

# The Transformation of Editorial Functions in the New Era of Intelligent Algorithm Recommendation Environment: Postprint

**Authors:** Mao Wensi

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## Abstract

With the rapid development of the Internet and mobile Internet, both the modes of information dissemination and people's habits of acquiring information have undergone tremendous changes, as information dissemination has become increasingly intelligent and personalized. In recent years, intelligent algorithmic recommendation has been widely applied across multiple domains, including news and information, digital reading, social media, e-commerce, and video. Particularly exemplified by Toutiao, the emergence of aggregated information clients built upon intelligent algorithmic recommendation technology has, to a certain extent, achieved the personalization and intelligentization of information dissemination, thereby driving the transformation of editorial functions.

## Full Text

### Preamble

#### The Transformation of Editorial Functions in the New Era of Intelligent Algorithmic Recommendation Environments

**Abstract:** With the rapid development of the internet and mobile internet, both the modes of information dissemination and people's information consumption habits have undergone tremendous changes, evolving toward intelligent and personalized information propagation. In recent years, intelligent algorithmic recommendation has been widely applied across news, digital reading, social media, e-commerce, video, and other domains. Particularly, the rise of aggregated information platforms—exemplified by Toutiao—built upon intelligent algorithmic recommendation technology has partially realized personalized and intelligent information dissemination, thereby driving the transformation of editorial functions.

**Keywords:** intelligent algorithms; precision push; information dissemination; editorial innovation; big data; media convergence

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**Author:** Mao Wensi

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## 2. Negative Impacts of Algorithmic Recommendations on Information Dissemination

While algorithmic recommendations make information transmission faster and more efficient, any technology can be a double-edged sword. Over-reliance on algorithmic recommendations also brings certain negative impacts to information dissemination, which mainly include the following aspects.

### 2.1 Lack of Gatekeeping Mechanisms and Frequent Orientation Problems

On internet platforms that rely solely on algorithms, information filtering and distribution are entirely machine-dependent, resulting in an absent gatekeeper role. Although keyword-based machine auditing can be implemented, violative content can often circumvent these mechanisms through various techniques and be successfully published. This leads to the dissemination of non-compliant information on some platforms, creating serious ideological orientation problems. The mobile internet promotes an “attention economy,” where information platforms do everything possible to attract user attention to gain traffic. As sensory beings, many users are drawn in by sensational headlines, and—whether intentionally or not—end up browsing vulgar content. A single click triggers subsequent so-called “personalized” pushes. Furthermore, without gatekeepers, the authenticity of information cannot be verified, turning internet platforms into breeding grounds for misinformation and even rumors.

### 2.2 Uneven Quality of Information Content

Many current internet platforms have introduced large amounts of self-media content, with all writing and publishing done by self-media creators themselves. These creators possess varying levels of writing proficiency, and the platforms’ lack of gatekeeping mechanisms results in uneven content quality for users. Grammatical errors, misused expressions, and typos are commonplace, severely affecting reading experiences. Simultaneously, many self-media creators employ “clickbait” tactics—using exaggerated, eye-catching headlines where the body content is irrelevant, vastly different, or even incomprehensible relative to the title.

### 2.3 Repeated Push of Redundant and Outdated Information

Algorithm-driven internet platforms analyze user behaviors—such as news browsing and search patterns—and social relationships to build user profiles, then employ specific algorithms to calculate user interest points for information 推送. While algorithmic 推送 has scientific merit, users frequently encounter previously seen repetitive information or partially relevant but outdated, untimely, or unwanted content. Despite platforms’ slogan of “giving users what they want to see,” this redundant and stale information is often not what users need, causing repetitive and useless reading that wastes time and energy. In other words, algorithmic recommendations often “miscalculate.”

### 2.4 Creation of “Information Cocoons”

Algorithmic recommendations are based either on individual browsing and search behaviors or on social relationships. Neither approach can fully reflect a person’ s complete needs, both suffering from inherent partiality. While people do prefer browsing content of interest amid information overload, this does not mean they only want to read what interests them—interest does not equal total demand. Platforms relying purely on algorithmic recommendations, under the guise of so-called personalization and precision, confine users’ information reception to their narrow “interests.” Over time, users’ perspectives narrow, and they habitually believe “what I see is the whole world,” with their information sphere dominated by personal interests. This is the so-called “information cocoon” phenomenon.

