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Postprint: Methods for Cultivating Skills and Qualities of Newspaper Journalists in the New Media Environment

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Abstract

With the advancement of Internet technology in China, news reception terminals are no longer limited to print media such as newspapers, heralding the advent of the new media era. New media has exerted an unprecedented impact on traditional media, as its strong personalization features, diverse audience selectivity, and varied forms of expression pose challenges to traditional media. In this new media environment, the cultivation of skills and qualities among newspaper journalists has emerged as a critical consideration for traditional print media. This paper analyzes the cultivation methods for the skills and qualities of newspaper journalists, starting from the challenges posed by the new media environment to traditional media.

Full Text

Cultivating Skills and Qualities of Newspaper Journalists in the New Media Environment

By Wu Xiaoxia

In the new media landscape, information dissemination has become increasingly interactive, holographic, digital, and networked, substantially enhancing the timeliness of information flow. Meanwhile, various news applications have gradually replaced traditional print media as the primary channel through which people access news. In this environment, newspaper journalists—key actors in news reporting—face considerable pressure. Only by continuously strengthening their reporting skills and professional competencies can print media adapt to the emerging trends and demands of the new media era.

1. New Characteristics of News Reporting in the New Media Environment

In the new media environment, both the volume and speed of news information have grown exponentially, profoundly impacting audiences' lives. This section analyzes the novel features of news reporting in this transformed landscape.

1.1 Enhanced Interactivity Bridging the Gap with Audiences

Driven by the proliferation of smartphones, news media applications on mobile devices have achieved remarkable development. Mainstream platforms such as Weibo and WeChat, alongside news apps including NetEase News, Phoenix News, Sina News, and *China Daily*, not only enable audiences to access news on their phones but also incorporate instant commenting functions. These features allow audiences to express their views on news events directly through mobile devices, narrowing the distance between events and audiences while strengthening social participation. Moreover, they facilitate the collection of diverse information, helping to reconstruct news truth from multiple perspectives and thereby enhancing the authenticity and objectivity of news coverage.

1.2 Diversified Communication Channels Improving News Timeliness

News reporting in the new media era is no longer confined to traditional print media; communication channels have become increasingly diversified. Whether through social media like WeChat, public platforms like Weibo, or dedicated news clients, the timeliness of news reporting has been significantly enhanced. A news event can now achieve maximum dissemination within hours through these varied channels. For instance, when Huawei Technologies founder Ren Zhengfei recently demonstrated national magnanimity by acknowledging his family's use of Apple products, WeChat self-media accounts, Weibo, and Toutiao disseminated the story within hours—far faster than traditional print media, which requires editing, proofreading, and printing, often delaying coverage until the following day at the earliest.

2. Challenges Facing Traditional Newspaper Journalism

2.1 The Risk of “Rehashing Stale News” Due to Slower Timeliness

In the new media environment, news events typically break on Weibo and other instant platforms, which have become important sources for newspaper journalists. However, traditional newspaper reporting requires multiple steps—including editing, proofreading, and printing—often resulting in publication only the next day or later. During this interval, news events continue to evolve on new media platforms, with new information constantly emerging. This dynamic can influence newspaper journalists during the editing process, leading to what is colloquially called “rehashing stale news” (炒冷饭), which severely undermines the authority of print media.

2.2 Challenges to News Authenticity

The authenticity of news reporting faces severe challenges in the new media environment. With more diversified information channels and increasing audience participation, conflicting accounts of the same event often emerge, creating a chaotic information landscape where “news reversals” (反转新闻) frequently occur.

3. Approaches to Cultivating Journalist Skills and Qualities in the New Media Environment

As primary actors in news reporting, journalists’ skills and qualities significantly influence news quality and media authority. Therefore, strengthening the cultivation of newspaper journalists’ competencies holds important practical significance for the development and transformation of traditional media in the new media era.

