**TV Drone Use Soars …. Live Over Cellular Wins Live Technology**

**by Bob Papper**

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that pretty much everyone who was planning to buy or even considering a drone purchase a year ago went ahead and pulled the trigger. Already own rose by 25 points overall … and nearly 40 points in top 25 markets.

**Does the TV station have a drone?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Already own | Planning to buy | Considering | Lease/arrange for one as needed | We just use drone footage from others | No, not involved with drones |
| All TV | 44.9%  | 9.1%  | 11.6%  | 7%  | 10.2%  | 17.2%  |
| Market |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 – 25 | 63.4  | 2.4  | 9.8  | 4.9  | 2.4  | 17.1  |
| 26 – 50 | 53.7  | 4.9  | 12.2  | 12.2  | 14.6 | 2.4  |
| 51 – 100 | 45  | 8.8  | 11.2  | 7.5  | 10  | 17.5  |
| 101 – 150 | 47.8  | 7.5  | 9  | 4.5  | 13.4  | 17.9  |
| 151+ | 21.4  | 19.6  | 16.1  | 7.1  | 8.9  | 26.8  |
| Staff size |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 51+ | 66.7  | 5.8  | 8.7  | 8.7  | 5.8  | 4.3  |
| 31 – 50 | 54.4  | 5.9  | 14.7  | 5.9  | 7.4  | 11.8  |
| 21 – 30 | 26.3  | 19.3  | 5.3  | 8.8  | 12.3  | 28.1  |
| 11 – 20 | 21.2  | 6.1  | 12.1  | 6.1  | 18.2  | 36.4  |
| 1 – 10 | 0  | 5  | 35  | 5  | 15  | 40  |

Fox and CBS affiliates are running ahead of ABC and NBC stations and way ahead of other commercial. Ownership in the Midwest runs about 10 points higher than elsewhere.

**Live technology**

A new question this year was how stations most often go live … IP Video (like TVU), ENG (microwave), SNG (satellite), or mobile phone.

The overwhelming first choice was IP Video at 85.4%, and it was second choice for just about everyone else. IP Video was first choice for every market size, every network affiliation, every staff size except the smallest newsrooms (where mobile phone won), and every region, although the percentage was lower in the West than elsewhere. Only 4.5% of news directors reported not using IP Video.

In second place (as first choice for live) came ENG at a paltry 7.3%. ENG was most common in markets 26 to 50, the largest newsrooms, at NBC affiliates and in the West. ENG was second choice at 44.5% of stations but not used at all at 19% of stations.

Mobile phone came in third place at 6.9% and second choice at 30.8%. It was the top choice in the smallest newsrooms (53.8%) and came in first at 17.2% of the second smallest newsrooms (11 to 20 people) and at 15.8% of other commercial stations.

SNG came out on top at 0.4% of stations and wasn’t used at all at nearly a quarter of newsrooms. It was second choice at 4.9% and third choice at 30.4%.

***Bob Papper is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Journalism at Hofstra University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. This research was supported by the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication at Hofstra University and the Radio Television Digital News Association.***

**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.