 15.9%  | 17.2%  | 54.1%  |
| Market |  |  |  |  |
| Major | 34.8  | 8.7  | 8.7  | 47.8  |
| Large | 6.5  | 22.6  | 12.9  | 58.1  |
| Medium | 8.9  | 14.3  | 21.4  | 55.4  |
| Small | 10.6 | 17.0  | 19.1  | 53.2  |

Overall, Twitter use in radio is almost identical this year to last, but this year saw a flattening out in the use of Twitter. There are comparatively smaller differences in what kind of station uses Twitter -- although amount of use is highest in the largest markets and at stations with more news people.

**Social media innovation**

What's the most innovative social media project you're working on?

Not surprisingly, far fewer TV news directors answered this question than the one on what they're doing that's new in social media. Some who did said it was a secret. Quite a few answered nothing. Fair enough.

A number talked about internal issues: app development, organization, management issues. Some involved video streaming. Quite a few included Facebook as part of the mix in one form or another. Others:

* promotion with mobile coffee truck
* social media newscast for Facebook
* talk show with Facebook posts, tweets and live phone calls
* contests, including at least one car giveaway
* several mentioned various election-related projects and a few talked about sports-related projects
* Facebook fan pages and Google Hangout
* local cheerleading contest
* user generated content or commentaries

Radio answers were harder to come by as well. Most just noted better use of social media or Facebook or Twitter or the integration of them. Other items:

* a few noted political events and coverage
* contests, promos and video
* a special site for annual series
* online charity auction
* high school students doing music reviews
* more user generated content

A third (33.3%) said nothing, and 12.2% said no answer. One said not telling. TV percentages were similar.

**Mobile**

What's the most important new thing that you started doing with mobile in 2012?

Among TV news directors, two-thirds noted something. That's a high response rate for a question like this. Thank you. The bigger the newsroom, the more likely that the station was doing something new with mobile.

New or upgraded apps were the overwhelming answers. And, within apps, weather-related apps were noted almost half the time. A few news directors noted apps for election results, school closings, sports and traffic. After apps, the big thing was live streaming of either newscasts or events or both. A fair number of news directors talked about more or more emphasis on web content, and almost as many talked about redesigning pages to make them more mobile-friendly, posting more pictures and video on mobile apps and more or more emphasis on text messages and alerts. A number of news directors noted that the biggest new thing they did with mobile in 2012 was simply doing something with it.

For whatever reason, stations in the West were less likely than others to be involved with new mobile activities.

In radio, of those who did something, a mobile app was the big winner. That was followed by updates and alerts ... then making mobile a better experience with mobile-friendly web design. Twitter use came next. A couple news directors noted having reporters record and send news material using mobile devices. But almost two-thirds -- 60.8% -- said nothing was new. Stations that did start doing something new in mobile were most likely to have the biggest newsroom and the most news employees.

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2012 among all 1,732 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,000 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,377 television stations (79.5%) and 217 radio news directors and general managers representing 575 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.