**Radio Website Profitability Down**

**by Bob Papper**

There’s really no good news in the latest RTDNA/Lawrence Herbert School of Communication - Hofstra University Survey on website profitability in radio. Profitability is down almost two points; loss is up four and a half. Only large markets went up in profitability; major markets plunged from 14.3 a year ago to 3.8 this time around. Number of news people and number of stations made no consistent difference.

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Profit | Breaking Even | Loss | Don’t Know |
| All Radio | 10.9%  | 15%  | 11.2%  | 62.8%  |
| Major Market | 3.8  | 7.5  | 9.4  | 79.2  |
| Large Market | 14.9  | 16.4  | 9  | 59.7  |
| Medium Market | 15.8  | 15.8  | 9.6  | 58.8  |
| Small Market | 6.7  | 17.1  | 15.2  | 61  |

For whatever reason, stations in the South were much less likely to have shown a profit on the web.

**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 percentage of radio stations with paywalls held steady at 1.2% having a paywall – compared to 0.9% a year ago. The Survey found no paywalls in major or large markets, in the Northeast or Midwest or at non-commercial stations.

Ten stations – number, not percent – said they were considering a paywall.

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/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.