

# New Media Application in Yangshuo for the Construction of Guilin as a World-Class Tourism City: Current Status, Challenges, and Strategies (Postprint)

**Authors:** Yuan Yue

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## Abstract

[Objective] Against the backdrop of constructing Guilin as a world-class tourism city, how to leverage new media to create world-class cultural tourism products, enhance tourism service quality, and shape a world-class tourism city brand has become an increasingly important research topic. [Method] Through field research and data collection, this article analyzes the current status and dilemmas of new media utilization in Yangshuo within the context of constructing Guilin as a world-class tourism city. [Result] Based on existing problems and current development status, targeted strategies are proposed to advance the systematic construction of urban tourism branding, focus on enhancing urban reputation, and promote the high-end, quality, and characteristic development of urban services. [Conclusion] The utilization and development of new media in Yangshuo holds certain reference significance for strengthening the attractiveness, creativity, and competitiveness of Guilin as a world-class tourism city.

## Full Text

### The Current Status, Dilemmas, and Strategies of New Media Application in Yangshuo for Building Guilin into a World-Class Tourist City

School of Culture and Communication, Guilin Tourism University,  
Guilin, Guangxi 541000

**Abstract:** [Purpose] Against the backdrop of building Guilin into a world-class tourist city, the question of how to leverage new media to create world-class cultural tourism products, enhance service quality, and shape a world-class

urban tourism brand has become increasingly critical. **[Method]** This study analyzes the current status and dilemmas of new media application in Yangshuo within the context of Guilin' s world-class tourist city development through field research and data collection. **[Result]** Based on existing problems and current development conditions, targeted strategies are proposed to advance the systematic construction of the city' s tourism brand, enhance its reputation, and promote the high-end, quality-oriented, and distinctive development of urban services. **[Conclusion]** The application and development of new media in Yangshuo offer valuable insights for strengthening the appeal, creativity, and competitiveness of Guilin as a world-class tourist city.

**Keywords:** world-class tourist city; new media; Yangshuo; appeal; competitiveness; creativity

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Nobel Economics Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz once predicted that the two most influential events for humanity in the 21st century would be the new technological revolution and urbanization. Urban image represents a prominent, concise, and tangible impression of a city' s industries, culture, and lifestyle, serving as a key factor in determining whether a city is attractive and worthy of investment. In the future, the integration between media and cities will become increasingly close, with urban images being reconstructed within various "mobile scenarios" and "spatiotemporal recombinations" [1]. Currently, the social framework and life rhythm constituted by new media have become the backdrop of urban development—ubiquitous network connectivity. New media records the evolution and transformation of urban tourism, while the vast panorama of modern cities provides fertile ground for new media to continuously evolve.

Following President Xi Jinping' s inspection of Guilin in April 2021, Guilin was entrusted with the new mission and requirements of "building a world-class tourist city." The autonomous region' s party committee and government have made systematic deployments for this goal, proposing the overarching vision of "global perspective, international standards, Chinese style, Guangxi characteristics, and Guilin classics" [2]. Yangshuo, in turn, has defined its development positioning as a pilot zone for building a world-class tourist city, setting forth new objectives to "create first-class premium scenic areas, first-class cultural tourism experiences, first-class international tourism consumption destinations, and first-class health and leisure resorts" [3].

Yangshuo has consistently emphasized new media channels in its urban im-

age communication, establishing a presence across platforms including WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin (TikTok). Since April 1, 2022, through the “Guilin Reports to You (Yangshuo Chapter)” new media promotional campaign, Yangshuo has organized various new media platforms to endorse its tourism and specialty products, generating significant momentum. By April 18, Yangshuo had organized 24 new media promotional events, achieving a total readership (viewership) of 6.847 million person-times, including six works with over 100,000 views, four works with over 1 million views, and one short video with over 10 million views.

Among Yangshuo’s numerous new media accounts, “YangshuoSugarHouse” stands out as particularly representative, operating across “two microblogs and one Douyin” as well as Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). Its WeChat platform includes the official account “YangshuoSugarHouse,” video channel, and service mall, demonstrating clear advantages in fan cultivation and community building. The official account regularly publishes original articles with targeted operational strategies for corporate promotion, supported by a professional team ensuring high-quality copywriting and layout design. While the video channel’s short videos have not yet achieved substantial dissemination in terms of likes and views, the platform’s live-streaming function enables precise marketing and scenario construction, fostering user stickiness and consumption. The Yangshuo Sugar House hotel integrates art with natural scenery through collaborations with renowned artists and top global brands, leveraging their traffic to effectively enhance Yangshuo’s cultural tourism brand influence.

