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Research on the Content Marketing Mechanism for In-depth Digital Reading Promotion (Post-print)

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To address issues such as the lack of user-centered design in promotional information, this paper proposes a novel approach based on content marketing theory to enhance the effectiveness of deep digital reading promotion and stimulate users' deep digital reading behavior. [Method/Process] Focusing on the perspective of promotional information, drawing on content marketing theory, and combining the connotation and characteristics of deep digital reading promotion, this study constructs a content marketing mechanism for deep digital reading promotion. [Result/Conclusion] The characteristics of the content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion mechanism are primarily manifested in the emphasis on the design, creation, and dissemination of promotional information, while simultaneously reshaping elements such as target users, promotion objects, promotion subjects, promotion channels, promotion strategies, and promotion evaluation; using promotional information as a bond, it achieves strong association between target users and promotion objects through valuable content, supported by promotion channels and promotion strategies.

Full Text

Research on Content Marketing Mechanism for Deep Digital Reading Promotion

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Abstract: [Purpose/Significance] To address the lack of user-centered design in promotional messages, this paper proposes a novel approach based on content marketing theory to enhance the effectiveness of deep digital reading promotion and stimulate users' deep digital reading behaviors. [Method/Process] Focusing on the promotional message perspective and drawing on content marketing theory, this study constructs a content marketing mechanism for deep digital reading promotion by integrating its connotations and characteristics. [Result/Conclusion] The content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion mechanism is characterized by its emphasis on the design, creation, and dissemination of promotional messages, while simultaneously reshaping key elements including target users, promotion objects, promotion subjects, promotion channels, promotion strategies, and promotion evaluation. Using promotional messages as the link, strong connections between target users and promotion objects are established through valuable content, supported by promotion channels and strategies.

Keywords: digital reading; reading promotion; deep reading; content marketing

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Introduction

The 16th National Reading Survey Report released by the China Institute of Press and Publication reveals that in 2018, the contact rate of digital reading methods among Chinese adult nationals reached 76.2%, establishing digital reading as a mainstream form of reading in contemporary society. While the rising rate of digital reading has contributed to improved nationwide reading rates, it has also brought about issues such as fragmented reading and superficial reading. In the internet environment, users' weaknesses in traditional settings—unwillingness to read and poor reading skills—are amplified in virtual spaces, generating more negative impacts. “Guiding digital reading back to rationality and promoting the depth and intellectual nature of digital reading constitutes the primary task of library digital reading promotion” [1]. Meanwhile, the vast and complex content in digital environments also creates dilemmas for users with better reading literacy, who struggle to discern and select appropriate materials. Digital reading service institutions need to appropriately serve as “selection agents” to help users find required deep reading content. Therefore, conducting deep digital reading promotion in digital environments—including cultivating users' deep digital reading literacy, providing deep digital reading materials, and offering related services—has become an important proposition in the digital age, requiring enhanced academic research on deep digital reading promotion.

Currently, relevant research both domestically and internationally primarily fo-

cuses on the necessity and significance of digital reading promotion, promotion institutions, channels, and strategies. However, few studies concentrate on promotional messages or optimize them to enhance deep digital reading promotion [2]. While Wan Muchen and Ou Liang [3] and Chang Dingwei [4] have investigated reading promotion messages and electronic resource promotion information published on WeChat platforms by university libraries, their research objectives were not message optimization. Promotional messages constitute a key component of digital reading promotion; optimizing them can improve user perception, acceptance, and participation, thereby enhancing promotion effectiveness. Most promotional messages in current reading promotion practices lack user-centered design and strong relevance to user needs, resulting in suboptimal promotion outcomes that require greater industry research and exploration.

