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Postprint of News Writing in the New Media Environment

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Abstract

The advent of the new media era has profoundly transformed the media landscape and modes of communication. Within this environment, advancements in science and technology have disrupted the monopoly of traditional media as the sole channel for news dissemination, while the widespread adoption of Internet technology has positioned online news as a critical vehicle for information and a conduit for communication. Media professionals must proactively innovate news editing concepts and methodologies, reorient the practice of news writing, facilitate the transformation and upgrading of traditional media, satisfy the diversified demands of audiences, and propel the development of journalism. This article centers its discussion on news writing within the new media context, examining—from the dual perspectives of news writing and audience needs—the influences exerted by the new media environment on news writing and dissemination, and subsequently distilling the key considerations for news writing to stimulate its innovation.

Full Text

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News Writing in the New Media Environment

Abstract: The advent of the new media era has profoundly transformed the media landscape and communication patterns. In the new media environment, scientific and technological development has altered the situation where traditional media served as the sole means of news dissemination, while the popularization of internet technology has made online news a crucial carrier of information and a bridge for communication. Media professionals must actively innovate news editing concepts and methods, reposition news writing, promote the transformation and upgrading of traditional media, satisfy the diversified

needs of audiences, and advance the development of journalism. This article discusses news writing in the new media environment, analyzing from two aspects—news writing and audience demand—the impacts of the new media environment on news writing and dissemination, and subsequently summarizing key considerations for news writing to foster innovation in journalistic practice.

Keywords: new media; internet; news writing

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1. New Media Environment

Supported by digital and network technologies, new media encompasses communication forms that deliver information services to users through channels such as the internet, broadband local area networks, wireless communication networks, and satellites, via terminals including computers, mobile phones, and digital televisions. This has given rise to various new media forms such as digital magazines, digital newspapers, digital broadcasting, digital television, digital film, and touch-screen media. The mass communication environment created by these new media constitutes what we face as the new media environment. As *Wired* magazine once defined new media: “communication from everyone to everyone.” Therefore, only by deeply understanding the impact of new media on news writing and innovating journalistic practices can we truly improve the quality of news writing and attract more readers.[1]

The new media environment exhibits several key characteristics. First, the identity of news publishers has become complex, and the interactive nature of communication has blurred the boundaries between audiences and writers. The emergence of self-media, in particular, means that many hot news stories are now published by event witnesses or participants themselves—everyone has the right to publish, and everyone can be a writer. Second, the volume of information has surged. The rapid rise of news-sharing platforms, coupled with the convenience of publishing and the absence of space constraints, has led to a sharp increase in the quantity of information. This vast amount of information has broken the traditional monopoly on information, making it more diversified. Third, channels for accessing resources have become more diversified. Nowadays, people no longer rely solely on newspapers and magazines for news; the rise of websites and apps such as WeChat and Weibo has diversified news acquisition channels. Fourth, news ferments more easily. The emergence of online platforms not only accelerates the speed of news dissemination but also breaks down temporal and spatial limitations, allowing everyone to participate in news discussion and dissemination. This makes news ferment increasingly rapidly

and its influence grow ever larger.[3]

2. Impact of New Media on News Writing and Dissemination

2.1 Changes in News Writing

New media, as an emerging media form, features broader dissemination and stronger timeliness compared to traditional media. Changes in the news environment are mainly manifested in the following aspects. First, the identity of news publishers has become complex, and the interactive nature of communication has blurred the boundaries between audiences and writers. The emergence of self-media, in particular, means that many hot news stories are now published by event witnesses or participants themselves—everyone has the right to publish, and everyone can be a writer. Second, the volume of information has surged. The rapid rise of news-sharing platforms, coupled with the convenience of publishing and the absence of space constraints, has led to a sharp increase in the quantity of information. This vast amount of information has broken the traditional monopoly on information, making it more diversified. Third, channels for accessing resources have become more diversified. Nowadays, people no longer rely solely on newspapers and magazines for news; the rise of websites and apps such as WeChat and Weibo has diversified news acquisition channels. Fourth, news ferments more easily. The emergence of online platforms not only accelerates the speed of news dissemination but also breaks down temporal and spatial limitations, allowing everyone to participate in news discussion and dissemination. This makes news ferment increasingly rapidly and its influence grow ever larger.[3]

