

## A Preliminary Analysis of the Communication Characteristics and Post-Print Innovation of Traditional Media's Weibo News

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### Abstract

Weibo has disrupted the traditional news production workflow, compelling traditional media to adjust their approaches to news acquisition and dissemination formats. In 2012, traditional media outlets in China successively launched official Weibo accounts for content production and distribution. This paper primarily conducts an analysis from four dimensions: the current state of Weibo news, its advantages and challenges, innovative development, and future considerations, with the aim of offering insights and recommendations for the future production and dissemination of Weibo news by traditional media.

### Full Text

#### An Analysis of the Communication Characteristics and Innovation of Traditional Media Weibo News

**Abstract:** Weibo has disrupted traditional news production processes, compelling conventional media outlets to adjust their news acquisition and dissemination methods. Since 2012, traditional Chinese media organizations have successively launched official Weibo accounts for content production and distribution. This paper analyzes four main aspects: the current state of Weibo news, its advantages and challenges, innovative developments, and future considerations, aiming to provide insights and recommendations for the future production and dissemination of traditional media Weibo news.

**Keywords:** Weibo news; CCTV News; news communication; highly-educated users; communication characteristics

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Since its launch in 2009, Weibo has rapidly become a popular social media platform due to its concise content, wide reach, and strong user base. During

its development, new advantages have gradually emerged. The integration of traditional media with Weibo has allowed traditional outlets to retain their professionalism and authority while generating many new characteristics and advantages. However, Weibo's unique communication format, while attracting audience attention and enhancing dissemination effects, has also created certain problems. This paper analyzes the communication characteristics of traditional media Weibo news to provide rational reflections and recommendations for its future development.

## 1. Weibo News and Its Development

The emergence of Weibo has impacted traditional media, forcing them to adapt to the new media environment. Weibo news represents the product of this integration between traditional media and the Weibo platform.

### 1.1 Definition of Weibo News

Weibo news is defined as “a genre that disseminates recent or ongoing information through the Weibo platform, enabling users to access news anytime and anywhere.” It primarily takes the form of text, images, and videos, and has evolved to include new formats such as Weibo livestreams, Weibo stories, and short videos during the convergence process.

### 1.2 Development of Traditional Media Weibo News

Since Weibo's debut in 2009, user numbers have steadily increased. According to Sina's data center, by the first quarter of 2018, Weibo's monthly active users reached 411 million, with 184 million daily active users. Users can share their observations and thoughts at any time, participate in news dissemination, and interact with mainstream media to express their opinions. With its massive user base and information sources, Weibo enjoys unique advantages in news dissemination and information acquisition. News published on Weibo demonstrates strong timeliness, often being released as events unfold, playing a crucial role in the spread of breaking news.

## 2. Analysis of Traditional Media Weibo News Communication Status

Traditional media Weibo news has developed its own distinctive characteristics and advantages during its evolution, creating favorable conditions for content production and dissemination.

### 2.1 Advantages

**2.1.1 Timeliness of News** Without timeliness, news cannot be called news. Traditional media Weibo accounts such as @CCTVNews, managed by China Central Television's News Center, and @People'sDaily, the official Weibo of

the authoritative newspaper, necessarily possess strong timeliness. For example, @CCTVNews began livestreaming the Boao Forum opening ceremony half an hour early. Breaking news events, information, and policies are also released immediately.

**2.1.2 Topicality of News** Weibo news is a form where one person publishes while many others participate through comments, reposts, and likes. This format enhances interaction with the audience, engages them in news facts, and facilitates broader dissemination. For instance, @CCTVNews frequently initiates activities such as naming newborn pandas and online voting for the Year of the Monkey mascot before the 2016 Spring Festival, achieving effective innovation in news formats while significantly enhancing dissemination impact.

**2.1.3 Official Opinion Leaders** The freedom of user expression and wide dissemination range on Weibo can easily turn the platform into a public square for opinion exchange. When the authenticity of certain events cannot be verified, Weibo opinion leaders are needed to control public discourse and provide clarification to prevent the spread of public opinion. Weibo opinion leaders are defined as “individuals who can influence a large audience by disseminating information and expressing opinions on the Weibo platform. They generate significant influence by actively creating or participating in topics and closely interacting with followers.” Traditional media Weibo accounts such as @CCTVNews and @People’sDaily represent official media opinion leaders whose authority is unquestionable.

