**TV Website Profitability Drops**

**by Bob Papper**

This past year saw a drop in website profitability – down almost 6 points from a year ago. The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that pofstra Hretty much all of the difference went into the “don’t know” category, with breaking even staying the same and loss dropping nearly 2 points. Either fewer news directors are aware of station or website profitability or I’m just getting more surveys from those who don’t know.

**Is the TV website making money? 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Profit | Breaking Even | Loss | Don’t Know |
| All TV | 40.7% | 10.1% | 6% | 43.3% |
| Markets 1-25 | 41 | 5.1 | 7.7 | 46.2 |
| Markets 26-50 | 41 | 12.8 | 5.1 | 41 |
| Markets 51-100 | 50.7 | 9.3 | 2.7 | 37.3 |
| Markets 101-150 | 33.9 | 8.1 | 4.8 | 53.2 |
| Markets 151+ | 34 | 15.1 | 11.3 | 39.6 |

The only market grouping that passed 50% in profitability was 51 to 100. Fox affiliates lagged all the others, although mostly Fox news directors didn’t know how the website was doing. Stations in West generally lagged behind other areas.

**Profitability of TV and radio station websites over time**

The general upward trajectory in TV is pretty clear; so is radio's up and down ride.

**Paywalls**

The number of TV stations reporting paywalls (a monetary charge to access a station website) fell from last year’s 4 to this year’s 2. That would be 2 stations with paywalls – not 2%. Another 2 stations said they were considering a paywall. That’s the same as a year ago … which may mean that the same 2 stations that were considering paywalls are still doing so. Or maybe not. In any case, local TV news is still not getting into the paywall business.

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 among all 1,683 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2%) and 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 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.