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The Significance of Mobile Socialization in Media Convergence Development (Postprint)

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Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

In the current era where socialized products have emerged as a new force, mobile socialization has become the primary characteristic of new media development. New media effectively promotes products and platforms by fully excavating the value of individual users and communities, with trust and personal connections at the core. Mobile socialization has become a crucial means for achieving the interconnection of all things in the convergent development of media.

Full Text

The “Net” of Social Connection: Stimulating Social Dynamics in New Media

In the 1980s, the poet Bei Dao captured the human condition in a single-character poem titled *Life*—the character “net” (*wang*). Today, this poem has become an uncanny description of modern existence. From the perspective of media evolution, information dissemination and connection have carried social attributes since the advent of the internet age. The development of new media has remained inseparable from the process of socialization. As one netizen observed: “From the papyrus of ancient Egyptians to today’s social software, regardless of how times change, humanity’s innate social nature—the pursuit of group belonging—remains constant.” In a sense, the history of new media development is also the history of social media development. In China, this evolution can be roughly divided into several stages:

2.4 Mobile Social Media as the Primary Information Source

Recent studies by an independent American polling organization have found that social media and official news organization websites have become the most important channels for online news consumption, with younger consumers relying more heavily on social media for news. They report that 47% of news

consumption occurs through social media, compared to 42% among those aged 30-49 and 23% among those over 50. Consequently, media must embrace socialization to attract broader audiences.

2.5 Mobile Socialization Driving Deep Media Integration

As President Xi Jinping noted: “With the continuous development of all-media, we have seen the emergence of full-process media, holographic media, full-staff media, and full-effect media. Information is everywhere, all-encompassing, and used by everyone, leading to profound changes in the public opinion ecology, media landscape, and communication methods, and presenting new challenges to journalism and public opinion work.” The “four all-media” concept represents the highest stage of media convergence: full-process follow-up from information release to feedback; holographic presentation of news events through multiple technologies and methods; full-staff collaboration moving from technical division of labor to unified skills; and full-effect dissemination through precise targeting and distribution. Mobile social functions create effective stickiness in media convergence. Content publication merely marks the beginning of media operations—forwarding and follow-up generate social momentum, aggregating loyal users and providing big data services for creating intelligent scenario-based media. In their book *The Age of Context: Mobile, Sensors, Data and the Future of Privacy*, Robert Scoble and Shel Israel identify five elements related to the age of context: big data, mobile devices, social media, sensors, and location systems—what they term the “five forces of context” [1]. Clearly, “mobile,” “social,” and “big data” will be crucial in future intelligent scenario-based media.

3. How to Stimulate Social Dynamics in New Media

We observe that social media development—whether through topics, interests, or tags—creates relationships and fosters a sense of belonging for users. NetEase Cloud Music, for instance, built its unique music community around music discovery and sharing. Here, music serves as content while community represents a social relationship. NetEase Cloud Music then established social connections through comments and launched the “Cloud Village” community, expanding topic breadth and dissemination power while strengthening community influence. On August 3, 2020, NetEase Cloud Music introduced the “Cloud Village Comment Healing Plan,” inviting psychological experts and volunteers to join the “Cloud Village Healing Institute,” and launched the “Hug” easter egg function: pinching a comment with two fingers triggers a “hug” animation, and the user who wrote the comment receives a “hug.” Though a simple easter egg, users experience it as heartwarming and liberating. Here, the media truly stands with users, creating emotional connections.

To enable our disseminated information to generate connection and integration after being received—to stimulate social dynamics and establish social relationships with users—we must proceed from the following aspects:

3.1 From One-Way to Interactive Communication Full-process media must be an interactive communication process. Merely satisfying one-way information dissemination is insufficient to generate social momentum. We must transform traditional information dissemination models from one-way to two-way communication, enabling multi-party interaction. Through content-based socialization, we generate user stickiness, turn users into friends, and transform them into collaborators who drive self-motivated dissemination behavior.

The case of Ding Zhen illustrates this phenomenon. On November 11, a photographer captured a video of a Tibetan man named Ding Zhen. In just seven seconds, this short video featuring a dark-skinned young man in Tibetan dress with distinctive highland blush and clear eyes quickly garnered nearly five million likes. On November 19, Ding Zhen launched his Douyin account, gaining over two million followers after his first post. By November 27, cultural and tourism bureaus from Tibet, Yunnan, Shandong, Hubei, and other regions joined the “talent scramble.” Weibo topics such as #HowHardSichuanIsTryingForDingZhen#, #TheWholeCountryIsInvitingDingZhen#, and #DingZhenSaysStopPhotoshoppingMe# simultaneously trended, accumulating nearly five billion reads. As of December 2, 213 monitored tourism-related Weibo topics about “Ding Zhen” had exceeded 12 billion total views and over one million discussions. According to incomplete statistics, more than 50 Ding Zhen-related topics reached Weibo’s trending list [2]. All of this represents an interactive, cyclical communication process where user comments, feedback, and forwarding become part of the content itself, driving secondary dissemination.

The pursuit of Ding Zhen reflects people’s longing for a “simple” and “pure” utopia [3]. Here, media triggered social dissemination momentum through content output.