## **1. The Current Status of New Media Application in Yangshuo’s Development as a World-Class Tourist City**

## **2. Dilemmas of New Media Application in Yangshuo’s Development as a World-Class Tourist City**

### **2.1 Insufficient Understanding of New Media Application, Preventing the Formation of an Effective “Dissemination-Feedback” Chain**

As is well known, Guilin is a historic tourist city endowed with exceptional natural resources and cultural heritage. The brand value of “Guilin’s landscape tops the world, Yangshuo’s landscape tops Guilin” provides a solid foundation for building Guilin into a world-class tourist city. However, current attention to new media remains low, with information reception patterns tending toward passivity, making large-scale promotion of content difficult. First, target audience positioning is unclear. As an emerging form of online marketing, new media brand marketing emphasizes precise user services [5], yet tourists have diverse content needs, making personalized customization urgent. Second, the shortage of new media technical talent in Yangshuo directly constrains the full utilization of new media promotion. Finally, without systematic overall planning for new media use, post-launch operation and maintenance receive inadequate attention, preventing the formation of an effective “dissemination-feedback” chain and limiting the value of new media as a bridge for direct communication between

tourists and the destination.

## **2.2 Excessive Commercialization and Lack of Public Opinion Guidance, Reducing Tourist Satisfaction**

Amid the rapid expansion of the short-video industry, some content creators pursue “traffic supremacy” and “data kingship,” leading to value deviations in content production. This has resulted in frequent phenomena such as malicious competition, false information, vulgar content, and copyright infringement that deviate from short-video creation norms [6]. Currently, Yangshuo’s scenic areas rely on internet celebrities for promotion to attract viewers and stimulate travel desire. However, excessive commercial packaging creates serious discrepancies with real scenes, causing psychological disappointment among audiences and generating feelings of deception and negative emotions. Meanwhile, official new media accounts respond too slowly to crisis public relations, which is detrimental to building Guilin’s world-class tourist city image. Most of Yangshuo’s new media content derives from ordinary citizens’ self-perception and emotional expression, with official accounts demonstrating weak awareness in guiding negative information and lacking capabilities in news opinion guidance and online monitoring and management.

## **2.3 Severe Homogenization of New Media Content and Lack of Creativity in Marketing Products**

Successful new media application depends on quality content. Currently, Yangshuo tourism videos posted by government, enterprise, and individual users exhibit serious copycat behavior. Short-video platforms recommend similar works based on users’ browsing history and viewing duration, which not only creates aesthetic fatigue but also breeds boredom and even psychological resistance toward attractions. Yangshuo’s short-video content varies widely in quality, with serious copyright infringement issues, relatively simple filming techniques, narrow scenarios, and a limited narrative perspective on world-class tourist city image—mostly recording only the superficial appearance of attractions without extending to the stories and emotions behind them. New media marketing lacks clear content planning regarding what types of content to publish, publication frequency, and user demographics, resulting in unoriginal marketing products.

## **2.4 Single New Media Communication Carrier and Lack of Deep Cultural Element Mining**

With numerous new media platforms available, Yangshuo tourism practitioners struggle with platform selection and fail to evaluate marketing effectiveness. Blind promotion on one or two mainstream platforms ultimately yields minimal results despite substantial effort. Urban tourism cultural elements largely determine a city’s appeal and tourism quality, as “cultural tourists not only want to visit attractions themselves but also hope to understand related cultural stories and historical changes through new media, capturing deep cultural imprints to complete their cultural identity construction” [7]. Yangshuo’s new media primarily relies on natural landscapes for dissemination, with high-traffic

content featuring the Lijiang fisherman, Yulong River bamboo rafts, and Xi-anggong Mountain sunrise. However, there is insufficient deep capture of local cultural elements, particularly regarding Hanfu national style, ethnic customs, and rural life, resulting in fragmented dissemination that fails to form a cohesive Yangshuo cultural narrative.

### **2.5 Lack of Highly Recognizable KOLs with Long-Term Positive Dissemination**

Currently, Yangshuo's representative internet celebrity is only Teacher Liu (Liu Tao), lagging behind comparable destinations like Lijiang, Zhangjiajie, and Xinjiang's cultural tourism system, which boast multiple mature tourism influencers. Yangshuo also lacks professional MCN institutions for new media operation, resulting in unstable channels for continuous dissemination, arbitrary content distribution, uneven output quality, and low dissemination efficiency. When public opinion crises emerge, responses tend to be delayed. For instance, on July 19, 2022, an internet celebrity mistakenly identified a 94-year-old fisherman photographed with tourists on the Lijiang River as the old man on the 20-yuan banknote, claiming he still worked at 94 to buy 170-yuan medicine for his stroke-afflicted wife. This crisis was repeatedly exposed on new media platforms, triggering widespread public concern and negatively impacting Yangshuo's tourism brand image. "The characteristics of information dissemination in the mobile internet era actually increase the sense of crisis for regions in shaping their tourism images. Eradicating and controlling negative destination information is as important as shaping a positive image through new media" [8].

