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Examining H5 Production Trends and Techniques Through China News Award-Winning Works: Postprint

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

Abstract

In recent years, numerous outstanding H5 works have emerged among the media convergence award-winning entries of the China News Award. As H5 technology finds extensive application in the news media sector, this study investigates the production trends and techniques of H5 works through an analysis of 22 independent samples, aiming to elucidate methodologies for creating high-quality converged media products.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: H5 Production Trends and Techniques: An Analysis of Award-Winning Works from the China News Award

Abstract: In recent years, numerous outstanding H5 works have emerged among the media convergence award winners at the China News Award. As H5 becomes widely adopted in the news media sector, this paper examines 22 independent H5 works to analyze trends and techniques in H5 production, offering insights for creating high-quality converged media products.

Keywords: H5; China News Award; media convergence; interaction

Classification Code: G213

Document Code: A

Citation Format: Jia Hao. H5 Production Trends and Techniques: An Analysis of Award-Winning Works from the China News Award [J]. China Media Technology, 2019(12): 12-14.

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Introduction

In 2018, the 28th China News Award established the Media Convergence Award for the first time, comprising six categories: converged short video, converged live streaming, converged interaction, converged interface, converged column, and converged innovation. In the 29th edition, the award categories were re-named as short news video, mobile live streaming, new media creative interaction, new media reporting interface, new media brand column, and integrated innovation. Across these two award cycles, 11 H5 works received the Media Convergence Award in each edition, making H5 one of the primary forms of award-winning works. Analyzing the production patterns of these H5 works thus holds significant practical value for new media content creation.

1. Trends in H5 Production

1.1 User Participation in Content Creation: Driving Dissemination and Viral Potential

Among the award winners, People's Daily's "Military Uniform Photo" and CCTV Finance's "Happiness Photo Studio" both secured first prizes in their respective years. These works encourage users to participate in H5 content creation through simple interactions, fostering a desire to showcase and share results, thereby promoting widespread dissemination and viral breakthrough. When such participatory H5 works are strategically planned and deployed around major holidays or events, they generate stronger user resonance and further facilitate the creation of blockbuster content. A prime example is the national flag profile picture H5 released by Tencent News and its speed edition during the National Day holiday.

1.2 Integrating Short Videos with H5: Transforming Narrative Structures

Since H5 can accommodate far more content and interactive elements than short videos alone, media outlets increasingly incorporate short videos into H5 works, shifting news narratives from single linear formats to non-linear storytelling while achieving broader dissemination. For instance, the award-winning work "You've Received a Package from August 1, 1927" by China Military Online employed a fast-cut short video style, while "The '18' Changes of Miao Village" by New Hunan used a short video as the opening to introduce subsequent character interview clips. During this integration process, it is crucial to keep H5 video content concise and succinct, as overly long material can cause slow loading or user boredom, leading to page abandonment.

1.3 Buttons and Animation as Core Interactive Elements

Buttons and animation remain the most commonly used forms in H5 works. These interactions are technically simple to implement yet can be combined to create rich effects. Currently popular combinations of buttons and animation primarily include four types: slideshows, multimedia integration, quizzes, and mini-games—all reflected in the award-winning works. Examples such as the simple H5 quiz “Listen, the Yangtze River Speaks!” and the mini-game “I Completed ‘Deep Sea Needle Threading’ for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge” demonstrate interactive formats that encourage user participation. However, selecting appropriate forms and interactions based on news content—and providing relevant operation hints—is essential.

1.4 Long-Page Formats with Diverse Interactions

Long-page layouts continue to be a highly popular H5 interactive format, capable of integrating diverse elements such as buttons, animations, audio, and video. Beyond conventional vertical long pages, horizontal long-page designs are also gaining traction. For example, the award-winning work “Come Aboard the ‘Hainan’ Time Machine and Return to 1988!” utilized a vertical long-page format, while “Reform and Opening Up 40 Years: How ‘Long’ is Changsha?” employed a horizontal approach. The success of long-page H5 works largely depends on the quality of graphic and interaction design; mediocre design may lead users to perceive the content and interactions as uninteresting, causing them to lose patience and exit due to the monotonous single-direction scrolling.

1.5 VR and AR as Emerging Frontiers for H5

The arrival of 5G and improvements in network environments and speeds will position Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) as new frontiers in H5 content production. Compared to other H5 materials and interactive forms, VR and AR entail significantly higher production costs and require specialized equipment for content acquisition. For example, The Paper’s award-winning work “Above 4,000 Meters” demonstrates substantial investment in both content collection and H5 production. Meanwhile, AR applications remain primarily confined to gaming and film, with their use cases in journalism still requiring exploration.

2. Techniques for H5 Production

2.1 Aligning Converged Media Content with Interaction Paths and Elements

When producing an H5 work, it is essential to determine interaction paths and elements that match the multimedia materials and content, ensuring consistency across content, interaction, and design style. In terms of interaction interface and path design, the narrative style, content threads, and interaction paths

should align seamlessly. Although buttons and animation can achieve rich interactive effects, overly complex interaction paths should be avoided to prevent user confusion. Additionally, operation hints should be designed when necessary to guide users through the H5 experience.

2.2 User-Centric Functional Design

What makes an H5 work go viral? A critical factor is adopting a user-centered perspective in functional design. The underlying logic is enabling users to obtain rich output through simple input. “Simple input” means reducing participation costs, including time spent using the H5 and cognitive effort required to explore interactions. “Rich output” means delivering expected benefits—either “social currency” that allows users to showcase themselves and shape their image through sharing, or tangible monetary rewards. User-centric functional design is the key technique for ensuring user acceptance, enjoyment, and sharing of H5 works.

2.3 Structured Thinking: Building H5 Works from Scratch

When planning and producing H5 works, many creators typically rely on brainstorming or imitation, developing ideas during the production process. This approach often results in published works that fail to achieve expected effects or dissemination goals. Therefore, we propose a structured “from scratch” methodology for H5 creation that can be applied to practical content planning and production.

3. Founder Flying Digital Edition: H5 Production Tool

Founder Flying Digital Edition comprises an H5 production tool and cloud-based supporting services, designed for editors, graphic designers, new media planners, and operations staff in media publishing organizations. Currently, for media publishing institutional users, Founder Flying Digital Edition continuously undertakes news H5 production activities, including but not limited to: (1) product trials—offering free trials of Founder Flying Digital Edition for media publishing organizations; (2) H5 news case collaboration—providing technical support for media organizations’ H5 production; and (3) H5 news work planning and production training—offering centralized training on H5 planning and production for media organizations.

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