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Research on Online Dissemination Platforms for Academic Journals of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in the New Era (Postprint)

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Abstract

Academic journals of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) wield considerable influence among academic journals in China; studying their online dissemination platforms can provide valuable reference for other academic journals to enhance their communication effectiveness. Among CASS academic journals, 94.92% have established official websites, 62.71% have launched WeChat official accounts, 5.65% have opened Weibo accounts, and only 1.69% have developed mobile applications. Existing problems include: the development of dissemination platforms lagging behind the requirements of media convergence, lack of connectivity among various dissemination platforms, suboptimal platform configuration, and delayed development of priority publishing on platforms. It is recommended to construct an authoritative official website platform with brand consciousness, create a distinctive WeChat platform with service consciousness, develop Weibo and mobile application platforms with innovation consciousness, and build a three-dimensional communication system with holistic consciousness.

Full Text

Research on Online Communication Platforms of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Academic Journals in the New Era

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Abstract

Academic journals of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) exert considerable influence within China's academic journal landscape. Studying their online communication platforms can provide valuable lessons for other academic journals seeking to enhance their communication effectiveness.

Among CASS academic journals, 94.92% have established official websites, 62.71% have launched WeChat official accounts, 5.65% have opened Weibo accounts, and only 1.69% have developed mobile client applications. However, significant challenges remain: platform development lags behind the demands of media convergence, connectivity between different platforms is lacking, platform configuration requires optimization, and priority publishing on these platforms is underdeveloped.

This paper recommends constructing authoritative official website platforms with brand consciousness, creating distinctive WeChat platforms with service consciousness, developing Weibo and client platforms with innovation consciousness, and building a three-dimensional communication system with holistic consciousness.

Keywords: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; academic journals; three-dimensional communication; online platforms

The era of media convergence has ushered academic journal development into a new historical context. As a think tank for the Party Committee and government, the academic journals hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences play an important role and hold significant status in disseminating and promoting the Party and government's key ideologies and culture. CASS academic journals account for only 2.8% of China's total academic journals, yet comprise 15%-21% of journals included in major Chinese evaluation systems such as CSSCI and core journal catalogs [?]. In total, there are 177 CASS academic journals, including 76 hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and its subordinate institutes, 94 hosted by provincial-level academies, and 7 hosted by municipal academies. Research on the online communication platforms of these journals can provide valuable lessons for other academic journals, thereby promoting innovative development and mobile transformation of China's academic journals and contributing to the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics. Given the current state of network-based communication platforms, this study examines four universal platforms: official websites, WeChat official accounts, Weibo, and mobile client applications.

Among CASS academic journals, 168 have launched official websites (94.92%), 111 have launched WeChat official accounts (62.71%), 10 have opened Weibo accounts (5.65%), and only 3 have developed mobile client applications (1.69%). Only *Chinese Journal of Population Science* (hosted by the Institute of Population and Labor Economics, CASS) and *Special Zone Economy* (hosted by

the Shenzhen Academy of Social Sciences) have simultaneously established all four platform types. Sixty journals operate only official websites without any “two micros and one client” (33.90%), 98 journals maintain both official websites and WeChat accounts but lack Weibo and client applications (55.37%), and five journals have no online communication platforms whatsoever—neither official websites nor “two micros and one client” (2.82%).

1. Official Websites as the Primary Communication Platform

The majority of CASS academic journals have established official websites, with 168 journals (94.92%) maintaining them. Among these, 75 journals have built independent websites with their own domains, 82 operate subsidiary websites under their host institution’s official site, and 11 use journal websites provided by CNKI. Nine journals have yet to launch official websites (see Table 1).

Official websites typically publish journal introductions, current issue tables of contents, archives, calls for papers, submission guidelines, and other information. Most journals with official websites have gradually introduced online submission functionality in recent years to facilitate author submissions. Some journal websites offer open access, allowing free download of published articles. A few provide priority publishing services, releasing articles online before print publication. Generally, independent websites offer more comprehensive functionality and better user interaction, while subsidiary websites have relatively weaker interactivity. Some subsidiary sites provide basic functions, but many are merely simple pages with insufficient functionality.