Content marketing, as an emerging systematic marketing strategy, overcomes the limitations of traditional hard-sell advertising by using promotional messages that align with user needs as a soft marketing approach to attract new users and retain existing ones. Introducing content marketing can help digital reading service providers better attract users with low digital reading literacy by designing and publishing user-centered promotional messages, guiding them to access deep digital reading materials, stimulating their interest in deep digital reading, and gradually cultivating deep digital reading habits to improve their literacy. Simultaneously, content marketing enables digital reading service providers to help users with higher reading literacy better perceive and select deep digital reading materials through carefully designed promotional messages, thereby increasing the utilization rate of deep digital reading materials and user satisfaction. Therefore, applying content marketing theories and methods to deep digital reading promotion can help address current dilemmas in digital reading promotion and steer deep digital reading promotion toward a user-centered track that emphasizes refinement and optimization of promotional messages, ultimately improving promotion effectiveness.

Some scholars have begun exploring library marketing promotion based on content marketing. L. Solomon [5], D. Fichter and J. Wisniewski [6] have noted that libraries need to strategically create and deliver content in efficient, sustainable, and attractive ways, making content marketing a powerful tool for marketing library services. G. Halevi and R. O'Hanlon [7] further narrowed the scope, pointing out that content marketing can be a powerful tool for marketing academic and health science library services. Huang Guofan and Zhang Yumei [8] argue that domestic library WeChat official accounts produce relatively little original content in terms of content marketing, and propose WeChat content marketing strategies based on practices at Hunan University Library and Xiamen University Library. Wu Meng and Hong Yue [9] elaborate on the conceptual scope of content marketing and its significance for library practice, introducing case studies and development strategies. However, these studies neither systematically introduce content marketing theories and methods nor deeply integrate them with library marketing, reading promotion, or digital reading promotion.

This paper integrates content marketing theory with deep digital reading promotion to explore the mechanism of deep digital reading promotion from a content marketing perspective, providing theoretical references for optimizing digital reading promotion practices.

2. Introduction to Content Marketing Theory

In 2001, Penton Custom Media in Ohio, USA, began using the term “content marketing.” Google Trends shows that searches for “content marketing” have risen sharply since 2009, indicating growing attention [10]. Joe Pulizzi, founder of the Content Marketing Institute and a world-leading content marketing expert, defines content marketing as the business marketing process of creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract actual or potential target customers [11]. Jefferson Tanton of the UK argues that valuable content is the key to successful online marketing in the social media era [12]. G. Holliman and J. Rowley [13], A. Pažeraitė and R. Repovienė [14], and Zhang Meijuan and Liu Fangming [15] further analyze the characteristics of valuable content.

Although numerous theoretical studies on content marketing exist from various perspectives, systematic theoretical explanations remain lacking. This paper conducted thematic searches using “content marketing” and “内容营销” as keywords in Web of Science Core Collection and CNKI (limited to “core journals” and “CSSCI”) until August 2018. After screening (criteria: full-text availability, formal journal or conference papers, and alignment with the “content marketing” definition), 81 relevant documents were obtained. Further tracing supplemented three frequently cited books. Through coding and synthesis, the connotations and characteristics of valuable marketing content are summarized into four aspects:

- (1) **Content Relevance.** Relevance refers to creating marketing content that forms strong associations with target users. First, marketing content should excavate customers’ internal needs and analyze potential customers’ behaviors and preferences to understand their general demands, interests, topics they follow, and urgent problems they want to solve. Second, created marketing content should facilitate faster and more accurate customer perception of product value. Marketing subjects must analyze customers’ multiple motivations in information seeking and utilization, select appropriate content materials based on these motivations, and present them using topics of interest to answer their questions. Knowledge relevance enables customers to quickly perceive value, capture their attention, and stimulate participation and sharing.
- (2) **Content Value.** Valuable content must be valuable not only to creators and disseminators but, more importantly, to recipients [15]. Value attracts customers and wins their long-term trust, achieving a win-win situation. For target customers, marketing content possesses both functional

and emotional value—it must be beneficial and appealing. Such high-quality content may be educational or thought-provoking; it may answer questions, train skills; or provide aesthetically and emotionally valuable entertainment. Additionally, created content should not be passively received but should incorporate social interactivity to inspire sharing and collaborative creation. For marketing subjects, marketing content helps retain old customers, develop new ones, increase sales, and enhance brand awareness and influence. By creating and publishing valuable content to demonstrate professional expertise and narrating business achievements through cases, the primary goal of capturing customer attention can be achieved, earning customer favor and trust to be regarded as a reliable expert and thought leader in the field. Furthermore, high content engagement, mobile-friendliness, and shareability facilitate interaction with customers, stimulating discussion and sharing enjoyment, advancing them from passersby to loyal fans.

