An introductory note, if you will. 2019 marks my 25th year conducting the

RTDNA (before that, RTNDA) Annual Survey. First at Ball State University and now at Hofstra University. It has been my privilege to do this, and I want to thank RTDNA, Ball State and Hofstra for the support and opportunity to keep this going. Most of all, I want to thank all of you who spend what I know is way too much time poring over the way too many questions that I ask on this survey. Thank you.

- Bob Papper

**Way More Radio Stations Get News From an Outside Provider**

**by Bob Papper**

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey found that the percentage of radio stations getting news from an outside service soared from a year ago … and hit the highest level since I started asking the question. One in four radio stations – 25.1% -- reported getting all or most of its local news from an outside service.

Commercial stations jumped from 17.6% a year ago to 29% this time around. Non-commercial stations fell from 21% a year ago to 14.5% now. The drop among non-commercial stations may reflect better policing on my part: a number of non-commercial stations answered the question yes and listed the provider as NPR. Obviously, the station doesn’t get its LOCAL news from National Public Radio.

The smaller the staff, the more likely that the station gets its news from an outside service. Number of stations in a group made no difference one way or the other. Market size was inconsistent, although small markets were less likely to use an outside service than any other market size. Stations in the Northeast and South were more likely to use an outside service than stations in the Midwest or West. No idea why that was the case.

**For those who said local radio news came from an outside service, I asked for the name:**

29.7 Various local TV stations … nearly double a year ago

17.8 Various statewide radio networks … more than double last year

16.8 Associated Press … rebounding – up 5 from last year after dropping 10 points the year

 before

12.9 Various local newspapers (clearly with and without some sort of agreement) … down 2

points following last year’s 6-point drop

 9.9 24/7 News Source (formerly Metro Networks and Total Traffic Networks) … last year’s

doubling must have been an aberration because the number is down 60% from a year

ago

 5.9 VirtualNewsCenter … unchanged

 2 Remote News Service … unchanged

 1 Spectrum News … new this year

 1 The internet … without noting who online … down

 3 Variety of individual places or didn’t know the answer

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.

***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 2018 among all 1,685 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,481 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,310 television stations (77.7%) and 645 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,938 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.