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## Enhancing the Competitiveness of Broadcast News in the New Media Era (Postprint)

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### Abstract

News programs are the flagship programs of broadcast media, and promoting the mainstream ideology, disseminating positive energy, and guiding public opinion are the missions shouldered by broadcast news. However, with the advancement of network technology, various new media and self-media have proliferated, posing tremendous challenges to the production methods and dissemination models of traditional broadcast news. This article analyzes the challenges and opportunities faced by broadcasting in the new media era, and proposes that broadcasting must adapt to the new situation, strengthen Internet thinking, actively integrate into new media, fully demonstrate its own advantages, make breakthroughs in aspects such as news content production, presentation forms, program structure, and dissemination methods, and strive to enhance competitiveness.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

In the new media era, the channels and methods through which the public receives information have undergone revolutionary changes. The traditional media model of “I broadcast, you listen (watch); I write, you read” no longer meets the demands of the times. As the primary platform for publicizing party committee and government work and the main battlefield for guiding public opinion, radio news must not only leverage its inherent advantages—such as companionship, live broadcasting, and audio transmission—but also break through self-imposed limitations, strengthen internet thinking, and utilize various “cloud” and “terminal” network platforms to transform its communication model. Only by doing so can it secure new development space, expand its influence, and enhance its competitiveness in the new media ecosystem.

## 1. Challenges and Opportunities for Radio News in the New Media Era

While radio as a traditional medium certainly has many shortcomings in the new media era, and its once-prized advantages in audio, live broadcasting, and interactivity no longer dominate, interpretive and analytical reporting of news remains a traditional media strength. In practice, formats such as radio series reports, social hot topic tracking, and radio news interviews enable comprehensive and in-depth exploration of news themes, continuous follow-up of news events, and reconstruction of complete pictures, allowing audiences to understand the full journalistic facts. Moreover, elements such as details and close-ups in reports are precisely what fragmented new media information lacks.

The “Wei Zexi Incident,” reported by China National Radio’s *News Horizon* program in May 2016, serves as an example. This case, which reflected the chaos of contracted hospital departments, attracted widespread attention. On May 2, the program first provided a comprehensive overview through interviews with the patient’s father, Dr. Chen from Henan Provincial Tumor Hospital, and Zhu Wei, deputy director of the Communication Law Research Center at China University of Political Science and Law, giving listeners a complete understanding of the incident. On subsequent days, the program tracked the latest developments, interviewing Baidu, patients, and hospitals to analyze various aspects of the event, keeping listeners informed of its progress. This reporting approach, through different perspectives and multi-layered analysis, helps listeners deeply understand the essence of news events and obtain comprehensive and complete information.

High-quality radio news must be not only factually accurate and comprehensive but also opinionated and principled, using commentary to reveal the nature of things and reflect the ideological value of reporting. News commentary is the soul of media—the platform through which media express viewpoints and guide public opinion. Radio commentary is not only a marker of a station’s level of policy and theoretical sophistication but also an effective means for radio as a mainstream media to amplify positive propaganda effects and play its role in public opinion supervision.

Live connection reporting allows listeners to know real-time information about news events and their dynamic progress. It not only restores journalistic truth to the greatest extent but also increases news freshness. When conducting connection reports, journalists observe events from the public’s perspective, capture key details that demonstrate event characteristics and express people’s emotions, and add personalized descriptions and commentary to make the news more vivid and lively. Additionally, connecting with event parties, experts, scholars, and government officials to conduct in-depth analysis of the causes and phenomena of events and to make predictive judgments about news outcomes creates multi-interpretive and multi-perspective narrative reporting. This helps listeners better understand news events while increasing news depth

and credibility. Therefore, radio should increase the proportion of connection reporting in news programs to enrich the presentation forms of sound in news and enhance listenability. China National Radio's *News Horizon*, *News on the Go*, *Evening News Rush*, and other brand programs, as well as news programs from many provincial and municipal stations, extensively use connection reporting to achieve news that has scene, depth, and thought, highlighting immediacy and demonstrating authority.

Music is an auditory art that can express emotions and convey themes, playing an irreplaceable role in radio news. The reasonable use of music in news programs to adjust rhythm, heighten atmosphere, or provide transitions can make programs more dynamic and coherent overall.

## 2.2 Leveraging Sound Advantages: Painting Pictures Through Sound

Audio transmission is a major feature of radio, which, combined with radio's companionship, becomes one of its advantages—particularly evident in today's rapidly developing automotive industry. Sound has a pictorial quality; people can conjure images from sound and construct an immersive sense of presence. Radio news must fully leverage this advantage, making news “speak through text and paint through sound,” thereby stimulating listeners' desire to tune in.

Recording reports are a common format in radio news. The audio in such reports includes not only character speech but also environmental sounds, natural sounds, various sound effects, as well as music and historical audio materials. Radio news should fully utilize these audio specialties, drawing on listeners' experiences and imagination. By properly recording and selecting typical and vivid sounds closely related to news events, reporters can better embody reporting themes and enhance the credibility and appeal of audio reports.

