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Postprint: Discussion on Fragmented Creative Forms of Radio Programs

Authors: Xie Fei

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Abstract

With the continuous improvement of socio-economic levels, the public's demands for radio program content are becoming increasingly diverse. The fact that radio programs have not been replaced by new media demonstrates that they still possess unique advantages in information dissemination. This paper will examine the characteristics and functions of program fragmentation, and discuss creative strategies including building program brands, positioning anchor roles, updating advertising formats, enriching fragmented content, pursuing program depth, and integrating mobile terminals, thereby providing references for industry development.

Full Text

Preamble

Abstract: With continuous improvement in socioeconomic conditions, audiences increasingly demand higher quality content from radio programs. The fact that radio has not been replaced by new media demonstrates its unique advantages in information dissemination. This paper examines creative forms for radio program fragmentation, including brand building, anchor role positioning, advertising format innovation, enriching fragmented content, pursuing program depth, and integrating mobile terminals, providing references for industry development.

Keywords: Media; Radio programs; Fragmentation; Creative forms

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Author: Xie Fei

Radio programs have traditionally served as a primary channel for accessing social information and content. Since the 21st century, the rise of computer and

internet technologies has spawned diverse new media forms. Audience segmentation has become increasingly refined, prompting radio stations to restructure programs around “fragmentation” to accelerate information delivery and improve output efficiency. While some stations suffer from insufficient content that cannot meet growing information demands, radio’s century-long development has preserved its distinct advantages: convenience, speed, and strong emotional resonance. Consequently, radio programs can achieve integrated development with new media. For instance, Hunan Radio has expanded its operations into new media platforms such as Ximalaya, Litchi FM, and Qingting FM, representing a fusion of new media and traditional broadcasting.

1.1 Overview of Radio Programs

Broadcasting is an audio transmission tool that uses wires, while wireless radio utilizes radio waves. The world’s first public radio broadcast occurred on November 14, 1922, when the BBC transmitted from the rooftop of Selfridges department store on London’s Oxford Street, formally introducing radio to the public as an important information medium. Its simple listening format, rapid information transmission, and strong emotional impact on audiences have sustained its popularity. In 1936, London established the world’s first public television station. Today, after a century of evolution, radio remains an indispensable part of human media history. During wartime, radio could intercept information dissemination; during natural disasters, it serves critical information transmission functions. Audiences can receive signals and listen to programs via radios or other terminal devices. Technological advancements now enable people to enjoy broadcast services through mobile phones and computers, creating new possibilities for radio development.

1.2 Impact of New Media on Radio Programs

Since the 21st century, new media technologies have emerged, bringing richer and more diverse media tools into view. As a traditional medium, radio has inevitably faced tremendous impact. The internet’s rapid transmission speed and low information exchange cost have placed radio at a disadvantage in terms of efficiency and method. Moreover, radio receivers are often limited to a few stations with insufficient content, unable to satisfy people’s growing information needs. However, radio retains its own advantages after a century of development—convenience, speed, and strong 感染力—making integrated development with new media achievable. For example, Hunan Radio has begun expanding its industry scope into new media, with platforms like Ximalaya, Litchi FM, and Qingting FM representing integration forms between new media and radio programs. Network broadcasting provides audiences with more comprehensive services while creating broader development space for radio.

2.1 The Role of Radio Program Fragmentation

“Fragmentation” (Fragmentation in English) refers to dividing a complete entity into multiple independent parts. In recent years, this concept has gradually entered our 视野 because social strata and status are constantly 细分, with each audience segment developing unique needs. Factors such as education level, knowledge 储备, occupation, age, and gender can all influence consumption choices, lifestyles, or ideologies. The arrival of the big data era has made fragmentation’s impact on life even more profound, with radio types also becoming subdivided. In the United States, common radio station types include news, talk, sports, music, and ethnic formats. Taking music radio as an example, it still holds an important position in our lives today—people habitually turn on music programs while driving or traveling. Music radio satisfies audiences’ aesthetic listening needs and provides companionship in daily life. Following the success of music radio, American broadcasters further subdivided music programs into country, gospel, blues, jazz, and other formats. China’s radio program fragmentation process started later, and its music radio market has not yet achieved such detailed classification. Consequently, current fragmentation efforts still rely on audience-based segmentation. Fragmentation can also manifest in program types, offering precise, personalized, and customized services according to audience needs.

