
AI translation · View original & related papers at
chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202310.01809

Rethinking Host Competencies and Qualities in the New Media Era: Postprint

Authors: Shi Shulan, Li Yue

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

Abstract

Traditional journalist-hosts are a familiar concept. With the rapid development of new media technology, “citizen journalists” have emerged as a new group distinct from traditional journalist-hosts. Today, everyone can act as a publisher, disseminator, and receiver of news events, which presents new demands for the traditional profession of journalist-hosts. This article analyzes the current state of China’s news industry in the new media environment, examines several problems currently confronting journalist-hosts from traditional media, and proposes corresponding recommendations for addressing these issues.

Full Text

New Reflections on Host Competencies and Qualities in the New Media Era

Abstract: Traditional journalist-hosts are no strangers to us. Today, with the rapid development of new media technologies, “citizen journalists” have emerged as a new group alongside conventional journalist-hosts. In this environment, anyone can become a publisher, disseminator, and receiver of news events, posing new demands on the traditional profession of journalist-hosts. This paper analyzes the current state of China’s journalism industry under the new media environment, identifies problems facing journalist-hosts in traditional media, and proposes corresponding recommendations to address these challenges.

Keywords: traditional media; new media; journalist-host; media convergence

As the era evolves, various media have entered the new media age. The “everyone is a journalist” communication environment has profoundly impacted traditional journalists. Audiences who were once passive recipients of news information

can now capture events with a simple click and share them online, becoming “creators of news events” and even “participants in news events.” Previously, news publishing was largely controlled by a small group of professionals, but in the new media era, any audience member with a microphone or mobile phone has the right to publish news events. This new media environment has presented a series of challenges for journalist-hosts in traditional media, even raising doubts about whether journalists remain necessary. This paper analyzes the domestic industry situation, the responsibilities and obligations of journalists in the new media environment, the advantages of traditional media, existing problems in the all-media landscape, their social impact, and how to regulate these phenomena, offering suggestions for better telling China’s stories.

1.2 Traditional “Journalist-Hosts”

The journalist-host combines the roles of “journalist and host,” possessing unique mastery capabilities throughout the processes of program collection, editing, and broadcasting that exceed those of ordinary hosts. Positioned between professional hosts and career journalists, the journalist-host is also a journalistic role that participates throughout the entire news event process, including planning, interviewing, and hosting, enabling them to better grasp the overall news reporting. Current research on “journalist-hosts” in China primarily focuses on experiential summaries. Teacher Liu Mingwei from Shandong Normal University has comprehensively defined the journalist-host as a host who is highly integrated into program reporting consciousness, excels in interviewing and hosting, and merges collection, editing, and broadcasting, fulfilling dual role requirements of both journalist and host.

With the arrival of the new media era, journalist-hosts in television news programs are no longer hosts in the original sense but need to directly participate in news reporting, playing a crucial leading role in news events. For journalist-hosts, conducting in-depth reporting on news events to help audiences understand the full picture has become a major advantage. During program presentation, journalist-hosts are not merely performing hosting functions but also bearing the identity of journalists, tracking events throughout and using their professional advantages to express relatively complex news events more concretely and vividly. This vivid expression can effectively narrow the distance between journalist-hosts and audiences, while their deep involvement in news events ensures, to a certain extent, the authenticity of news reporting.

1.3 Emerging “Citizen Journalists”

The concept of “citizen journalists” has become familiar with the advent of the new media era. Literally, the central term in “citizen journalist” is “journalist,” with “citizen” serving as a modifier. Generally, non-professional news disseminators or providers of citizen journalism are referred to as “citizen journalists.” Citizen journalists differ from the professional journalists we previously knew; they may play a journalist’s role in certain aspects of a news event’s reporting

and dissemination process but are not professional news communicators—just ordinary members of the public. The concept behind “citizen journalists” reflects the idea of “participatory journalism.” Because they are not professional journalists but come from among the people, they are also called “grassroots journalists.”

2.1 Crisis Facing Journalist-Hosts

With the continuous development of new media technologies, various online spaces have provided platforms for the general public to publish information. The emergence of “citizen journalists” has led increasing numbers of people to question whether traditional journalists remain necessary.

2.1.1 Excess of News Sources In the past, audiences’ primary channels for obtaining news were television, radio, and newspapers. The new media era has dramatically increased the ways people receive information. The development of Weibo, WeChat, and various apps has expanded news sources beyond traditional limitations. Media’s “mass era” is transitioning to a “niche era,” as people are no longer limited to passive information 灌输 but are in an active position to choose freely. This undoubtedly poses a tremendous challenge to both traditional media and traditional journalist-hosts.

2.1.2 Excessive Information Dissemination Speed Compared with traditional journalist-hosts, citizen journalists come from among the audience and therefore capture breaking news events more quickly. Due to their convenience, citizen journalism spreads far faster than traditional journalism, granting them first-reporting rights, definition rights, and even interpretation rights over news events. Consequently, the emergence of citizen journalists has seriously impacted the survival of traditional journalist-hosts, whose advantage lies in depth and breadth.