3.2 From Content Media to Social Media Since social connections must be established through information exchange, information dissemination must deliver value to move users and create resonance. In an era where everyone is a self-media creator, to make users become friends and “speak for friends,” we must first achieve value identification and create a sense of belonging. We must extend an olive branch of human interest and actively create relationships between media and users. Ding Zhen’s “sweet and wild” smile touched netizens, and the beautiful scenery of Litang, Sichuan sparked people’s yearning. While receiving this information, audiences resonated with “beauty,” stimulating enthusiasm and motivation for secondary dissemination.

NetEase Cloud Music exemplifies the transformation from content media (functional media) to social media (content-driven social aggregation of user stickiness) to intelligent scenario-based media (highly matched content and user values). On the internet, different people’s feelings and emotions may seem vastly different, yet they are often genuine. While complete mutual understanding between individuals may be impossible, this does not prevent us from treating every emotion with a warmer attitude. Whether the “Cloud Village Comment

Healing Plan” or the “Hug” easter egg, both likely align with the platform’ s ethos. The evolution from “NetEase Depression Cloud” to “NetEase Healing Cloud” represents community improvement as NetEase Cloud Music faces larger user groups [4].

To enter the future intelligent scenario-based era, new media must first achieve transformation from content media to social media, then develop toward scenario-based media that highly matches user values.

3.3 Focusing on Younger Users: Profiling the Post-90s and Post-00s Generations The *2020 Report on Insights into the Rise of New Domestic Brands* released in June 2020 shows that post-90s and post-00s generations have stronger internet stickiness, enthusiastically using short videos, graphic content, and other new content platforms, making them more easily influenced target groups for new domestic brands in new media. Therefore, post-90s and post-00s generations must be the target user groups for future new media. To strengthen new media, we must profile this group and position users accurately, maximizing scenario adaptation for this demographic.

Again using NetEase Cloud Music as an example: “Music is the basic component of interest communities and a natural interactive scenario” [5]. Based on young people’ s preference for communication through music, NetEase Cloud Music built a community with music, set up scenarios, introduced emotional connections, and constructed a warm social media platform where post-90s and post-00s generations can find outlets for expression. The value of music communities for young people lies here: numerous topics can unfold around a single song while simultaneously possessing emotional connection attributes. When hearing emotionally resonant music, people often experience strong sharing desires, and communities directly satisfy this emotional release, “coinciding” with the social needs pursued by new generations [6].

In this way, NetEase Cloud Music attracts large numbers of post-90s and post-00s users. As early as the 2016 *NetEase Cloud Music Big Data Report: Social Attributes Quietly Changing the Music Market*, data showed that mobile users accounted for 81% of total users, and the music listening era had entered socialization. The combined proportion of post-90s and post-00s users reached 68%, far exceeding post-80s and other users. No wonder Marketing Research’ s *Self-Entertainment: 2018-2019 China New Potential Energy Group App Contact Behavior Report* disclosed data showing that in the list of most influential apps among the post-00s group, NetEase Cloud Music ranked first in the music category, second only to WeChat, QQ, Alipay, Taobao, and Weibo.

3.4 Changing the Mobile Social Media Landscape Through New Technology The *China Mobile Internet Development Report (2019)*, a blue paper compiled by the People’ s Daily Online Research Institute, points out that new technologies and new markets are driving changes in the mobile social landscape. Douyin and Kuaishou have achieved explosive growth in recent years

through their “short video + algorithmic recommendation + mobile social” attributes, opening a new track beyond the 熟人社交 (acquaintance social), 陌生人社交 (stranger social), and other domains dominated by Tencent, Weibo, and Momo.

Entering the mobile social era, people’s communication and sharing methods have shifted from text to video, and social media has moved from “Weibo” to “Douyin.” Compared to text, video has relatively lower entry barriers and can achieve broader dissemination dimensions. The arrival of 5G has further accelerated video-based social communication. The development of new technologies has created a landscape where everyone can participate. Entering the 5G era, medium and long videos will inevitably rise alongside short videos, occupying a place in mobile social media.

Technological progress has consistently led media advancement. From text to sound to image, from various one-way communications to two-way video communication via broadband internet, new technologies have changed communication methods, driven media development, and reset the social media landscape. “In the future, video expression elements in media will become more diverse and varied. A video will necessarily contain environments and specific scenarios. Beyond rational information, speakers in videos will convey expressions, tones, vocal modulations, postures, and eye contact. These non-logical, irrational factors sometimes play greater and more important roles than logical and factual elements in achieving social communication and social identity” [7].

In summary, as social products become emerging forces, mobile socialization has become the main characteristic of new media development. In 2020, against the backdrop of COVID-19 prevention and control, live-streaming e-commerce exploded, and intense competition among e-commerce platforms has made e-commerce socialization a major trend. “New media effectively promotes products and platforms by fully tapping into individual and community user value, with trust and personal connections at the core” [8]. On the path of future new media development, mobile socialization will help achieve connections between people and information, people and people, people and objects, and people and services, facilitating deep integration among media.

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(Executive Editor: Hu Yang)

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