Typically, character speech audio accounts for a relatively high proportion in recording reports and can effectively portray character images and express their thoughts and feelings. Meanwhile, typical environmental sounds that create a sense of imagery are also indispensable elements in excellent radio news works. In China National Radio's radio feature *Wengding, a Mountain Village Shrouded in Clouds and Mist*, there is a segment with the following audio: (sound of footsteps on stone slabs, chicken clucks) “Right! The villagers have all returned. They' ll stir the fire pit, add some firewood, and start cooking. Look, cooking smoke is already rising...” (pig grunts) “The pigs are calling; they' re hungry too.” (laughter) In this audio, the footsteps on stone slabs, pig grunts, chicken clucks, people' s laughter, and witty language conjure a tranquil and peaceful mountain village scene in listeners' minds, fully presenting the villagers' sense of satisfaction and happiness with their harmonious and quiet life.

### 2.3 Optimizing Program Structure: Rhythmic Balance Between Tension and Relaxation

The “Block + Wheel” structure. The new media era is also an era of “big media” competition. Faced with fierce competition for audiences, radio news must not only amplify its core advantages—sound, companionship, and interactivity—but also break original patterns in news program architecture. Through clever arrangement, it can effectively aggregate listeners’ attention. The “block + wheel” structure promoted by China National Radio’s Voice of China is a relatively successful model. It sets up multiple large-block segment programs throughout the day, such as *News Horizon*, *News on the Go*, *Noon 60 Minutes*, *Evening News Rush*, and *News with Views*, refreshing information every half hour or hour. This dense and compact news arrangement greatly expands information capacity, adapting to people’s fast-paced lives and information needs. Content includes news briefs, connection reports, in-depth reports, and commentary. Coverage of hot news topics employs horizontal expansion within half-hour units, rolling broadcasts throughout the day, and vertical excavation. This model makes program rhythm well-paced and flexible, effectively filling the shortcomings of radio’s fleeting and linear transmission. Consequently, the “block + wheel” structure has been emulated by many domestic radio stations and become the normal mode for professional news radio programs.

Interlaced arrangement of hard and soft news. Radio’s linear transmission determines that news sequencing must be skillful. “Hard” news such as current affairs and thematic reporting constitutes important content in radio news programs. How to arrange it to improve listening stickiness requires in-depth research. China National Radio’s *News Horizon* is a daily large-block comprehensive news program consisting of two one-hour segments presented in “Ask ××” and “Chase ××” units. The first-hour segment typically uses taglines like “Ask This Morning,” “Ask the Focus,” “Ask the Market,” “Ask Behind the Scenes,” “Ask the Truth,” “Ask About Progress,” and “Ask the World” to introduce the latest news, key news, financial news, background analysis, and progress tracking. The second-hour segment typically uses taglines like “Chase the Controversy,” “Chase the Truth,” “Chase the Market,” “Chase Progress,” and “Chase the World” to conduct in-depth excavation and analytical commentary on various news items. Between each “Ask ××” and “Chase ××” hard news unit, short and relatively soft news or service information units are interspersed, such as “News Map,” “News Face,” “Today’s Travel,” “At This Moment,” and “Movie Legends,” to enhance program listenability, recognizability, and branding. After the 2020 program revision, although the “Ask ××” and “Chase ××” unit names were eliminated, the arrangement still follows this interlaced hard-and-soft news structure, creating more excitement points for listeners, making program rhythm more dynamic, and stimulating listening interest.

## 2.4 Strengthening Internet Thinking: News Transmission on “Cloud” and “Terminal”

The internet has changed people’s ways of thinking and behaving, transformed the media landscape, and caused tremendous changes in radio listening habits. Today, smartphones have become the primary tool for obtaining information. Listeners’ identity has shifted from audience to users, transforming from information consumers to both consumers and producers, thereby achieving higher media penetration and loyalty. In this context, radio should strengthen internet thinking, regard network platforms as new frontiers for news transmission, and fully consider the communication characteristics of information on new media such as clients, WeChat, and Weibo during news production. By integrating various elements like graphics, audio, and video, radio news can also achieve instant online transmission, providing the public with different reading experiences.

During the 2020 Two Sessions, many domestic radio and television media adopted reporting forms such as cloud releases, cloud conferences, and cloud channels, forming a new ecosystem of radio and television services under a cloud architecture. For example, Shanghai Media Group made mobile cloud live broadcasting its primary working method, completing numerous “cloud” interviews through remote video connections or guided mobile self-shooting. Hunan Broadcasting System developed a “news cloud editing” system, creating new program formats like “Two Sessions Cloud Interviews,” “Cloud Connections,” and “Two Sessions Cloud Links.” This entirely new news production and transmission model integrates information, technology, and human resources from traditional radio and television media and fully utilizes new network technologies to achieve powerful communication effectiveness. Radio news practitioners must also deeply study the characteristics of information release on network platforms, actively learn from new media experiences, and achieve coordinated efforts across “web, terminal, micro, and screen” in news transmission links. This allows radio news to break free from traditional linear transmission models, truly move onto the “cloud” and “terminal,” and achieve interactive, three-dimensional communication, winning the initiative in the fiercely competitive media ecosystem.

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

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