2. Rapid Development of WeChat Platforms

A total of 111 CASS academic journals (62.71%) have launched WeChat official accounts, with 108 journals (61.02%) actively using them (see Table 2). Core journals demonstrate greater emphasis on WeChat utilization than non-core journals, with over two-thirds of core journals operating WeChat accounts compared to only about one-third of non-core journals. Three journals have opened WeChat accounts but neither configured menu columns nor published any information, rendering them effectively unused.

Most CASS journal WeChat accounts feature first- or second-level menu columns providing journal introductions, submission guidelines, calls for papers, contact information, archives, article abstracts, and other information. Some accounts without menus only occasionally push selected articles from previous issues. Certain accounts offer functions such as linking to official websites, submission tracking, and open access. In addition to journal-related information, some specialized journals also publish disciplinary developments and updates.

3. Declining Use of Weibo

Only ten CASS academic journals have opened Weibo accounts (5.65%), and merely four remain active (2.25%) (see Table 3). *Theory Study* (hosted by the

Harbin Academy of Social Sciences) was the earliest to launch Weibo but also the earliest to discontinue it. The four currently active journals are all authoritative academic publications: three are CASS-hosted journals (*Social Sciences in China*, *International Law Studies*, and *Chinese Journal of Population Science*), and one is *Open Times* (hosted by the Guangzhou Academy of Social Sciences). Apart from these four, all other journals have discontinued Weibo, including *Journalism Research*, which had the most followers. The primary reasons for discontinuation are that Weibo focuses on short-form content requiring additional editorial effort, lacks column-based presentation formats, and is less suitable for journal content compared to official websites and WeChat.

4. Minimal Use of Client Applications

Only three CASS academic journals have developed mobile client applications (1.69%): *Chinese Journal of Population Science* (CASS Institute of Population and Labor Economics), *Guangdong Social Sciences* (Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences), and *Special Zone Economy* (Shenzhen Academy of Social Sciences). *Chinese Journal of Population Science* prints its App installation QR code on the journal's back cover. After installation, users must register and log in to access modules such as "Journal Updates," "Manuscript Query," "Online Editing," "Hotspot Guide," "Current Issue," "Archives," "Next Issue Preview," "Expert Review," and "Journal Introduction," though a few modules fail to display properly. *Guangdong Social Sciences* provides its App installation QR code on its WeChat account, offering separate iOS and Android versions. Its App only provides an electronic bookshelf function displaying published issues. *Special Zone Economy* launched its App on July 26, 2019, with download available via its WeChat account. Comparatively, *Special Zone Economy's* App offers rich functionality, strong interactivity, and an attractive interface that better engages users and meets their needs.

5. Strategies for Optimizing Online Communication Platforms of CASS Academic Journals

CASS academic journal platforms face several challenges: development lags behind media convergence requirements, connectivity between platforms is lacking, configuration needs optimization, and priority publishing is underdeveloped. Therefore, multi-pronged measures are urgently needed to optimize and develop their online communication platforms.

5.1 Building Authoritative Website Platforms with Brand Consciousness

Official websites are crucial platforms for journals to showcase their image and disseminate information, characterized by their dedicated nature, authority, and public orientation, with emphasis on comprehensive journal presentation. Information published on official websites should be thorough and detailed [?]. Numerous fake websites exist online, and lacking an official website not only hinders readers and authors from accessing information but also

increases the risk of them visiting fraudulent sites, causing negative impacts. Therefore, journals without official websites should launch them promptly. This study finds that some journal websites are designed and developed by CNKI, which provides technical support. These websites have relatively uniform styles and basically complete functions that adequately meet user needs. Currently, CNKI offers this service free of charge to interested journals, representing a viable option for those with limited resources to develop independent websites. However, to avoid homogenization and highlight journal characteristics, publishers should still strive to develop independent websites whenever possible.

5.2 Building Characteristic WeChat Platforms with Service Consciousness WeChat official accounts focus on community-based journal communication, disseminating information in a “short, flat, and fast” format. Users of CASS journal WeChat accounts are primarily authors and readers. A well-operated account can effectively attract readers and help convert them into authors. Therefore, journals should analyze their user composition, treat users as important service targets, and provide...

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

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