3.1 Perspective-Taking for Multi-Angle and In-Depth Reporting

While platforms like Weibo and WeChat offer timely and interactive information dissemination, they also suffer from high rates of news reversals and misinformation. This is precisely where authoritative traditional print media can differentiate themselves. By adopting perspective-taking approaches during interviews, newspaper journalists can enhance the multi-dimensionality and depth of their reporting, ensure accuracy, and foster positive public opinion guidance.

During the reporting process, journalists should gather information online but prioritize field interviews, following standardized news-gathering procedures to complete their stories. In interviews, journalists should stand in the shoes of those involved in news events, thoroughly understanding perspectives from subjects, witnesses, and other stakeholders to avoid biased reporting. News stories synthesized from multiple viewpoints and statements not only demonstrate the depth characteristic of traditional print media but also maximize truth reconstruction and prevent news reversals.

3.2 Enhancing Interview Techniques and Engaging with Subjects

Newspaper journalists must improve their interview techniques and engage more closely with subjects in the new media environment. While online news platforms provide ordinary citizens opportunities to express views and offer news tips—thereby narrowing the gap between news and the public—print journalists must compensate for their inherent disadvantages by adopting more immersive approaches. For example, journalist Chen Luyu conducts interviews in her subjects’ living and working environments. Her interview with Dong Mingzhu involved accompanying her on a tour of Gree’ s factories. Similarly, Chai Jing immersed herself among the people during both the SARS outbreak and the Wenchuan earthquake. Such proximity enables journalists to obtain more authentic and concrete reporting material, enhancing the objectivity and authen-

ticity of traditional print reporting. Conversely, merely piecing together online information to “rehash stale news” not only fails to reveal truth but can mislead readers, ultimately eroding the authority and audience base of traditional print media.

3.3 Upholding Journalistic Professional Ethics

Upholding professional ethics represents a fundamental requirement for newspaper journalists in the new media era. Austrian writer Stefan Zweig once warned: “He sold his talent, doing the work of a literary beggar, collaborating with literary manufacturers to produce, helping to shape public opinion, becoming a prostitute of the press.” Such journalists still exist today. With the rise of entertainment-focused platforms like Weibo, some journalists resort to extreme measures to generate buzz and attract eyeballs, seriously violating both professional and social ethics.

Journalist Qiu Qiming offered a contrasting perspective: “Journalists can lower their stance, even crawl forward, bend down and move ahead—as long as they make some progress, that’ s something.” This reflects a journalist’ s faith and commitment to the profession: the great satisfaction of uncovering even a fragment of truth through dedicated effort. As *Xinwen Lianbo* anchor Li Ruiying noted: “Any job feels fresh and exciting at first, but becomes monotonous and dull over time. However, when your work receives audience recognition, that sense of happiness is even stronger.” For newspaper journalists who daily deliver news that matters to readers, maintaining professional ethics constitutes a basic requirement in the new media environment.

3.4 Fostering Continuous Learning and Integration with New Media

Journalists must embrace continuous learning and actively integrate with the new media environment. As Shui Junyi observed: “New media like mobile newspapers represent pressure on traditional media, but this is not a zero-sum game where one eliminates the other.” Therefore, newspaper journalists should cultivate innovative thinking, transform traditional mindsets, and strengthen their mastery of new media technologies.

In the new media environment, journalists can access more real-time information through diverse channels, providing richer material for reporting. Simultaneously, traditional print media can build their own WeChat platforms or online networks to enhance reporting immediacy. For example, *Qilu Evening News* developed the “Qilu Yidian App” and established its own WeChat official account to follow up on online news promptly.

Conclusion

The new media era has accelerated information dissemination and increased public participation in news reporting, presenting numerous challenges for tra-

ditional media. In this context, cultivating and enhancing newspaper journalists' skills and qualities has become critical for print media development and maintaining authority. Compared to online dissemination, print media offers greater depth. During news gathering and editing, journalists should adopt perspective-taking to understand subjects' situations, enabling them to obtain more comprehensive material. This study aims to contribute to the enhancement of newspaper journalists' competencies and skills in the new media environment.

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

Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.