- (3) **Diversified Content Expression Forms.** Valuable content is marketing itself, presented in various forms and channels. It can be categorized by traditional formats (e.g., blog posts, conference papers, research reports) versus mobile internet innovations (e.g., virtual exhibitions, live streaming) [15], user popularity (e.g., lists, infographics, research surveys) [5], or creation difficulty—basic (e.g., blogs, white papers) versus advanced (e.g., short videos, mobile apps, micro-films).
- (4) **User-Centered Content Expression Methods.** Adopt natural, conversational approaches to deliver content that is emotional, human, and interesting. Select and flexibly use online materials and witty, humorous language styles to close the distance with users. Disseminators should possess personal attributes, allowing users to feel sincerity and achieve emotional connection. Think like journalists: select a good story from content that interests users and narrate it in a compelling way, employing multiple expression methods including narration, argumentation, description, lyricism, and exposition.

3. Content Marketing-Based Deep Digital Reading Promotion Mechanism

The digital reading promotion mechanism refers to the interaction modes and processes among the components and external influencing factors of digital reading promotion. Components include promotion subjects, promotion objects, target users, promotional messages, promotion channels, promotion strategies, and promotion evaluation. The operational process involves promotion subjects first identifying target users, then selecting promotion objects, creating promotional messages, disseminating them through channels and methods, and evaluating promotion effects.

Introducing content marketing theory and methods into deep digital reading

promotion brings new changes. As shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper], the primary change in content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion is the emphasis on designing, creating, and disseminating promotional messages. Instead of empty hard advertising, strong connections between target users and promotion objects are achieved through valuable and compelling promotional messages that align with user needs, attracting and retaining users, enabling them to quickly perceive the usefulness of digital reading materials, and subsequently accessing and utilizing deep digital reading resources.

Figure 1 Comparison with Traditional Digital Reading Promotion Methods

Digital reading promotion is a process driven by the interaction of multiple elements. The impact of content marketing on promotional messages influences other components. Promotional messages serve as the bridge connecting target users and promotion objects; promotion objects and target users are the main elements affected by promotional messages, while promotion subjects, channels, and strategies are secondary elements affected. Naturally, promotion evaluation also changes accordingly. Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper] presents the content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion framework. The following sections elaborate on its components and interrelationships.

Figure 2 Framework for Content Marketing-Based Deep Digital Reading Promotion

3.1 Promotional Messages

3.1.1 Content Relevance and Value Content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion emphasizes maximizing the relevance between specific marketing content and user needs through promotional messages. Created messages must address users' learning, work, entertainment, and problem-solving needs. Promotional messages are the key element connecting target users and promotion objects: on one hand, they must correspond to target users' reading needs to establish strong associations; on the other hand, they must reflect the characteristics and value of promotion objects, using compelling messages to express the advantages of promoted digital resources, brands, and projects. The more personalized and relevant the promotional message, the more likely it is to capture user attention, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of deep digital reading promotion.

When facing deep digital reading materials or service projects, creating and disseminating promotional messages that connect target users and promotion objects under content marketing guidance is crucial. Current library digital reading promotion typically invites database company personnel for routine explanations without addressing users' specific contextual needs and problems, resulting in suboptimal effects. Peking University Library's public account promotes digital teaching resources through case study columns, setting promotional message titles based on user demands and interests such as faculty teaching, historical revelations, and hot topic restoration, enabling users to quickly perceive and

capture their attention. In the message body, beneficiaries share their experiences, explaining the utilization value in teaching material support and student topic discussion research, providing concrete ideas for faculty and students to use database resources and helping them appreciate the unique value of certain databases, thereby effectively improving resource utilization rates.