2.2 Changes in Audience Demand

New media has brought tremendous impact to news writing, and fundamentally, this pressure primarily stems from changes in audience reading demands. Therefore, writers must deeply understand audience needs to innovate news writing. In the new media environment, methods for obtaining information have become rich and diverse, offering people more choices and producing certain changes in both information production and consumption. During the 12th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee at the People's Daily headquarters on the all-media era and media convergence development, the General Secretary emphasized: "Party newspapers and periodicals should strengthen the construction and innovation of communication methods, developing various new media such as websites, Weibo, WeChat, electronic newspaper reading boards, mobile newspapers, and internet television, and actively develop interactive, service-oriented, and experiential news information services." The word "service" sets forth requirements for news producers to listen attentively to the people's voices, pay attention to the vibrant lives of the masses, improve

writing quality and standards, “grasp the timing, measure, and effect, enhance appeal and impact, and resonate with the public.” [2]

Changes in audience demand are mainly reflected in the following aspects. First, reading has become more headline-oriented. When facing massive amounts of news, audiences mostly judge news value through headlines. Second, audience reading habits tend more toward scanning, interactive, and search-based patterns. Scanning refers to skimming information in a jumping, selective manner; interactive reading involves liking, commenting, and other actions after reading; search-based reading means audiences are more accustomed to searching for content of interest using keywords. Third, audiences prefer light reading. Under considerable life and work pressure, most readers approach news reading more as leisure, making vivid and relaxed writing styles more appealing. Fourth, fragmentation characteristics are evident. With the development of smart devices, accessing information has become more convenient, allowing people to make full use of fragmented time—waiting for work, ordering meals, or taking breaks all become opportunities to obtain information. Consequently, concise and brief information is more easily disseminated during these time periods.

3. Characteristics of Information Dissemination in New Media Environment

Information dissemination in the new media environment exhibits three primary characteristics. First, richness. New media communication is not limited by space constraints, allowing for comprehensive presentation through images, short videos, text, animated graphics, and other formats. This helps enrich the forms of expression and facilitates understanding of content. From a visual perspective, this is more pleasing to the eye and immediately comprehensible than lengthy treatises. Currently, diverse forms of expression have been adopted across economic, cultural, social, military, historical, and other domains. This richness brought by new technology also provides readers with different reading experiences. Second, timeliness. Traditional print media dissemination requires a publication process involving editing and proofreading, with fixed publication schedules.[4] By contrast, new media enjoys considerable freedom in publication timing—anywhere with internet access allows for writing and posting, with virtually no restrictions on location or time. If news materials can be obtained at the moment an event occurs, they can be broadcast immediately after undergoing relevant procedures. Third, interactivity. In the new media era, people can not only browse news from more industries but also comment on relevant news, enabling interaction between readers and other readers as well as between readers and writers. This interaction serves as a supplement to the news information itself, forming discussions in comment sections. Some readers even spend more time reading user comments than the news itself, and these discussions help facilitate dialectical analysis and accurate judgment of information content. Interactivity is also reflected in the word-of-mouth spread of information—a single

@ symbol can achieve blanket coverage of information across networks. However, this also brings risks for the spread of malicious rumors, and public opinion formed by readers who cannot distinguish truth from falsehood is also worth noting.

