

## Radio and Television Broadcasting Survey – Data Accuracy

The quality of statistical information is in large part a function of the degree to which the information correctly describes the phenomena it was designed to measure. This is not easily measured but the radio and television broadcasting statistics program has a number of characteristics that have a positive influence on the quality of estimates.

- Organisations must be licensed to operate in broadcasting industries, and completing the survey is a condition of license.
- The survey is a census of all organisations licensed to operate in these industries.
- The target population is identified from the CRTC licensing database.
- The survey content is largely based on generally accepted accounting principles and on standards generally recognised in the industry.
- The industry and their representatives regularly use the information from this survey to assess the impact of regulations and policy. It is therefore in their interest to provide data that are as accurate as possible.

Like all surveys, however, the annual survey of radio and television broadcasting is subject to errors. The next sections describe the potential sources of error and the procedures put in place to minimise such errors.

### Potential sources of errors

The Radio and Television Broadcasting Survey is not a sample survey and therefore sampling errors do not occur. There are potentially four sources of non-sampling error that can be identified in any given census survey: coverage error, response error, non-response error and processing error. Non-sampling errors are difficult to quantify.

*Coverage error* results from inadequate representation of the intended population. This error may occur during selection of the survey population, or during data collection and processing. It is unlikely that coverage error has a significant impact on the quality of the data from this survey given the source of the information on the population (CRTC) and the particular licensing conditions under which broadcasters operate.

*Response error* may be due to many factors, including faulty design of the questionnaire, respondents' misinterpretation of questions, or respondents' faulty reporting. Frequent changes in company personnel may also lead to response error. This survey has several features that help respondents complete the questionnaire, including logic and consistency checks, and a glossary of terms and concepts. Responses are compared from year to year and analysts query any significant unexplained changes. However, even with these checks, the quality of data ultimately depends on the respondents' willingness to consult their

records or on the existence of such records. Past experience indicates that response errors are not significant in the case of private broadcasters. However, completing the survey is a more difficult task for non-commercial broadcasters since they do not always have the necessary records or personnel familiar with the underlying accounting concepts.

*Non-response errors* occur because some respondents do not co-operate fully. This has not been a major concern with this survey. The response rate has surpassed 90% for the last reference years. Non-response is generally limited to smaller non-commercial broadcasters. Imputations made for total and partial non-response are subject to errors. This potential error is limited to a relatively small percentage of the data points collected by this survey (2.6%). These imputations also represent less than 2% of the value of the key variables produced by this survey. However, imputations are more frequent in the case of small non-commercial broadcasters (short questionnaire), and these imputations account for a larger proportion of values. The data for this portion of the population are therefore less accurate.

*Processing errors* may also occur during coding, entry, editing and tabulation of the data. In this survey, quality control procedures are used during the processing of data to keep such errors to a minimum.