3.1.2 Content Forms Promotional message content forms are diverse and require comprehensive consideration of user preferences, promotion object characteristics, and promotion media features for flexible selection and matching with chosen promotion themes. In social media environments, lists, infographics, research surveys, stories and their social causes, and commentary on industry news are the most attention-grabbing and frequently shared content formats [5, 16].

- (1) **List Content** is typically clear at a glance, allowing users to allocate relatively less attention to find desired information. For example, Shanghai Library uses list-form promotional messages on its WeChat official account to promote e-books, such as “A Book Lover’s Long Holiday Reading Plan” and “What Should Children Read During Summer Vacation? Magic Aunt Zhang Hong’s Booklist is Here!”
- (2) **Infographics** are visually impactful content that facilitates user understanding. Since 2013, Shanghai Library has annually released reading reports, presenting readers’ yearly reading statistics from Shanghai public libraries through infographics [17]. In 2017, Shanghai Library published a WeChat promotional message—“2017 Reading List is Here! See What Everyone is Reading?”—using infographics to “reveal secrets” and enable mutual understanding among users. Based on WeChat reading volume and comment data, the promotion effect was favorable.
- (3) **Research Surveys** can serve as evidence supporting claims or viewpoints. For instance, the annual National Reading Survey Report released by the China Institute of Press and Publication typically provides a basis for digital publishing institutions to expand online marketing [18].
- (4) **Stories** are effective brand-building tools in content marketing, providing valuable or entertaining content. Successful stories often evoke emotional resonance or contain valuable information that helps users solve problems [10].
- (5) **Publishing Commentary or Initiating Discussions** on industry changes or breaking news events helps enhance user engagement. In 2018, Xiamen University Library’s annual report project “You and Me” was successfully upgraded to “Library Go” [19], comprehensively employing infographics, stories, commentary, and other content forms plus interactive features—users could open and log in through a WeChat mini-program to see their personal stories with the library in 2018. Using data to tell industry stories and transforming numbers into users’

personal learning journeys and tangible narratives represents successful marketing content for the library's overall brand.

Promotional message content forms need to be differentiated for various promotion channels, requiring the creation of different content types that can be exchanged and communicated across platforms. If the promotion channel is WeChat, the message should be WeChat articles specifically promoting digital resources; if it's a website, the message should be web content; if it's a radio station, the message should be audio. However, the same content is often converted into one or more other types—a long blog post may be used to create a series of tweets, transformed into infographics, posted to image communities, or recorded as short videos or audio [5].

3.1.3 Expression Methods and Approaches On one hand, promotional messages should begin from contexts and situations familiar to users. This requires designing attention-grabbing titles and outlines that capture user pain points and solve their problems. Through such connections and associations, users are gradually guided to accept promoted reading materials and continuously encouraged to develop reading and learning habits in new content areas. On the other hand, promotional message expression should be concise, vivid (e.g., multimedia, visualization), interesting (storytelling, game design, cases), and approachable (conversational, interactive) to facilitate user perception. Since the core of disseminated content is addressing target users' needs, the content must solve their problems and should be conversational and persistent, not limited to presenting results but also showing processes [21].

For example, booklist curation, guided by content marketing concepts, leverages internet users' knowledge, experience, taste, and imagination to refine, reorganize, and represent bibliographic information around specific themes. Curators' work involves "finding the best and most relevant content, then presenting it in the most suitable way" [22], with Douban booklists being a successful example of user-curated booklists.

3.2 Promotion Objects

Content marketing primarily targets brand awareness, customer conversion and guidance, and customer loyalty. Digital reading promotion objects refer to digital resources, service projects, digital library brands, and digital reading literacy that libraries and other promotion subjects plan to market. Content marketing-guided digital reading promotion can highlight the characteristics, value efficacy, and authority of promotion objects.