4. News Writing Strategies in New Media Environment

4.1 Strengthening Title Writing

Title creation is the first step in news writing, and in the face of massive information, the title is key to determining article readership. First, it is essential to study audience psychology. All types of news writing require audience psychology research. It should be noted that the strong interactivity of new media has led to audience segmentation, so when crafting news titles, writers must accurately position the target audience and determine title style accordingly. For example, the title from the Beijing News Book Review Weekly WeChat account, *The Wandering Earth: How Did the “First Year of Chinese Sci-Fi Cinema” Begin?* targets literature enthusiasts, highlighting science fiction literature to precisely capture readers’ interest while also hitting a hot topic. Second, emphasis should be placed on creating suspense to attract attention.[5] Writers must appropriately control the amount of information in titles to ensure they both attract audiences and disseminate news information. For instance, the Xinhua News Agency WeChat account title, *So Tempting! An Old Man Wanders on the Edge of Desire and Morality for 3 Minutes, Finally...* Third, titles must be concise and clear. News titles must be succinct without being verbose or ambiguous. For example, *China Successfully Launches 32nd Beidou Navigation Satellite Using Long March 3A Rocket* directly describes the successful launch without any ambiguity and uses precise wording. Fourth, clickbait titles must be eliminated. The principle of matching title with content and highlighting key points should be followed, accurately grasping the main content of news and expressing themes with vivid and appropriate language. Clickbait only leaves audiences feeling deceived. In summary, in the new media era, news writers should focus on creating titles that both attract audiences and convey news information.

4.2 Emphasizing Language Expression Innovation

As information access channels become increasingly convenient, the audience base continues to broaden. Audiences from different social strata and age groups possess varying comprehension and acceptance abilities, requiring news writing to adapt to different mainstream groups with different content. While ensuring news credibility and authenticity, writers must emphasize news appeal. Therefore, news writers should flexibly apply news language techniques to create suspense and attract reader interest. Especially in an era where internet language is popular, news language must be plain and fluent to meet audience reading

needs—brief yet not dry, fresh yet not impetuous, swift yet not hasty, vivid yet not vulgar. Using civilian-oriented, story-based writing techniques enhances news readability and affinity, improves news practical value, and plays a correct role in guiding public opinion.

Three specific techniques can enhance news language. First, the technique of universal connection can be applied to enhance the philosophical quality of news language. Universal connection is a concept from Marxist philosophy. To apply this concept to news writing requires achieving “de-familiarization” —connecting with things familiar to audiences to narrow the distance between audiences and news facts, or connecting with natural laws to enhance language flexibility, applicable in both personality news and event news writing. Second, rhetorical devices should be frequently employed to enhance news language vividness. Symbols can also be used to strengthen news language emotion. For instance, the headlines “Warner and Time Online Finally Tie the Knot” and “Past: Farmers Paid for Cadres’ Tourism; Present: Government Funds Farmers’ Study Tours” respectively use metaphor, parallelism, and contrast, making news more interesting, lively, and able to attract audience attention. Similarly, the headlines “Snow Accumulation Up to 10cm! Heavy Snow Tonight in These 5 Henan Locations” and “Why is 110 a Lifesaving Number? Henan Releases 8 Thrilling Cases” employ exclamation marks, double quotes, and question marks to effectively enhance title impact. Finally, poetry and allusions can be actively applied to enhance news artistry. After all, news writing is also a form of literary art rather than rigid factual statements. For example, a Xinhua News Agency article titled “*Both Public and Private Granaries Are Full*” —*Du Fu’s Famous Poem Becomes Reality Today* used classical poetry to enhance title artistry. Additionally, applying poetry and allusions can elevate themes, render artistic conception, and set atmosphere. In short, news writing is not rigid or monotonous. Writers can also apply rhetorical devices, symbols, and classical poetry to enhance news cultural connotations, thereby accurately conveying news information while satisfying audience reading demands.[6]

The lead is the beginning of news and can reflect the main idea. A good lead not only conveys primary news information but also attracts readers to continue reading. News writers must skillfully conceive and apply language techniques to craft leads, enhancing their vividness and readability while adding effective information within limited content. For example, leads can be direct and fact-emphasizing, but should choose the most vivid and intuitive content. On January 4, according to Taiwan’s “Central News Agency,” starting at 2:02 AM, four successive perceptible earthquakes occurred in Taitung, concentrated in Yanping Township, all shallow-focus earthquakes, with the maximum intensity of 4 in Luye Township, waking residents four times in one night. This lead uses data to describe the actual earthquake situation, making it clear to audiences at a glance. Additionally, methods such as contrast, conclusion, quotation, and narration can be employed. News writers should use language skills to distill news events and capture the “eye of the topic.” Furthermore, when designing leads, writers should consider audience interests and select the most novel and

interesting content from news events. For different industries and fields, writers should flexibly grasp different lead emphases. For example, the lead “Older adults sometimes have difficulty remembering where they put their keys, but a research report shows that healthy and well-educated elderly have not diminished in their ability to recall names, places, and stories” directly questions conventional assumptions, prompting audiences to read further. Finally, news leads must avoid exaggeration and deviation from facts, especially eliminating ambiguous or equivocal language, while reasonably controlling lead length.

