

Harnessing the Integrated Media Express: Enabling “Warm News” to Resonate with the Public - Postprint

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

Abstract

In the era of media convergence, the media ecological environment has undergone fundamental transformation. As ordinary citizens have become the principal agents of information dissemination in the “everyone has a microphone” epoch, mainstream media must align with the advancing pace of communication media by thoroughly exploring the humanistic highlights within positive-energy stories of ordinary individuals, effectively producing and vitalizing “warm news,” and compellingly narrating heartwarming stories of the new era. This enables “warm news” to seize the express train of media convergence, thereby enhancing mainstream media’s capacity for public opinion guidance, dissemination power, and influence, allowing media to function as a bridge and bond connecting the Party and government with the people, to boost morale for economic and social development, and to create a favorable public opinion environment for the concerted realization of the Chinese Dream.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Seizing the Media Convergence Express: Allowing “Warm News” to Resonate with the Public

Abstract: In the era of media convergence, the media ecosystem has undergone fundamental transformation. Ordinary citizens have become primary agents of information dissemination in an age where “everyone has a microphone.” For mainstream media to keep pace with evolving communication platforms, they must excavate the human brilliance within positive stories about ordinary people, produce compelling “warm news,” and tell heartwarming stories for the new era. By enabling warm news to ride the media convergence express, mainstream media can enhance their capacity to guide public opinion, expand

their reach, and increase their influence, thereby serving as a bridge and bond between the Party, government, and the people. This creates a favorable public opinion environment for socioeconomic development and collective realization of the “Chinese Dream.”

Keywords: Seizing the media convergence express; Telling “extraordinary” stories; Upgrading “spiritual products”

Classification: G206

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2019)05-053-03

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2019.05.012

Main Body

In the era of media convergence, communication subjects have become complex and diverse, and the media environment has undergone fundamental change. With just a person and a mobile phone constituting a converged media reporting unit, every citizen possesses the right to speak, and anyone can become a news producer or disseminator. The era of citizen journalism has truly arrived. In this environment, ordinary news reporting is something the general public can produce themselves, dramatically increasing pressure on professional journalists. While ensuring news authenticity and timeliness, the quality and depth of original content have gained broader attention and importance.

Due to internal factors such as institutional mechanisms, personnel transformation, editorial assessment, and workflow integration, combined with limitations in timeliness and reach of traditional media, many market-oriented media and platforms that prioritize algorithms often gain the upper hand in news distribution, leaving many mainstream media outlets at a disadvantage. How to bring the main melody back into public view during the media convergence era, leveraging the political consciousness and strong editorial capabilities of mainstream media professionals to achieve more effective dissemination of heartwarming news that promotes positive energy, represents a major issue that mainstream media must deeply consider and consciously practice.

As a new species born from the internet, WeChat Official Accounts have permeated all sectors of society. Traditional media, individuals, and companies have flocked to this platform, using quality content and precise positioning to satisfy audience needs for information acquisition, communication, learning, and cognition. In today’s increasingly integrated media landscape, readers have in fact become our users. The influence of news and the attention garnered by reports can be gauged from WeChat clicks, forwards, shares, and audience comments. Letting data speak and using click-through and forwarding rates for validation has become crucial in the WeChat era.

By the end of 2018, China had 829 million internet users, with 98.3% using

mobile internet. The country had 1.57 billion mobile phone subscribers, with average weekly internet usage reaching 27.7 hours. Some 30 billion pieces of information are transmitted daily via the internet, 85% of netizens use WeChat, and there are 15 million WeChat Official Accounts with 1.082 billion active users. The habit of viewing and commenting has taken hold among 36.9% of netizens, and WeChat's activity and stickiness will continue for the foreseeable future.

On February 19, 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the Party's News and Public Opinion Work Symposium, pointing out the need to "promote integrated development and actively leverage the dissemination advantages of new media." New media advantages lie in immediacy, comprehensiveness, vividness, and interactivity. Traditional media can adopt full-media presentation methods combining text, images, and video to find more suitable, effective, and efficient dissemination methods for each news item, thereby enhancing their capacity to guide public opinion.

Faced directly with the media convergence era, Haimen Daily has used its WeChat Official Account as a two-way communication platform to listen to "grassroots voices," making "warmth" its main editorial tone. By telling fresh stories and disseminating positive voices, it has fulfilled its function of guiding public opinion and transmitting mainstream social values. Currently, Haimen Daily's WeChat platform has over 160,000 followers, with average daily readership reaching 70,000. Its comprehensive index ranks first among 1,904 various official accounts of considerable scale in Haimen, with total clicks reaching 24.2687 million in 2018. Given Haimen's 500,000 smartphone users, this represents broad coverage, and clicking on the Haimen Daily official account for major news and hot events has become an unconscious act among audiences, creating a scale advantage in public opinion guidance. Haimen Daily has become the only county-level newspaper in Jiangsu Province to consistently rank on Jiangsu's new media list, was selected among the top 20 most influential county-level Party newspaper new media platforms in China for 2017, and has successfully built Haimen's most authoritative official new media release platform.

1. Seizing the Media Convergence Express to Promote Correct Values

In the mobile internet age, information acquisition has become more convenient, and our lives are constantly surrounded by hot topics with faster sharing speeds. Consequently, in neglected corners, many newsworthy stories worth cherishing are overlooked, while false, one-sided, and negative information fills public life, creating adverse effects on social stability and harmony. Against this backdrop, mainstream media journalists should go to the front lines and among the people to discover, excavate, and compile positive "warm news" that reflects authentic life, provides insight, and promotes correct values. Warm news should use ordinary people's perspectives and daily life as its reporting subjects, demonstrating grand propositions from micro-level perspectives through in-depth and meticulous coverage. Such news generally features strong storytelling and compelling plots.