### **2.6 Serious Deficiencies in Yangshuo's International New Media Tourism Marketing**

The rapid development of new media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has enhanced interaction between users and destinations, breaking through one-way communication and spatiotemporal limitations while enabling real-time communication and globalizing tourism service marketing. As a pilot zone for building Guilin's world-class tourist city, Yangshuo must open up international visibility and expand into international markets by leveraging international new media for content publishing and brand promotion to attract overseas potential consumers. Currently, Yangshuo focuses primarily on the three domestic battlefields of WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin, leaving enormous unexplored potential and possibilities in terms of international new media account numbers, update frequency, and interaction levels.

## **3. Strategies for Yangshuo's New Media Application to Boost Guilin's World-Class Tourist City Construction**

New media's rapid development continues to permeate all areas of urban construction. Regional characteristics in urban culture—including history, geography, and humanities—serve not only as thematic elements for new media promotion but also facilitate the creation of urban brand cards and competitiveness

enhancement. Yangshuo' s new media application provides an excellent demonstration for other regions on the path toward building Guilin into a world-class tourist city. Moving forward, Yangshuo must closely monitor new media trends, seek integration points between new media and offline activities, and gradually form a distinctive cultural tourism image through content innovation and experience creation.

### **3.1 Establish a Yangshuo New Media Tourism Marketing Database to Enhance Tourist Information Interaction**

Yangshuo' s tourism informatization includes smart tourism projects, high-definition interactive digital terminals, “Drunken Beauty Yangshuo” AR multi-dimensional guides, WeChat public service platforms, and intelligent tour guide maps. To further optimize the “One-Click Tour Guilin” comprehensive tourism service platform and leverage the Guilin cultural tourism big data platform, Yangshuo should establish a smart cultural tourism marketing platform using internet, cloud computing, and big data technologies. This platform would conduct precise marketing through live-streaming, thematic promotion, and search engine keyword optimization, while strengthening the collection and analysis of multi-dimensional tourist information from key source markets like Hunan and Guangdong—including visitor attributes, preferences, locations, and consumption patterns—to drive market segmentation and implement targeted marketing and management. To increase attention toward world-class tourist city construction, Yangshuo' s new media creators should actively utilize marketing databases to stimulate consumer interest, enhance attention toward tourism products, strengthen tourist information interaction, and influence consumer travel decisions.

### **3.2 Establish a Yangshuo New Media Crisis Management Institution to Enhance Crisis Public Relations Capabilities**

In the process of building a world-class tourist city, “when emergencies occur, if the public' s demand for authentic information cannot be met, inflammatory and misleading information will fill the information space, preventing objective and truthful information from spreading while rumors, false information, and negative emotions fuel public opinion incidents” [9]. The Yangshuo County People' s Government must establish a specialized institution to handle crisis events and form an effective crisis management mechanism—on the one hand, organizing personnel for thorough analysis and investigation, and on the other hand, taking appropriate measures to control the spread and expansion of negative information. Building a world-class tourist city label requires effective public opinion guidance. First, experts and industry professionals in urban development and tourism branding can be invited to analyze tourism events from professional perspectives to guide public opinion and set the agenda. Second, the opinions of individual opinion leaders must be respected. The increasing number of new media users and expanding dissemination has transformed the public opinion landscape of tourist city image. Official tourism new media accounts must possess keen news sensitivity, enabling every participant to become

an opinion leader while carefully guiding urban public opinion.

### **3.3 Enrich Yangshuo New Media Content and Innovate Marketing Approaches**

Successful new media application depends on quality content. Currently, Yangshuo's tourism videos posted by government, enterprise, and individual users exhibit serious copycat behavior. Short-video platforms recommend similar works based on users' browsing history and viewing duration, which not only creates aesthetic fatigue but also breeds boredom and even psychological resistance toward attractions. Yangshuo's short-video content varies widely in quality, with serious copyright infringement issues, relatively simple filming techniques, narrow scenarios, and a limited narrative perspective on world-class tourist city image—mostly recording only the superficial appearance of attractions without extending to the stories and emotions behind them. New media marketing lacks clear content planning regarding what types of content to publish, publication frequency, and user demographics, resulting in unoriginal marketing products. To address this, Yangshuo should fully leverage its superior natural scenery and complete tourism product chain to conduct in-depth exploration of cultural heritage sites, ancient towns, streets, and villages, identifying distinctive, disseminable, and relatable promotional points. Incentive mechanisms should be established to encourage originality, focusing on ordinary people and everyday events to shape a positive tourism image through small stories that reflect larger themes. Further excavation of Yangshuo's resources should consider character design, emotional appeal, and rural lifestyles as dissemination pathways to strengthen Yangshuo's unique elements.

