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Research on News Gathering and Editing in the New Media Context: Postprint

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Abstract

With the comprehensive advancement of social economy and technology, the media sector has increasingly gravitated toward media convergence. The emergence of new media platforms such as mobile applications, Weibo, and WeChat has not only fundamentally disrupted the working environment of traditional news gathering and editing, but has also substantially transformed the news gathering and editing workflow compared to conventional media, highlighting a series of issues including low utilization rates of information resources, insufficient communication capacity, and weakened propaganda and public opinion influence. This paper takes research on news gathering and editing work under new media as its entry point, and on this basis explores the characteristics of news gathering and editing work in the new media context, the optimization of news feature film gathering and editing, and how to conduct news gathering and editing on social software platforms.

Full Text

Preamble

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Abstract: With the comprehensive advancement of social economy and technology, the media field has gradually gravitated toward media convergence. The emergence of new media platforms such as mobile apps, Weibo, and WeChat has not only fundamentally transformed the working environment for traditional news gathering and editing but has also significantly altered news production workflows. This shift has highlighted a series of issues, including low utilization of information resources, insufficient dissemination capacity, and weakened propaganda and public opinion influence. This paper examines news gathering and editing work under new media as its entry point, exploring the characteristics

of news gathering and editing in this context, optimization strategies for news feature production, and methods for conducting news gathering and editing through social media platforms.

Keywords: new media; news gathering and editing; news features; WeChat Official Accounts

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1. Characteristics of News Gathering and Editing Under New Media

1.1 Massive Information Resources

Against the backdrop of growing network development, the speed and scale of news collection and dissemination are unprecedented. Precisely obtaining needed information from this vast sea of data in a timely manner presents considerable challenges. The advent of various new media platforms has simplified and accelerated information publishing, enabling the general public to become information publishers. However, information released by ordinary users has inherent limitations, inevitably leading to significant deviations during dissemination and resulting in low information quality. Consequently, news gathering and editing work faces the problem of disorganized information resources, requiring news professionals to strengthen their professional competencies and enhance their screening and discernment capabilities.

1.2 Multi-Purpose Editorial Output

In the past, many news reporting methods followed certain standardized patterns. However, with the comprehensive integration of new media, news reporting channels have gradually diversified. For instance, television news features were previously limited to broadcast television, but in the new media environment, news can now be effectively disseminated through online videos, mobile devices, and WeChat Official Accounts. This allows editorial content to be presented through differentiated channels, offering audiences various dissemination methods. News gathering and editing under new media must fundamentally master these different presentation modes, showcasing editorial information in eye-catching ways and delivering it to audiences through new media techniques.

2. Optimization Measures for News Gathering and Editing Under New Media

2.1 News Gathering and Editing for Television News and Features

2.1.1 Selection of Editorial Angles The selection of editorial angles for television news and news features under new media should emphasize the hierarchy of topic selection and conceptualization. Topics must not only objectively reflect the essence of matters and demonstrate their inherent connotations but also fundamentally embody the characteristics of subjects, maximizing novelty and ingenuity to make news stances clear or thought-provoking. Conducting in-depth interviews is essential for comprehensively and objectively grasping situations and collecting more detailed and abundant materials, which fundamentally prevents superficial news content and directly improves reporting quality. Additionally, strengthening the novelty of news gathering and editing enhances the “newness” of news—not only in terms of timeliness but also requiring fresh editorial perspectives, new angles, novel materials, and in-depth information to highlight themes and achieve effective communication.

2.1.2 Enhancing News Appeal Through Details Details determine success or failure, a principle equally applicable to television news and news feature gathering and editing under new media. Details can directly shape the structure and content of news features. The function of television news visuals is to express required details—not just any commonplace target from daily life. Details in news must create impressions for audiences, and their presentation constitutes an effective pathway for constructing news subjects and themes while strengthening viewability. Utilizing details can make character portrayals more vivid, as details possess inherent tension in news reporting. They can depict psychological dynamics and character traits, thereby enhancing the visual appeal of on-site reporting. All this requires journalists to possess keen observational skills and sensitivity to on-site reporting, capturing and depicting character details to vividly present figures to viewers. Meanwhile, excellent visual expression serves as an indispensable “language” form for on-site reporting. The advantage of television on-site reporting in the new media environment lies in its visual imagery, which can vividly demonstrate the original appearance of matters, allowing audiences not only to watch but also to be transported to the reporting scene through sound, creating an immersive experience. Therefore, on-site reporters must select the most characteristic visual images and employ “crafted” visual language to highlight themes through planning, thereby enhancing the appeal of on-site reporting visuals.