In concrete practice, three key aspects should be emphasized:

First, grasp the core meaning of events, address audience concerns, and deeply excavate the human brilliance within positive stories about ordinary people. Gather facts and details to move people emotionally and convince them rationally. Through typical guidance, educate readers to do good deeds and be good people, consciously practicing civilized behavior norms and advocating positive values.

Second, when hot events and emergencies that attract widespread public attention occur, intervene immediately to obtain accurate information from authoritative departments, collect materials meticulously, and provide timely feedback to the public to kill the breeding ground for false rumors. Mainstream media must shoulder the responsibility of transmitting mainstream social values, fulfill their “mouthpiece” function, and serve as a bridge and bond connecting the Party and government with the people.

Third, regarding widely circulated rumors and misinformation, start from points of audience interest, incorporate internet thinking, and comprehensively utilize modern media methods to respond promptly to concerns, restore facts, debunk false rumors, and guide public opinion, thereby eliminating the adverse effects of false information and negative news on readers’ lives and thinking.

In daily content distribution, we focus on people’ s livelihoods. When parents queued up at midnight to register at Shiyan Kindergarten, even chaining their stools together, we chatted with them in the early morning hours to understand their helplessness. When town and village bus services fully opened, we obtained detailed route information and schedules. Such approaches add warm human touches to our reporting. For hot livelihood policies that citizens care about, we conduct original planning, invite professionals from functional departments to provide authoritative and in-depth interpretations, and 统筹运用文字、照片和视频等各类媒介资源，让大家知晓、理解新政，配合新政实施，使得政策实施效果实现最大化。

2. Telling “Extraordinary” Stories to Gather Moving Social Forces

Good stories attract attention, and sincere emotions move people even more. Heartwarming stories for the new era can capture public pain points and tear-jerking moments, narrating the “extraordinary” deeds of ordinary people. By disseminating the “extraordinary” in “story” form, they move people with authentic and delicate emotions, connect facts and details, adopt full-media presentation methods combining text, images, and video, and seek group resonance. This enables audiences to spontaneously discover the philosophy behind stories and unconsciously be touched and nourished by positive energy stories.

Only in this way can journalists recognize the value of news events when they occur, faithfully record them at the first moment, and produce excellent works. In any era, media’ s foundation comes from deep cultivation of content. The more mobile and rapid the age, the more calmness is needed to settle down and

the more conscious effort is required to refine quality. A journalist's growth process is essentially one of enhancing the "Four Capabilities" through hard work and accumulation. Only by going deep into the grassroots and taking root there to accumulate experience and thoroughly understand both policy and public sentiment can one find the most touching stories of the era and capture irreproducible emotions.

Through concrete work, we can deeply excavate the human brilliance in ordinary people's stories, use typical guidance to educate readers to do good and be good people, and promote positive social energy. Taking Haimen Daily as an example, to achieve the goal of "telling fresh Haimen stories for the new era," we have continuously launched the "Thank You, Warm-hearted Haimen People" series on our WeChat public platform. These include stories like Huang Gengping, an exceptional boss who, despite four consecutive years of company losses, gave up easy million-yuan factory rent, sold his downtown commercial housing, and paid salaries to over a hundred employees; and six ordinary villagers from Ruibei who jumped into a dark river to break windows and save people, getting injured themselves without noticing. Such stories of ordinary people's extraordinary deeds inevitably move readers to tears and achieve excellent publicity effects.

Though these stories only document the daily lives of many ordinary characters, they bring overwhelming emotion and warmth, moving people and provoking deep thought. Simple language, meticulous description, and vivid scenes thoroughly demonstrate universal love, social sincerity, and noble sentiments. They move readers, provide endless aftertaste, educate and enlighten the public, enhance citizens' moral quality, promote positive social energy, and enable local mainstream media to occupy a dominant position in the complex public opinion field.

3. Effectively Enhancing the "Four Capabilities" to Upgrade "Spiritual Products"

While mainstream media uses print and periodicals to promote warm news, they should also skillfully utilize WeChat, Weibo, websites, short videos, and other forms to conduct multi-dimensional and three-dimensional dissemination of positive mainstream values. Through combined media communication methods, mainstream values increasingly become the common character and behavioral norms of all social members.

Journalists' works should not be merely information products but should be upgraded to higher-level "spiritual products." The reported characters and facts should carry the writer's emotions and thoughts, permeated with reflections on life and society. Every word and punctuation mark demonstrates the journalist's ideological realm, willpower, humanistic concern, and social responsibility. Because of thought, ordinary news events can achieve quality upgrades; because of sincere emotional resonance, simple information transmission also carries warmth.

In the mobile internet age where information acquisition is more convenient and sharing speeds are faster, journalists cannot have a dependent mentality, much less become “second transmitters” for correspondents. Especially for print media with slower dissemination speeds, the competition is about news freshness and exclusivity. Therefore, journalists must go to the scene, find key people, and interview key points and events. Only in this way can they write warm news that resonates with ordinary people.

General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed to “continuously enhance footwork, vision, mental capacity, and writing ability.” Consistent adherence to this principle will yield endless good news. Using the “Four Capabilities” to write professional answer sheets is also journalists’ unwavering pursuit. Entering the new era and embarking on new journeys, journalists need to be filled with love for the journalism profession, cultivate news sensitivity, enhance their comprehensive qualities, boldly step forward, actively go to the front lines, capture fresh “live fish,” walk with diligent feet, observe with careful eyes, think with deep minds, and write with sincere pens.

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

Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.