3.2.1 Promoting Digital Resources Domestic scholars primarily understand digital reading promotion objects as digital resources. Current institutional promotions of e-journals, databases, institutional repositories, and digital libraries suffer from generic resource-user associations—recommending bibliographies while emphasizing document carriers over content characteristics and

intrinsic value. Deep-level resource promotion should be strengthened, using knowledge discovery, dissemination, and flow to drive resource circulation and connecting related resources through knowledge points [23]. Content marketing theory precisely emphasizes this deep-level association, advocating for providing content that addresses users' learning, living, and work problems. Content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion should focus on excavating, organizing, and processing book content to form knowledge graphs, integrating 精华 content that solves users' prominent problems, and creating knowledge-based promotional messages. Rather than merely purchasing original digital publications and databases, it should emphasize aggregating fine-grained knowledge units.

Specifically, combining the three stages of deep digital reading—selection, input, and output—different emphases apply to various digital resource promotions:

- (1) **Selection Stage:** Focus on helping users navigate to obtain reading materials, enabling them to quickly perceive and access digital resources. This requires micro-processing original digital resources to extract abstract and guide-type marketing content, integrating promoted digital resources into thematic association and guide-type information knowledge maps to reduce deep reading difficulty and improve reading efficiency. For example, Shanghai Library's WeChat official account launched "Micro Reading" and "Micro Literature Hall," recommending timely and contextual books and journal articles based on recent major hot news or folk festivals, with QR codes attached as convenient digital resource access pathways. This approach addresses the "channel dilemma" in current library digital reading promotion. Similarly, Binghamton University Library integrates databases, news, and special collections in biology, chemistry, computer science, and other disciplines on its blog, providing a "Research Help" section including "How to Start a Research Topic," "How to Find Relevant Resources," "How to Evaluate Resource Value," "How to Cite," and other assistance, thereby demonstrating authoritative image and influence in professional information integration [9, 24].
- (2) **Input Stage:** Focus on reading guidance. Due to the contradiction between massive information and limited time/energy, users' knowledge understanding is often discrete and isolated, requiring information organizers to integrate and associate information from different channels and provide intelligent, visualized knowledge navigation. Libraries should use semantic web technologies to collect, reorganize, aggregate, and deeply process digital resources, providing knowledge recommendations and guidance through recommended bibliographies, online abstracts, online book reviews, thematic or hot topic recommendations, and links, presenting text content and embedded knowledge as well as knowledge associations in fine-grained ways [25-26].
- (3) **Output Stage:** Focus on helping users integrate, absorb, and apply learned knowledge. Building on the previous two stages, created promo-

tional messages help users conduct thematic reading around specific topics or purposes, encouraging output (e.g., thesis writing, book reviews, interaction with other users) to test knowledge validity, forming a complete learning cycle of “searching, reading, integrating, and applying.”

3.2.2 Promoting Reading Service Projects, Institutions, and Brands

When promotion objects are reading service projects, institutions, and brands that indirectly promote reading, promotional messages should highlight how these projects solve users’ problems, with the main function being connecting and guiding users. Regarding brand building, libraries and similar institutions can emphasize authoritative resource advantages to become thought leaders and reliable experts. As user information needs become more immediate and fragmented, the authority of digital library resources is weakened because users are unaware of or cannot perceive it. In social environments, users prefer obtaining valuable content from social media that solves practical problems—only valuable and interesting content can attract and retain them. When users have multiple choices, the key task is creating genuinely interesting information to capture their attention. Promotion subjects can provide knowledge explanation services, organizing relevant discipline experts and faculty to explain knowledge points to users. For example, City University of Hong Kong Library proactively collaborates with law schools to design new resource explanation models, narrowing the cognitive distance between resources and users [23].

3.2.3 Promoting Objects that Enhance Digital Reading Literacy

When promotion objects aim to enhance users’ reading literacy (guidance, training, courses, etc.), promotional messages should primarily help and accompany user growth. For users eager to develop reading habits who need companionship and supervision, their main demand is receiving guidance and training. Therefore, the core task for promotion subjects in designing digital reading promotion is stimulating reading interest and participation enthusiasm, such as Northwestern Polytechnical University Library’s “Book Novice Reading Cultivation” project [27].