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## 3. Transformation of Editorial Functions Under Algorithmic Recommendation Environments

In 2017, to foster a healthy public opinion environment, relevant regulatory authorities strengthened oversight of internet content, successively issuing regulations such as the *Provisions on the Administration of Internet News Information Services* and the *Administrative Measures for Content Management Personnel of Internet News Information Service Units*, and conducting multiple talks with key websites. Subsequently, websites undertook several rounds of account cleanups on their platforms. While these efforts enhanced platform governance to some extent, they could not fundamentally prevent the generation and dissemination of harmful information. People gradually recognized the drawbacks of over-reliance on algorithmic recommendations. Particularly in the information age, where the internet and mobile internet have become primary carriers of ideology and play an increasingly important role in value transmission, the gatekeeper role cannot be absent from internet information dissemination. Editors’ value in the communication field is experiencing a resurgence, with editorial functions transforming under algorithmic recommendation influences. This transformation, in the author’ s view, represents more of a

strengthening—a higher requirement for editors in the new era. Editors remain crucial in building cultural confidence.

### 3.1 Gatekeeping Function

As disseminators possess inherent social and cultural attributes, guiding audience values is their inherent responsibility and obligation. Therefore, in today's era of pervasive machine algorithms, editors' gatekeeping function should not be weakened but rather strengthened, encompassing verification of authenticity and accuracy, as well as ensuring correct political direction and public opinion orientation. Particularly in terms of orientation, editors must assume their due responsibilities and obligations in transmitting socialist core values, cultivate strong cultural consciousness, continuously elevate their ideological awareness, and ensure no deviation in political or value orientation of disseminated content. For the foreseeable future, machine auditing cannot replace manual editorial review in gatekeeping and auditing manuscripts for ideological orientation. Additionally, editors must continuously improve their ability to identify information amid vast data volumes to ensure accuracy and rigor.

### 3.2 Screening and Guidance Functions

Editors' screening and guidance functions are intrinsically linked to their gatekeeping role. While gatekeeping ensures no orientation errors, screening involves selecting healthy, thoughtful, profound, tasteful, nutritious, and valuable content from massive information pools to guide audiences toward quality information. This function plays a positive role in promoting socialist core values and guiding audiences to establish correct values and cognition. This requires editors to continuously enhance their sense of social responsibility and ideological awareness.

### 3.3 Information Processing Function

Information processing is a crucial editorial function. Excellent text processing and editing capabilities can significantly enhance manuscript value. Currently, with self-media flourishing and everyone able to become a content creator, the barriers to information production and dissemination have lowered considerably while presentation formats have diversified. Consequently, editorial information processing functions face new requirements. On one hand, editors must still polish text to make it more coherent and fluent—basic manuscript processing. On the other hand, editors must possess content integration capabilities that accommodate internet and mobile internet communication characteristics and adapt to user browsing habits across different channels, flexibly employing text, images, audio, video, and other elements to enrich content presentation.

### 3.4 Planning Function

Editors' planning functions manifest in two primary aspects. First, editors further select manuscripts that have passed gatekeeping and screening, choosing higher-quality content to establish relevant special topics that guide focused audience browsing. Second, editors can design topics based on current hot issues or trending fields, then select corresponding manuscripts to similarly guide audience reading. In the information age—an attention economy—editors' topic planning and design can more fully exert guiding influence on users.

### 3.5 Emergency Response Function

In the information age with its vast data volumes, it is unrealistic for editors—particularly at news platforms—to review every piece of content word by word. Oversights are inevitable despite careful review. This requires website editors to assume emergency response functions, reacting promptly to and handling problematic published content, especially information with factual errors or public opinion orientation problems, by timely deletion to prevent further negative impact. In other words, editors must not only gatekeep before publication but also remain responsible for platform content and audiences after information is released.

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

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