2.2 Advantages of Journalist-Hosts

Although citizen journalists significantly impact journalist-hosts, we should clearly recognize the inherent advantages that journalist-hosts possess:

First, authority. In information reporting, professional journalists still hold the right to publish authoritative content. In major coverage such as the “20th Anniversary of Hong Kong’s Return” and the “BRICS Summit,” traditional media like CCTV News authoritatively release leaders’ speeches and conference content, maintaining leading attention online regarding issues concerning national economy and people’s livelihood. In terms of communication influence, professional journalists still possess strong public opinion guidance capabilities. In emergencies, confirmation, characterization, and resolution are all guided by traditional media, especially mainstream media represented by *People’s Daily*,

which uses authentic information, high-density commentary, and news supervision to increase event attention and transparency, hold responsible parties accountable, promote rectification, and advance social fairness.

Second, professionalism. In news event reporting, traditional journalist-hosts have advantages in communication resources and rich techniques, with strong capabilities for content development. Whether aerial news coverage, visualization technologies, or VR journalism, all require human and material resources as guarantees. Due to their simple equipment and weak processing capabilities, citizen journalists struggle to produce high-quality news content such as the multimedia visual microfilm *Red Temperament* by Xinhua News Agency.

Third, execution capability. Journalist-hosts play a crucial role in a news program, and execution capability is also a key element. If journalist-hosts simply broadcast according to a provided script, they can hardly achieve ideal results. Therefore, they must participate in the entire program's preparation and planning. Without involvement in program arrangement, journalist-hosts can hardly guarantee the communication effect after broadcast. This is relatively difficult for non-professional citizen journalist-hosts to accomplish but represents an obvious advantage for professional journalist-hosts. From early-stage planning and interviewing to later-stage editing and broadcasting, journalist-hosts should have a relatively concrete and holistic grasp of the program's main theme and, of course, be thoroughly familiar with program details. Therefore, during program implementation, journalist-hosts who participate in program arrangement can truly implement program intentions. Their personal involvement in news events makes news reporting more authoritative and persuasive, enabling such news programs to excel.

3.1 Enhancing “Media Literacy”

To gain a firm foothold in the rapidly developing new media era, journalist-hosts must first enhance their “media literacy.” Media literacy is a capability that reflects people's ability to obtain and analyze various mass media information and the skills required to use traditional media, new media, or self-media to serve social life and work needs. In the new media era, journalist-hosts should further enhance their media literacy, establish a sense of responsibility, strengthen their ideals and beliefs, and explicitly support the Party's program. In this “Internet Plus” era, audience demands and choices are increasing, and emerging citizen journalists challenge news authenticity. Therefore, journalist-hosts should identify their positioning and responsibilities more clearly, focusing on positive propaganda during dissemination. By utilizing new media technologies and their professional advantages, they should keenly observe small matters around them, extending their concern for people to those neglected by others.

3.2 Enriching News Expression Forms

In terms of news communication direction, professional journalists should earnestly absorb the spirit of citizen journalists while maintaining their authenticity and professionalism, increasing audience attention through various techniques and enhancing audience participation. Therefore, journalist-hosts in traditional media must continuously master and utilize new technologies, employing richer news language, forms, and techniques to produce excellent television programs. Simultaneously, they can leverage their professional advantages and use big data computing to adapt to the trend of audience segmentation.

3.3 Focusing on News Depth

Due to citizen journalists' convenience, traditional journalist-hosts can hardly achieve the same immediacy in news timeliness. However, traditional journalist-hosts can dig deeper on the foundation of citizen journalists, combining citizen journalists' news clues to excavate news stories closer to people' s lives, caring about public feelings and needs. This approach ensures news authenticity and authority while reflecting and staying close to the masses, making it more "down-to-earth."

3.4 Leveraging Strengths and Developing Competencies

Integrating with new media is the foothold for developing traditional media and journalist-hosts. Facing various challenges in the all-media era, journalist-hosts must strengthen their learning capabilities and continuously improve their professional skills and self-cultivation. In television news programs, meticulous thinking ability can help journalist-hosts make quick judgments and analyses of complex events, grasping the core of issues. Hosts' rigorous critical thinking can also make television programs more authoritative and persuasive, thereby avoiding superficiality and exaggeration. Under new social development circumstances, journalist-hosts should adopt a mindset of discarding the dross and selecting the essential to learn from citizen journalists' characteristics, fully leveraging professional journalists' advantages. They should persist in taking authenticity as their lifeblood, guidance as their soul, and the people as their center, continuously producing excellent works that tell China' s stories well.

The new media era has placed higher demands on journalist-hosts. As public figures with social influence, traditional journalist-hosts must not only shoulder the social responsibilities conferred by their specific identities but also actively improve their comprehensive qualities to meet the demands of media work in the new era. At this critical moment, journalist-hosts must both preserve their unique advantages and skillfully utilize new media technologies, find their positioning by focusing on the center and serving the overall situation, remember their social responsibilities, improve their professional standards, continuously produce works with thought, warmth, and quality, and contribute to China' s

media industry.

References: [1] Wei Fen. Analysis of the Role Transformation of Radio Journalists in the New Media Environment [J]. West China Broadcasting TV, 2017(14): 160-161. [2] Zou Yuting. Strategies for News Journalists to Do Well in News Communication Work in the New Media Environment [J]. News Research Guide, 2017(2): 203.

(Author Affiliation: Houma Radio and Television Center)

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

Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.