3.3 Target Users

In content marketing theory, the combination of internal sales processes and customer purchases creates an interaction cycle. The combination of sales processes and content that guides consumers through this cycle is called a content segmentation table [11]. The content marketing funnel model comprehensively considers the entire customer lifecycle purchase process—including early, middle, and late stages—covering problem identification, object understanding, solution/provider comparison, selection/purchase, and continuous attention to become loyal customers. It outlines customer purchase scenarios and analyzes information needs at each stage, emphasizing the difference from general promotion: while promotion provides information to broad audiences, content marketing must define audiences, identify and target groups, create highly rele-

vant content segmentation tables based on interaction cycles according to their stage-specific needs, and achieve precise content marketing to meet stage-specific goals.

Based on the content marketing funnel model and interaction cycle content segmentation table, and combined with analysis of internet users' reading behaviors, this study examines how to connect valuable content with user needs at each reading process stage. Under scenarios of user need generation, active seeking, selection, initial utilization, sharing, and continuous use, helpful content is created for each promotion cycle stage and mapped out to interact with potential users at specific nodes, advancing them from passersby and potential users to loyal fans and long-term users. The entire association process among users, promotion subjects, and promotion objects follows the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) and AISAS (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, Share) models. Users face various difficulties and thresholds in their reading paths—these are the problems digital reading promotion subjects must help solve and the source of themes for creating digital reading promotion content. The emphasis lies on the relevance of selected promotional message themes to users and promotion objects.

As shown in Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper], during the “active seeking stage,” users interact with promotion objects of digital reading promotion projects and evaluate resource relevance. Therefore, promotion planning must focus on segmented groups, excavate their needs, follow the “customer lifecycle” for precise profiling and content positioning, and combine questionnaires or interviews to investigate key user perception points. It requires specifically understanding challenges faced by students, faculty, administrators, parents, and communities; analyzing their reading status, needs, and characteristics; excavating their demands and behavioral features; and establishing content connection points and strength to demonstrate problem-solving services. Creating strongly associated, valuable content around user pain points and thinking from users' perspectives with empathy is key to attracting users.

Figure 3 Interactive Cycle Content Segmentation

For example, for researchers with autonomous learning capabilities whose main demand is knowledge services, the core task of digital reading promotion is knowledge consultation and marketing based on multiple platforms and channels. For their knowledge needs such as project applications, promotion personnel can use professional capabilities to provide cutting-edge academic information, trend and hotspot analysis, proposal template collection, experience interview summaries, and project establishment guidance [28].

3.4 Promotion Subjects

Content marketing imposes high requirements on marketing teams, requiring assembly based on specific roles and functions, including but not limited to chief content marketing officers, editors-in-chief, content creators, content producers,

content listening officers, and freelance writers. Therefore, content marketing-based digital reading promotion should focus on the editorial team responsible for content creation, dissemination, and maintenance within promotion subjects, possessing composite expertise in planning, academic, and marketing capabilities, and considering media application context suitability issues and the ability to edit and integrate digital resources according to different channel characteristics.

In current digital reading promotion practice, governments, libraries, publishing houses, database vendors, educational institutions, and social organizations all participate. Content marketing-based digital reading promotion requires not only designated content creators (teams) or editors but also mobilizing broader institutional organizations and personnel beyond 专职 marketing staff, including library staff, faculty (e.g., explaining and analyzing professional journal articles), and users, fully exploring their personalities and identities to influence ordinary people through authentic, distinctive individuals and generate emotional resonance. Journalists, storytellers, content creators, and freelance writers should be jointly employed. Individuals like Luo Zhenyu, Zheng Yuanjie, and “Storyteller Uncle Kai” are concrete, clear personalities who build trust through sincerity. Some libraries have begun focusing on building promotion subject teams; for example, Tongji University established a cultural promotion position in its 2018 library recruitment to participate in literature resources and reading promotion project organization and implementation, both online and offline, and in creative conceptualization, copywriting, and promotion proposals.

