

## Postprint: Possibilities for Chinese Web Dramas Leveraging Intelligent Technologies for Dissemination in the New Media Environment

**Authors:** Zhang Yao

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### Abstract

As the new media environment continues to mature, the ways in which people consume drama content are undergoing significant changes. Web dramas have emerged as the preferred viewing format for certain audiences. This paper investigates how to achieve effective dissemination of web dramas within the new media context and expand their audience reach. Drawing upon the inherent characteristics of web dramas, this study employs a sampling survey methodology through online questionnaire distribution to analyze potential communication modes and formats in the new media landscape, and further explores future development possibilities by integrating emerging technologies.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

#### The Possibility of Chinese Web Dramas Relying on Intelligent Technology for Dissemination in the New Media Environment

*(Nanjing Arts Institute, Nanjing, Jiangsu 210000)*

**Abstract:** As the new media environment matures, viewing habits are undergoing transformation, with web dramas becoming the preferred choice for some audiences. This article examines the inherent characteristics of web dramas, employs sampling survey methodology through online questionnaires, analyzes potential dissemination methods and forms in the new media landscape, and explores future development possibilities by integrating emerging technologies.

**Keywords:** new media; web drama; internet; intelligent technology; web drama dissemination

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## Introduction

The emergence of computers and the internet laid the foundation for web dramas. The earliest web drama originated in the United States with “The Spot” in 1995, which depicted beach life [1]. In November 2009, Tudou.com and the China Film Group jointly produced “Mr. Lei,” marking the initial formation and beginning of development for Chinese web dramas. With the advent of the 5G era and the rapid development of new media, web drama production and dissemination have encountered more opportunities and prospects. The continuous expansion of new media platforms and channels has enabled significant development and breakthroughs in web drama dissemination in the new media environment. The advantages of web drama dissemination in the new media environment are self-evident when compared to traditional television drama broadcasting.

## 1. Advantages of Web Drama Dissemination in New Media Environment

In the context of vigorous new media development, web dramas align with new media dissemination methods due to their inherent characteristics. Moreover, their foundation in network communication enables a broader audience reach. By leveraging big data to understand audience psychology, web dramas can more precisely cater to viewers, aligning with contemporary cultural concepts and emotional marketing, thereby strengthening audience identification. The real-time nature of the internet makes web drama completion rates and secondary dissemination more timely and effective, thus maximizing dissemination impact.

### 1.1 Wider Dissemination Platforms

Relying on internet development and the rise of various new media video platforms, web dramas can achieve multi-platform and multi-scenario playback, providing audiences with more viewing channels and greater convenience. Viewers can watch videos through portable electronic devices such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. A drama unfinished on a home computer can be continued while riding public transportation.

### 1.2 Multi-Category Dissemination

Unlike multi-episode serial content, web dramas leverage new media platforms to achieve diverse presentation forms and multi-platform content promotion through precisely edited material distributed via short video platforms. This

multi-platform, multi-method, and multi-category dissemination enables faster and more efficient dissemination with better results. For instance, during the broadcast of the web drama “Day and Night,” various short video platforms simultaneously released condensed suspenseful short clips [Figure 1: see original paper], thereby stimulating audience curiosity and achieving promotional impact. When web dramas are broadcast, related soft article promotions can also be seen in text on major public platforms, making promotional forms more diversified, content richer, and attraction stronger, thereby generating positive reputation and traffic for the web drama.

### 1.3 Higher User Stickiness

With updates to internet and video technology, web drama creation involves not only content innovation but also continuous exploration of new technologies in form. Relying on the ongoing development and innovation of VR/AR technology, web dramas have begun to achieve breakthroughs at the technical level, resulting in interactive web dramas. The emergence of interactive web dramas makes content more responsive to audience choices, with plot development closely aligned with viewer psychology, leading to higher content recognition and stronger audience stickiness. The web drama “The Last Mountain Mover of Dragon Ridge Maze” attempted to use interactive formats, allowing audiences to select character props themselves, representing a notably representative attempt at interactive dramas in China at this stage.

## 2. Web Drama Dissemination Strategies

While network dissemination itself can achieve timeliness through internet power, different platforms have different positioning and user preferences. To gain more exposure and traffic in the vast new media landscape, web dramas must produce content according to the characteristics of different new media platforms, achieving multi-form and multi-channel dissemination.

### 2.1 Multi-Channel Model

With the rapid development of new media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, and Zhihu, many web dramas have established their own dissemination content based on each platform’s characteristics. According to platform fan positioning and rules, content is decomposed and distributed to existing large-traffic fan platforms to optimize dissemination effects. For example, when the web drama “Forensic Qin Ming” was broadcast, it employed WeChat soft article promotion, Weibo topic promotion, and short video clips of key scenes, creating momentum for the series from various channels and attracting viewing groups of different ages and levels.

## 2.2 Multi-Platform Interoperability

Network audiences do not obtain information in a closed space; in fact, they often exist in a socialized environment where various connections form between audience members, creating mutual influence. This connectivity not only changes dissemination patterns but also affects people's social relationships. From the audience perspective, connectivity has three aspects of impact. First, mutual influence among audiences can transcend time and space, often with significant impact, which means information and opinion flows extend in all directions, bringing difficulties in control. This connectivity also implies a high degree of aggregation, which externalizes dispersed and hidden individual choices into collective choices, integrating weak individual opinions into strong collective voices. However, these collective choices and voices differ from public opinion, as they are not always rational nor do they always bring positive effects [2]. The barrage comments and messages on web dramas reveal the viewpoints of different "camps" of viewers, generating inter-camp discussions that create more intense collisions of viewing experiences and higher audience participation.