2.1.3 Ensuring Strong Vitality in News Content Multi-angle news reporting in the new media environment requires comprehensive processing of specific matters, weakening the intrinsic characteristics of news while deeply exploring correlations between news and related phenomena. For example, a news program on water pollution explicitly addresses the issue from the beginning,

interviewing multiple local villagers to directly present the pollution reality to audiences. The program features interviews with environmental protection bureau officials who explain pollution causes, while news footage moves directly to pesticide factories, presenting responsible parties' evasive behavior through on-site reporting. On-site reporting not only injects vitality into news events but also demonstrates issues from alternative angles and enables targeted investigation. Currently, new phenomena are emerging like bamboo shoots after spring rain, and audiences are gradually shifting their attention from merely understanding new matters to exploring their causes. On-site reporting in the new media environment provides pathways for explaining and analyzing new incidents. The effective application of background information can directly endow news with vitality. New media can present abstract news content to audiences through charts, which are easy to comprehend and understand, allowing audiences to directly grasp data correlations and improve their interpretation of news connotations. Comparativeness constructs intuitive perceptions for viewers; seemingly unrelated data becomes obviously comparable through chart presentation, enabling comprehensive research into data concepts—this comparative function is irreplaceable.

2.2 Expanding WeChat News Official Accounts

2.2.1 Deepening WeChat Official Account Content In an era of diminishing WeChat dividends, the platform requires alternative operational strategies, with content remaining critical—“content is king” is eternally relevant. WeChat news content possesses diversified characteristics with extensive news types. Any news with high dissemination volume and readership must have distinctive features, whether humorous, heartwarming, or touching—there must be some form that resonates with audiences and prompts sharing. However, content formats must evolve to produce products suitable for WeChat dissemination. Therefore, when gathering and editing news for WeChat Official Accounts, editors must first consider what feelings the news should evoke in readers and whether the storytelling approach can mobilize readers' emotions, making them excited or moved. For instance, a news piece titled “Practical: Washing Face with Tea Water Has Many Benefits” uses a simple, straightforward name that appears rather ordinary, causing many audiences to skip clicking on it. Editorial staff must always be prepared to send quick updates, recognizing that speed is paramount and boldly using prepared templates while adapting to circumstances. Follow-up reporting after quick updates should include interactive elements. Distinctive writing styles can enhance readability, employing mixed text-image layouts, Lihua-style typography, and interspersed stories and details. Minimizing modifying adjectives, replacing complex sentences with simple ones, being concise and non-redundant, using humorous statements that make audiences smile, and incorporating multimedia forms such as images, videos, and GIFs creates content that is interesting yet dignified. “Content” encompasses not only what is expressed in news but also how it is expressed. For example, drug and product instruction manuals contain useful content, but few people

read them completely, and even fewer share them after reading. Some argue that brevity better retains users for browsing, but in reality, truly excellent news knows no length—if your news is good, audiences will read it regardless of length.

2.2.2 Crafting WeChat Official Account Headlines Assigned manuscripts must have their headlines revised, but only after approval before publication. Headlines should incorporate timeliness and relevance elements, create suspense, and employ colloquial language. Making quick updates more disseminable requires strong timeliness, though this makes triggering multiple rounds of dissemination difficult. Processing headlines for quick update manuscripts can yield unexpected results. Use short, powerful words and phrases, avoiding direct use of the term “quick update” unless for particularly urgent and important pieces. To address this challenge, new media editors can employ the “cocktail party effect” to capture attention. Users only click content related to themselves; your news encounters users in the vast network, and they give you less than three seconds. To attract and earn their click within three seconds, headlines must contain keywords that reach users—preferably words they are familiar with, requiring no thought and evoking mental imagery. Keywords need emphasis through two methods: first, placing them as early as possible, as all products have title length limits and keywords must not become ellipses; second, marking keywords with symbols such as quotation marks, 「」, 《》, or □.

2.2.3 Emphasizing “Integration” and “Breakdown” Official account editors must extensively browse various news sources, adept at playing both “chef” and “butcher.” Integrate and edit related news content so audiences not only know what happened but also understand why it happened, its significance, and the stories behind it—just as a chef skillfully cooks various ingredients to present an exquisite dish, making news full-bodied, three-dimensional, and comprehensive. For news with complex content, editors must learn the butcher’s “breakdown” technique, extracting and separately presenting the essential, newsworthy content to give news distinctive features and clear direction, enabling audiences to easily select it from massive information. For example, the Yangquan Radio and Television Official Account selected new energy content from a 20-plus-minute news program, creating the piece “Generating Electricity from Rooftops: These Greenhouses at Suburban Qianmuping Are Extraordinary,” with a highly targeted title.

2.2.4 Official Account Operation is Crucial Content operation must coordinate with activity operation. For instance, an online campaign titled “Illustrating Forty Years—Telling Yangquan Stories” invited fans to upload old photos documenting Yangquan’s changes, while the “Creating a Hygienic City Through Your Lens” online solicitation had fans upload candid photos showcasing Yangquan’s transformation. These two online campaigns combined with

offline activities increased the Official Account' s follower count by nearly 10% according to data analysis.

In summary, under the comprehensive development of new media, news gathering and editing personnel must enhance their intellectual, practical, observational, and writing capabilities, continuously enriching their comprehensive qualities, expanding their knowledge base, and cultivating innovative spirits to adapt to new eras and demands, thereby promoting the development of news gathering and editing work.

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

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