### **3.4 Build an All-Media Marketing Channel to Form a Yangshuo New Media Communication Matrix**

A world-class tourist city image is a multi-dimensional entity. While integrating traditional marketing channels such as radio, television, and newspapers, Yangshuo's tourism marketing must incorporate various new media app channels. The promotion model should fully recognize the functions, advantages, and disadvantages of different new media platforms to maximize marketing effectiveness. Efforts should strengthen new media cultural tourism promotion represented by Weibo, WeChat, OTA platforms, and mobile terminals. The official Weibo account should pursue instant and practical information release, regularly planning hot topics, interacting with marketing accounts, and enhancing Yangshuo's cultural tourism exposure, forwarding volume, and effective fan base. Platforms such as Xuexi Qiangguo, Toutiao, and Douyin should be fully utilized to strengthen Yangshuo's cultural tourism promotion. An official flagship store for Yangshuo culture and tourism should be established to provide ticket sales and Guilin souvenir products, achieving integrated marketing between official new media and tourist self-media.

### **3.5 Deploy New Media Operation Strategies to Leverage Yangshuo KOL Marketing**

As a nationally designated opening-up county for tourism and a world-famous scenic area, Yangshuo is a classic brand for Guangxi tourism and a flagship product for Guilin tourism. Currently, Yangshuo County's official Douyin account "Yangshuo Micro-Tourism" has low follower numbers and cumulative likes, failing to create the expected promotional aggregation effect. In contrast, individual Yangshuo tourism accounts generally outperform official accounts in followers and likes. Yangshuo County must first plan and operate its official accounts effectively by deploying MCN strategies, as "new media content production and distribution have gradually formed an MCN model that creates a scaled, vertical creative ecosystem with batch production, quality control, and content gatekeeping" [11]. Simultaneously, KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) should be actively utilized for their group influence. Celebrities and internet celebrities can be hired for soft promotion of Yangshuo, invited to create Vlog videos during their visits, and initiate Vlog activities. By organizing events such as photography, short-video, and micro-film competitions themed "Beautiful Yangshuo," mass participation can be mobilized to encourage group visits to the destination.

### **3.6 Leverage Overseas Communication Media to Create a New International New Media Marketing Approach for Yangshuo**

The primary task of new media marketing is to ensure tourists know about distinctive tourism products. Therefore, it is essential to deeply explore Yangshuo's rural characteristic culture centered on the Lijiang River and Yulong River scenic areas and innovate distinctive tourism attractions. "In building Guilin into a world-class tourist city, beyond the inherent value of tourism resources, tourists' perceptual evaluation of Guilin's tourism resources plays a crucial role" [10]. Relying on Guilin's advantages of ethnic minorities' singing and dancing talents and urban tourists' desire for pastoral lifestyles can enhance tourist satisfaction and strengthen Yangshuo's influence, value-added potential, and comprehensive worth. "In domestic urban image dissemination, strategies must address both local realities and international perspectives for overseas communication" [12]. Currently, Yangshuo's international new media tourism marketing suffers from serious deficiencies. Future efforts should plan Yangshuo tourism marketing events on international new media platforms, focusing on account management, video quality, user interaction, and advertising promotion to strengthen outreach. International new media platforms should be actively leveraged and unified with China's external publicity work of telling China's story well. Furthermore, Yangshuo's international marketing multi-media channels should be integrated, including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and other international new media platforms. Simultaneously, new media and film media channels should be combined by inviting film crews to shoot in Yangshuo scenic areas or embedding Yangshuo symbols in film and television works, then rapidly and extensively disseminating and operating through new media to attract foreign audiences' attention to Yangshuo's scenic areas, making Yangshuo a "paradise on earth" for foreign tourists.

Empowering world-class tourist city construction through new media requires a

gradual process. In this process, Guilin's dedicated "One-Click Tour Guilin" network big data and new media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin provide tourists with considerable convenience. However, due to talent shortages, slow concept updates, and insufficient material excavation during the transformation from traditional to new media, alongside relatively booming new media operations driven by capital that fabricates fake news to gain traffic, harming Guilin's urban image, it is necessary to quickly establish and improve the new media operation system. Media resources must be integrated, new media talents introduced and cultivated, and collaborations with universities strengthened to guide and unite local enterprises' new media teams in jointly contributing to Guilin's world-class tourist city construction.

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

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