2.2 Characteristics of Radio Program Fragmentation

The concept of fragmentation is continuously penetrating various media fields, with music, general, news, and livelihood stations all emphasizing fragmented processing of content and formats. Today’s listeners are no longer passive recipients but have become active participants with greater discourse power. Radio program production and editing must better satisfy audience demands by refining content. Traditional radio programs typically lasted 15–20 minutes or even over half an hour, easily causing audience fatigue and weak information transmission. Fragmented programs are characterized by being short, compact, and powerful—brief in duration, high in frequency, with each anchor segment lasting no more than three minutes. For example, Liaoning Broadcasting Station’s FM92.1 *Entertainment Duo* has won audience favor through dense, short, humorous, and witty language. Additionally, fragmentation manifests in program formats and presentation methods by adding 板块 content without violating the program’s 主旨. For instance, Dalian Radio’s *Ten Songs* not only recommends ten songs daily but also incorporates modules like “background story explanations” and “singer creation experiences” to attract listeners through narrative content. Humans have an innate need for stories; when anchors explain background stories and creative experiences, listeners’ empathy is easily triggered, creating a virtuous cycle between content and audience psychology that increases program “stickiness.” In today’s accelerated lifestyle, half-hour radio programs have gradually been abandoned by audiences. Only by accelerating program rhythm and adapting to market development can fragmented creative

forms achieve long-term growth.

3.1 Building Program Brands

The increasing refinement of radio program types represents an inevitable trend in the new media era. However, this “fragmentation” does not exist independently but contains certain connection points and relationships. Therefore, regardless of external changes, the main 传播主旨 content remains cohesive and unified. Building program brands can promote the essence of programs and deepen their 主干. For example, Hunan People’s Broadcasting Station FM102.8 primarily disseminates health-related content, targeting elderly audiences with all program 板块 designed according to listener profiles. Apart from FM102.8, no other broadcast programs serve this demographic. Thus, when building a brand, stations must identify their positioning and conduct fragmentation processing based on different audience targets to ensure meaningful creative forms. For audiences, remembering the brand means remembering the program, and brand trust can translate into economic and social benefits. As leading entertainment brands in China, Hunan TV’s *Happy Camp* and China Music Radio’s *Music Radio* are highly representative, generating substantial revenue for stations through brand 联动 effects. When building brands, planners should integrate cultural characteristics and influence audiences through humanistic, aesthetic, and creative qualities to highlight brand effectiveness.

3.2 Exploring Content Depth

“Short, flat, and fast” has become characteristic of much new media content. In today’s complex environment, information transmission speed, methods, and efficiency are accelerating. While information access has become more convenient, new media also exposes problems such as low data quality and difficulty distinguishing truth from falsehood. As an established medium, radio—like television—possesses strong credibility and authority. Therefore, when innovating and reforming radio programs, it is essential to deeply explore content depth and produce quality, standard-bearing designs. Because radio “fragmentation” means shorter durations—for example, FM91.8 Hangzhou Traffic Economic Radio’s daily evening news program *Editor’s Time* runs 15 minutes total (including advertisements and hourly traffic updates), structured around “Editor’s Key News Focus” and “All-Media Editor Online.” The “Key News Focus” segment presents and interprets the most important news of the day from the host’s editorial perspective, generally within three minutes, using concise language to articulate core content and unique viewpoints. Although program duration is shortened, quality does not decline; information reception remains comprehensive without “head-without-tail” issues, satisfying both modern news dissemination characteristics and audience reception needs.