**2.1.4 Young, Highly-Educated Users** Highly-educated users are those with high knowledge levels and learning abilities. According to Sina Weibo’s 2017 Data Center statistics, 81.9% of Weibo users are under 30 years old. They are knowledgeable, cultured, and have unique perspectives on issues. Traditional media can interact and communicate with these young, highly-educated users to innovate their news dissemination approaches.

## 2.2 Challenges

**2.2.1 Lack of In-Depth Reporting** Due to audiences’ habit of shallow reading in the new media era, content producers opt for brief news items in their publications, resulting in Weibo news lacking the depth of traditional media such as television and newspapers. In the Weibo media environment, everyone is a self-media entity with the freedom to publish opinions, which reduces news authenticity. During major events, audiences still turn to authoritative traditional media with strong credibility for information. In-depth reporting, with its authority and authenticity, represents an important channel for traditional media to enhance their competitiveness.

**2.2.2 Excessive Fragmentation of News** Fragmented news dissemination has led to serious homogenization. Real-time news publication on Weibo, where fresh content appears every minute, results in similar reporting across different media outlets. Additionally, audiences consume information during fragmented time periods, causing news to lack depth, fail to present complete event pictures, and miss important information. Finally, there is fragmentation in news editing. Traditional media such as newspapers and television edit news based on timeliness and importance, whereas Weibo news editing appears less structured.

**2.2.3 Erosion of News Authenticity** News is disseminated to a broad audience, and spreading false news can obviously produce significant negative impacts. In news communication, the excessive pursuit of timeliness leads to publication without comprehensive understanding of the facts, resulting in inaccurate reporting. Second, clickbait headlines exaggerate facts and cause misinformation. Finally, the increase in commercial advertisements creates conflicts of interest that also contribute to news distortion. Traditional media must strictly control news authenticity in future dissemination processes to effectively prevent the erosion of news truthfulness.

### **3. Future Considerations for Traditional Media Weibo News Development**

Despite the continuous development of traditional media Weibo news, exemplified by accounts such as @CCTVNews, which has formed the aforementioned characteristics and advantages, certain problems and challenges have emerged. The following three reflections and recommendations address these dilemmas.

#### **3.1 Strengthen In-Depth Reporting**

Traditional media Weibo news content primarily focuses on current affairs, social news, and people's livelihood issues without deep excavation—in short, it lacks in-depth reporting. Although users enjoy entertainment news, this does not mean they do not need in-depth journalism. In-depth reporting is not necessarily lengthy as commonly assumed, but should focus on uncovering stories behind incidents. Moreover, in-depth reporting can compensate for the shallow reading habits associated with Weibo, playing a positive role in reflecting user demands and guiding public opinion.

#### **3.2 Balance News Quality**

With news emerging every minute and second on Weibo, the context of information overload has led to phenomena of reckless reporting regardless of news authenticity or quality. Weibo's positioning of "seeing fresh things at all times" can easily cause quality information to be drowned out, resulting in missed important information. Traditional media should strictly guarantee news quality by producing original content, exclusive news, and exclusive videos. In terms of

perspective, they should cover not only macro angles on major domestic and international events but also micro angles on schools, communities, and ordinary people, selectively disseminating different information for different audiences.

### 3.3 Improve User Experience

Frequently establish topics that allow user participation and discussion to increase interaction. For instance, regarding certain policies, encourage audience participation to express their views, and even join fan groups to interact with users directly. When publishing news, headlines should be concise and clear to ensure news quality, efficiently informing users of key information points. Finally, continuously enrich news content by discovering interesting stories and creating more topics to make content more diverse. This not only enables differentiated dissemination but also makes communication more effective.

From the perspective of news communication, Weibo's wide reach, strong timeliness, and simplicity are worthy of emulation by other media. Meanwhile, its unique communication methods have also led to certain shortcomings, such as information overload, serious homogenization, and fragmented dissemination, which largely drown out valuable information, affect Weibo news dissemination effectiveness, and limit Weibo's communication scope and influence.

During the convergence development with Weibo, traditional media has gradually formed its own unique system, though it remains imperfect. Traditional media Weibo possesses characteristics and advantages in news communication, such as authoritative releases, rich topic selection, and strong timeliness. However, it also has disadvantages, including a lack of in-depth reporting. While authoritatively releasing news and enriching topic selection, traditional media should strengthen in-depth reporting, balance news quality, improve user experience, and establish an approachable image.

As times continue to evolve, audiences demand increasingly higher standards for Weibo news. Traditional media must adhere to news communication principles, maximize the combination of their own advantages with Weibo's strengths, actively seek more novel and influential communication formats, and continuously innovate. Only then can traditional media Weibo news develop more effectively.

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