Third, flexible application according to different genres is necessary. In terms of content, news can be categorized as current affairs, social, financial, military, etc. In terms of genre, news can be divided into messages, features, news specials, and television news, each with distinct writing methods. Messages are brief reports characterized by short length, factual content, and strong timeliness, requiring attention to the five Ws and concise language. Features employ writing techniques to report news events and personalities with more detail and varied expression than messages, requiring accurate wording, appropriate selection, suitable materials, rich content, and novel angles. News specials are magnified descriptions focusing on details, requiring close-up perspectives, description techniques, emotional integration, and deep analysis to enhance impact and immersion. Television news uses sound and video to attract audiences, requiring accessible, humorous, and concise writing with minimal rhetorical devices and well-adjusted structure. In summary, news writers should select appropriate techniques based on genre, though the new media environment allows for greater flexibility. Recent innovations include one-sentence news for major events, such as Xinhua News Agency’s “Just Now, Saudi Crown Prince Dethroned,” which attracted countless followers and became an emulated model.

4.3 Content Presentation Innovation

In the new media era, information publishing can be presented to audiences through multiple means such as text, audio, and video. News reporting should flexibly apply these according to different content, covering news events from all directions and angles. For major political news events, one can cut directly to the chase. For instance, a Xinhua News Agency WeChat public account headline reads, “Xi Jinping Presides Over Second Meeting of Central Commission for Comprehensively Governing the Country According to Law, Emphasizing These Points,” with a cover image featuring the words “Authoritative Release” on a blue background, reflecting the serious and authoritative nature of such news reporting. Clicking the link reveals concise, clear content with distinct themes, allowing readers to quickly understand relevant meeting information. For social and livelihood news events, Xinhua’s public account article “40 Seconds! History’s Fastest Accident Handling Born! Netizens: All Straightforward People” uses short videos and images to describe the news event, with brief text and humorous style, such as “Note: From getting out of car to talking with driver took only 25 seconds, seems they were both straightforward people,” ac-

accompanied by emoticon images, screenshots of netizen comments, and examples of traffic accidents experienced by netizens. At the article's end, editors also included procedures for quickly resolving minor accidents like scratches and rear-end collisions without violating regulations, along with reminders about handling major accidents with casualties. Although the article is not lengthy and uses plain language, readers develop a calm attitude after reading, able to face unpleasant matters lightly while also learning traffic regulations, earning numerous likes and comments. For leisure and entertainment content, China Newsweek's public account post "Why Does Getting a Haircut in First Lunar Month Kill Your Maternal Uncle?" introduces the historical origins of haircuts during the Qing Dynasty, accompanied by Douyin videos and TV drama screenshots, making it relaxed and fun. Another example is People's Daily's public account post "Liu Guoliang Is Anxious!" which announced the 2019 national table tennis team coaching staff list and the assessment and reward-punishment methods for men's and women's team coaches. Within less than 100 characters, the entire article used charts to introduce the reward-punishment methods to readers, clearly organized and highlighting key points at a glance.[7]

In the all-media era, internet technology supports the powerful functions of new media, integrating text, images, sound, animation, and other forms of expression to bring users diverse reading experiences. How to create a post that resonates with the masses based on content deserves in-depth research and practice by media professionals. Recent news works show that news writing themes, methods, angles, language, and techniques have undergone very obvious changes. Faced with this situation, news writers should deeply understand news characteristics and audience needs in the new media environment to innovate news writing methods, enabling mainstream values to achieve the widest possible dissemination.

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

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