3.5 Promotion Channels

Content marketing emphasizes both content and channels. Especially in the mobile internet era, establishing internet platform thinking and innovating marketing channels is crucial. As Jay Baer states, social media is the fuel that ignites content [11]. Overall, when coordinating digital reading promotion channels, appropriate channels should be selected and combined based on target users, promotion objects, promotional messages, and environmental factors such as timing and scenarios, while flexibly applying content promotion techniques and influencer boosting.

Specifically, promotion subjects should fully utilize various public social service platforms while ultimately establishing their own channels or directing traffic to self-built digital library websites and user service communities, using official websites as the axis. Based on different attributes of other social media platforms, personalized self-media should be deployed. Library websites or mobile clients are entry points for accessing digital resources, while social networks are important channels for library-user communication. Effective integration between social network icons and websites or apps is necessary. One effective promotion channel is directly providing QR codes, which can both understand users’ reading interests and promote sharing and communication among users while directly linking from social media to self-built digital resources, thereby

enhancing the overall brand influence of the digital library.

Special attention must be paid to the multi-screen environment where users fragment their time, leading to scattered attention. Therefore, multiple online channels need to be integrated for cross-screen joint promotion of digital reading, combined with offline channels. Converged services should be developed across multiple screens, old and new media, and virtual and reality, including micro-reading services that recommend excellent e-books, journal article abstracts, and in-depth online articles matched to user needs.

Moreover, content marketing theory emphasizes providing continuous content. Therefore, promotion channel selection must consider platforms and channels users employ continuously. Platforms like Alipay, WeChat, and Baidu that users utilize almost daily can be leveraged to achieve the “continuity” emphasized in content marketing, using promotion channels to normalize promotional content and internalize it into users’ life attitudes and methods through sustained immersion. Current practices offer referencable cases: Shanghai Library has opened “Book Search” services in WeChat and Alipay’s “City Services,” offering free online reading books within Alipay and launching library city service micro-sites and micro-reading channels, enabling mobile full-text reading services. East China Normal University Library and Anhui Agricultural University Library have pioneered and successfully operated Baidu direct accounts.

3.6 Promotion Strategies

Content marketing focuses on attracting users through promotional messages to promote sales. Current digital reading promotion has begun applying relationship marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, advertising marketing, event marketing, experiential marketing, book reviews, search engine optimization, social media optimization, online reading guidance, and other marketing strategies. To address fragmented reading problems, content marketing strategies help attract user attention and interest, encouraging interest in promotion objects and promoting deep digital reading behaviors and improved promotion effectiveness, particularly the first two stages of the AIDA model: attention and interest. Using content marketing elements can enhance attention capture and interest generation.

Different digital reading content marketing strategies should be adopted for different user groups: (1) For those lacking reading willingness, guide them to experience reading charm, enjoy reading 乐趣, and gradually develop reading willingness. According to content marketing theory, instructive and helpful content is popular among users. (2) For those with reading willingness but poor reading skills, including those who haven’t learned to read (e.g., children, young students) and adults who lost continuing education opportunities, library reading promotion can train them to learn reading. For example, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics’ Summer Reading Training Camp aims to improve college students’ reading literacy through the reading guidance philosophy

of “teachers and students reading, writing, and living together, seeking soul companionship and spiritual guidance” [29-30]. Simultaneously, machine learning technology should be used to mine and analyze target users’ information needs and problems, providing active and personalized digital reading services through “push” methods (e.g., push notifications and recommended reading), associating these digital reading content marketing activities with users’ daily life behaviors such as learning, work, and emotions, striving to become users’ personal life assistants. For instance, Shanghai Library uses massive data resources from its “One City, One Network, One Card, One System” service platform to build big data analysis, mining, and visualization platforms, forming intelligent services including user profiling analysis, personalized push, and borrowing recommendations [31].