3.3 Updating Advertising Forms

In traditional radio programs, information content and advertisements often appear in a “separated” state. After listening to lengthy content, audiences suddenly confronted with dense advertising easily develop resistance and switch stations. Under the new media’s rapid development and the tremendous impact of emerging online advertising on traditional media advertising, broadcast advertising formats must seek innovation, adjust promptly, and break traditional concentrated broadcasting models by making advertising fragmented with total duration not exceeding three minutes per segment. This promotes integration between advertisements and program content, reduces audience resistance to broadcast advertising, and achieves mutual benefits. For example, Guangxi Private Car FM93.0 uses situational stories when 植入 advertising into programs, with anchors using language 铺垫 to make advertisements part of the program rather than 单纯, 无味, 枯燥 advertising displays, thereby enhancing advertising content’s narrative quality and listenability and allowing audiences to naturally receive promotional messages.

3.4 Enriching Fragmented Content

Fragmentation divides complete content into multiple sections. For radio programs, achieving fragmentation does not simply mean shortening program duration or connecting programs with advertisements but rather diversifying content from within. In the big data era, people emphasize “content is king.” For radio stations, adding small fragmented units can provide audiences with intuitive feelings, transform originally 单一 content into serialized formats, add more useful “dry goods,” and connect multiple linear units according to program content, direction, and attributes. This not only highlights the theme but also makes fragmented programs appear more refined, satisfying market demands and modern life rhythms.

3.5 Anchor Role Positioning

The shift toward fragmented radio programs inevitably affects anchor presentation styles. From a production perspective, most current radio programs (except traffic programs) have anchors who 承担 responsibilities including manuscript screening, production, and recording, making them the people who understand the entire program content best. Innovative role positioning helps improve program affinity and highlight program characteristics. Especially as fragmentation deepens and audience listening habits are disrupted—for instance, when a frequency broadcasts dozens of programs daily with short durations, fast pace, and close 衔接—audience dependence on programs or hosts greatly weakens. To be remembered quickly, anchors must have distinctive characteristics, features, and direction. Before establishing positioning, anchors should conduct deep self-analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses, maximizing strengths while minimizing weaknesses. During broadcasting, they should express ideas with

the most authentic emotions because one's authentic state produces relatively stable emotions and conditions that best highlight host style. Establishing a fixed anchor image within fragmented, diversified program content can not only increase audience stickiness but also facilitate point-to-point secondary radio marketing.

3.6 Integrating Mobile Terminals

Digital information transmission has become an inevitable development direction. According to China's 14th National Reading Survey, by 2016, China's adult reading rate reached 79.9%, with digital terminal reading at 68.3% and mobile digital reading usage at 66.1%, showing a continuous upward trend. Similarly, the China Internet Network Information Center released the 41st "Statistical Report on Internet Development," showing that by December 2017, China's netizen population had reached 772 million, an increase of 40.74 million from the previous year, with mobile netizens reaching 753 million. This demonstrates impressive mobile terminal reception rates, and smart terminals offer greater tolerance than traditional media, freeing audiences from time, location, and space constraints. Therefore, when innovating radio program fragmentation, stations must grasp mobile terminal advantages in the big data era, leverage people's dependence on network technology, and highlight their own strengths. For example, developing WeChat public platforms and adding listener message interaction segments transforms traditional one-way information output into two-way interaction, satisfying audience participation needs.

Additionally, stations can develop Weibo official accounts, mobile apps, and radio clients to diversify listening methods, make listening more convenient, and expand program fan bases. China's earliest online radio station, Guangdong Pearl River Economic Radio, began real-time online broadcasting in December 1996. By 2000, China had established 68 online radio stations. Today, virtually all broadcast programs can be accessed online. For instance, in 2018, Hunan People's Radio established 21 micro-radio stations across its region. When integrating smart mobile terminals, stations can fully leverage big data mining technology to collect and analyze audience browsing traces, summarize high-frequency listening programs, program durations, and concentrated listening times, and adjust existing program forms accordingly to meet listener psychological demands, improve social satisfaction, and ensure user stickiness.

In summary, as an important branch of traditional media, radio programs must innovate their formats to meet diverse audience demands in the new era. "Fragmentation" represents a crucial manifestation of radio's modernization, requiring staff to combine actual program conditions, understand audience positioning, and integrate scientific and reasonable innovation strategies to achieve sustainable operation of radio programs and stations.

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(Author affiliation: Zhejiang Pinghu Media Center)

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

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