**TV Website Profitability Edges Up Again**

**by Bob Papper**

This past year saw another modest increase in TV website profitability – up nearly three and a half points. The latest RTDNA/Lawrence Herbert School of Communication - Hofstra University Survey found that markets 1 through 50 fell in profitability while markets 51+ all went up. Note that 40% of news directors don’t know the answer to the question.

**Is the TV website making money? 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Profit | Breaking Even | Loss | Don’t Know |
| All TV | 45.9%  | 9.2%  | 4.8%  | 40.2%  |
| Market size: |  |  |  |  |
| 1 -25 | 35.7  | 17.9  | 10.7  | 35.7  |
| 26 - 50 | 45.7  | 11.4  | 5.7  | 37.1  |
| 51 - 100 | 61  | 6.8  | 1.7  | 30.5  |
| 101 - 150 | 40.3  | 4.8  | 3.2  | 51.6  |
| 151+ | 40  | 11.1  | 6.7  | 42.2  |

The bigger the newsroom staff, the more profitable the website … from 10.5% profitability for newsrooms with under 11 staffers up to 60.8% profitability for stations with news staffs of 51+. Fox affiliates lagged behind all the other affiliates – as usual. Stations in the Midwest and, especially, the West lagged behind those in the Northeast and South. Also as usual.

**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) soared from last year’s 0 to 3. That’s not percentage; it’s the actual number of stations charging for the station’s website. One in a top 25 market and two in markets 151+. Two more stations report that they’re thinking about a paywall. One in a top 25 market and one in market 51 to 100.

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Lawrence Herbert School of Communication - Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2019 among all 1,702 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,427 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,313 television stations (77.1%) and 673 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,996 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.