3.7 Promotion Evaluation

The “Content Marketing Evaluation Pyramid” lists three metric dimensions: primary content metrics—sales, cost savings, and customer retention; secondary content metrics—lead quality, lead quantity, and shortened sales cycles; and user metrics—web traffic, “likes,” page views, and search rankings [11]. Based on this pyramid and existing evaluation indicators in reading promotion, an evaluation indicator system from a content marketing perspective can be constructed, including evaluation indicators (macro and micro) and evaluation tools, considering both promotion subject and target user perspectives:

- (1) **Macro Indicators** include target return on objectives (ROO), return on investment (ROI), number of cultivated users, degree of improvement in users’ reading literacy, and degree of increase in reading quantity.
- (2) **Micro Indicators** include traffic conversion, length of borrowing/download cycle shortened/influenced, conversion rate of content products, user awareness rate, user contact/click-through rate, total user number, user usage/download rate, user experience and satisfaction, reader word-of-mouth or pre-post project recognition of digital library institutions or brands, and evaluation of each element’s operational quality during implementation. For example, one IFLA International Marketing Award evaluation criterion requires inclusion of project effectiveness evaluation methods with measurable results. Zhang Ji and Guo Jing analyzed award-winning cases and summarized that two common methods evaluate marketing effectiveness: beneficiary numbers and service satisfaction [32].
- (3) **Evaluation Tools** include email subscription volume, WeChat and Weibo official account follower increases, reading volume, likes, forwards, shares, comments, post volume, page views, customer information needs and trends, most popular blog content, search rankings/SEO indicators, offline event participation numbers, and event scales.

Additionally, content marketing-based digital reading promotion evaluation can

incorporate effectiveness concepts and emotional evaluation approaches. The effectiveness concept is increasingly becoming a standard for evaluating service quality in the public cultural service field. Library effectiveness mainly refers to the scale of library marketing input and output and the ability to transform input into output, specifically including marketing cost, efficiency, effect, and benefit [33]. For measuring content marketing emotionality, indicators include users' ability to recall and describe promoted resources, lines, plots, music, etc., reflecting their recognition of content marketing and whether they experience emotional reactions and brand attitude changes due to message content.

As digital marketing expert J. Baer proposes in “Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is About Help not Hype” [34], facing fierce competition and users' limited attention, digital reading promotion needs to strengthen user perception behavior research and carefully design promotional messages to be perceived as relevant and useful, ensuring more user attention and establishing long-term trust and intimacy. This paper applies content marketing theory to digital reading promotion, focusing on improving promotional message elements. Through created messages, it demonstrates the high value of specific promotion objects and strong associations with various user needs, thereby reshaping other elements including promotion objects, target users, promotion subjects, promotion channels, and promotion methods. The constructed content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion framework model provides a new approach to address current problems such as lack of user-centered design in promotional messages, optimize deep digital reading promotion effectiveness, and stimulate users' deep digital reading behaviors. The path of content marketing-based deep digital reading promotion will be the focus of future research.

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Author Contributions

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English Abstract: [Purpose/Significance] To remedy the lack of customized design in promotional messages, this paper proposes a new idea based on content marketing theory to improve the effectiveness of deep digital reading promotion and stimulate users' deep digital reading behaviors. [Method/Process] Focusing on the promotional message perspective, this paper constructs a content marketing mechanism for deep digital reading promotion by adopting content marketing theory and combining it with the definition and characteristics of deep digital reading promotion. [Result/Conclusion] The characteristics of deep digital reading promotion based on content marketing are mainly reflected in the design, creation, and dissemination of promotional messages, while reshaping six elements: target users, promotion objects, promotion subjects, promotion channels, promotion strategies, and promotion evaluation. Specifically, with promotional messages as the link, the strong connection between target users and promotion objects is realized through valuable content, supported by promotion channels and strategies.

Keywords: digital reading; reading promotion; deep reading; content marketing

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.