## 2.3 Multi-Domain Openness

The micro-level manifestation of network dissemination openness is the openness of the dissemination process. Temporally, compared with traditional media, the internet can be in a constant state of information release, with the latest comments and messages being highly visible and transparent, forming a stark contrast with traditional media limited by publication cycles and broadcast time slots. All elements and links in the network dissemination process exist in an open state [3]. Under policy and regulatory norms, web drama quality continues to improve. Web dramas adapt to the openness of network dissemination, enabling real-time barrage playback and comment presentation that aligns with audience preferences, fostering good development in interactive domains. For instance, the interactive web drama "His Smile" allows viewers to assume the role of the female protagonist, with plot bridge choices appearing at the bottom of the screen. Through different choices, the plot develops differently, and viewers can also choose to develop relationships with different male protagonists. The drama offers 21 choices and 17 endings, allowing audiences to participate in real-time during viewing, experience the plot more authentically, and understand character feelings, thereby enhancing viewers' perceptual ability regarding the plot.

## 2.4 Multi-Level Appreciation

Web drama dissemination relies more on the process of generating and spreading effects and impacts. Word-of-mouth among internet users affects web drama traffic and influences topic selection and content for subsequent web drama creation. In a survey of 110 questionnaires distributed by the author, audiences who enjoy watching web dramas are mostly concentrated in the 20-30 age range, with 45.13% of viewers preferring short dramas of 10-20 episodes [Figure 2: see

original paper]. With young audiences as the main viewing body, audience viewing habits are changing. Audiences have transformed from “passive recipients” to active viewers. Modern audiences live in a fast-paced era where online short dramas align with people’s fragmented viewing habits while satisfying entertainment needs. Audience aesthetic demands for web dramas have simultaneously improved, with online self-produced dramas exhibiting postmodernist aesthetics and youth subculture characteristics: marginality, subversiveness, and criticality. Many contemporary web dramas present a “sense of gratification” that aligns with modern audiences’ horizon of expectations and aesthetic psychology, changing the fate of web dramas being eliminated.

### 3. Exploring Possible Dissemination Methods from the Audience Perspective

In the new media environment, individuals as users play an important role as nodes in the dissemination network and constitute the basic unit in the new dissemination structure of new media. Each individual is a producer, disseminator, and consumer of information.

Users can publish relevant information through their own accounts. Although self-media content production is mostly non-institutionalized and sometimes fragmented and random, new media has endowed individuals with the right to self-expression. Content contributed by each individual also affects the entire content ecology [4]. Web drama dissemination more often needs to rely on information producers, and these information producers are precisely the audience. Whether through barrage comments, reviews, or forwarding to other self-media platforms, all audience comments play a crucial role in web drama dissemination.

In information flow, each audience member plays the role of a switch and “repeater.” For content that meets their needs, individuals choose to forward, which opens the switch and repeater, promoting information amplification and diffusion. In this spontaneous relay dissemination of individual nodes, the mechanism of opinion leader self-organization also functions. The quality of web dramas prompts audiences to generate different psychological feelings after viewing, and some audiences will publish these feelings on the internet through text, short videos, and other methods. Everyone’s viewpoint is different, but both positive and negative aspects emerge. This camp-style viewpoint confrontation also forms the basis for topic generation, enabling web drama content to spread more extensively on the internet and playing a certain dissemination role.

In individual nodes, users can obtain information from self-media or others without leaving home because their social relationships act as information sources. Even if users do not use any news clients, they may still obtain rich information in friend circles or other communication platforms. Of course, when information cannot fully meet their needs, they will proactively seek more content they require. Besides content production bringing dissemination effects, many web

dramas with good traffic drive the development of other industries. Many web dramas are platform self-produced dramas requiring payment for viewing. Good web dramas not only bring positive reputation but also promote platform payment behavior. Additionally, offline consumption brought by idol artists' fans is also a form of information consumption. Web dramas generate derivative products such as figurines and bookmarks, thereby achieving content transformation.

As new media dissemination gradually matures, technological evolution also brings new possibilities for new media content dissemination. With the continuous improvement and development of 5G technology and artificial intelligence technology, while enriching internet functions, technology also enriches and develops forms of human connection. This communication and connection method brings more convenient and diversified creative possibilities to web dramas.

### **3.1 Improving Connection Efficiency, Achieving Barrier-Free Communication**

Internet development has enabled real-time communication for human beings. Current web dramas also present diverse forms of real-time communication, such as barrage comments and messages. Future intelligent translation and other technologies will further enhance connection efficiency. Although the application field of intelligent translation is not limited to humans, its main application direction should be human communication. The connection and interaction between users of different languages will feature a barrier-free interface, providing possibilities for breaking down language communication barriers when audiences watch web dramas [5]. Additionally, intelligent translation can also translate plots in real-time according to content, combining the voice timbre and quality of characters themselves for diverse transformation, providing possibilities for expanding relationship networks beyond regional and national restrictions. The selectability of web drama language types gives more viewing possibilities to groups restricted by language and increases the entertainment value of the plot.

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

*Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.*