**TV Drone Use Mostly Stable**

**by Bob Papper**

It would be a mistake to say that the TV news goldrush into drones is over, but compare last year’s 11 point increase in “already own” to this year’s increase of 0.8. More are “planning to buy” and fewer are “not involved” with drones, but most movement was pretty modest.

**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 | 56%  | 9.2%  | 7.6%  | 6.8% | 9.2%  | 11.2%  |
| Market |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 – 25 | 53.3  | 3.3  | 10  | 10  | 6.7  | 16.7  |
| 26 – 50 | 71.8  | 7.7  | 0  | 10.3 | 0  | 10.3  |
| 51 – 100 | 58.8  | 10.3  | 5.9  | 2.9  | 11.8  | 10.3 |
| 101 – 150 | 58.5  | 7.7  | 9.2  | 6.2  | 12.3  | 6.2  |
| 151+ | 37.5  | 14.6  | 12.5  | 8.3  | 10.4  | 16.7  |
| Staff size |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 51+ | 75.9  | 5.6  | 0  | 11.1  | 3.7  | 3.7  |
| 31 – 50 | 59.7  | 8.3  | 8.3  | 2.8  | 11.1  | 9.7 |
| 21 – 30 | 46.4  | 14.3  | 10.7  | 5.4 | 10.7  | 12.5  |
| 11 – 20 | 33.3  | 12.5  | 25  | 8.3  | 8.3  | 12.5  |
| 1 – 10 | 20  | 15  | 5  | 5  | 25  | 30  |

Other commercial stations lag well behind the big four network affiliates, and stations in the Midwest are much more likely to own a drone than stations elsewhere; stations in the Northeast are most likely to be shopping now.

***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/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.