

## Characteristics and Pathways of Information Dissemination in the We-Media Era: A Case Study of WeChat (Postprint)

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

### Abstract

With economic development and technological advancement, the modes of human communication have undergone profound transformations alongside the evolution of the times. The advent of the We-Media era has afforded individuals expanded space for communication, establishing every person as a subject of dissemination. Through personal devices, individuals can transmit information to the external world, while the continuous updates of various software applications have further facilitated communication. In recent years, WeChat has emerged as a prominent platform among internet-based social networks, owing to its precision and efficiency in information dissemination, thereby bearing witness to the development of China's We-Media era. This study primarily examines WeChat as its main research subject, analyzing its communication modalities and pathways to investigate the development of contemporary We-Media information dissemination.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

#### Research, Discussion, and Exchange: Characteristics and Pathways of Information Dissemination in the We-Media Era—A Case Study of WeChat

*ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal*

**Abstract:** With economic development and technological advancement, human communication methods have undergone revolutionary changes. The arrival of the we-media era has created more space for exchange, making everyone a subject of dissemination. Individuals can broadcast information to the outside

world through their own devices, and the continuous updating of various software has made communication increasingly convenient. In recent years, WeChat has become a new favorite among internet social platforms due to its precision and efficiency in information dissemination, witnessing the development of China's we-media era. This paper focuses on WeChat as the primary research object, analyzing its dissemination methods and pathways to explore the current state of information propagation in the we-media landscape.

**Keywords:** we-media era; information dissemination; WeChat public platform; communication order

**CLC Number:** G206

**Document Code:** A

**Article ID:** 1671-0134(2018)08-098-02

**DOI:** 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2018.08.039

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In 2011, Tencent launched an instant messaging application—WeChat. Following its successful development, within a year, by 2012, it had replaced Weibo as the new dominant internet service platform in the market. In August 2012, WeChat introduced its Public Platform, enabling users to follow accounts and access information of interest. Through scientific design, the platform satisfied daily needs for automatic replies and mass messaging functionalities. According to WeChat's monthly active user statistics from 2014, overseas monthly active users had reached nearly 400 million, representing an increase of 40 million compared to 2013. Simultaneously, the WeChat Public Platform has achieved widespread development due to its convenience. The primary information push method currently involves targeted delivery to specific user groups, and its dissemination model is gradually transforming how people obtain information.

### 1.1 Gradual Increase in New Media Advertising Investment

With the evolution of the times and the maturation of the market economy, the advertising industry has experienced rapid growth. According to advertising bidding data released by China Central Television (CCTV) in 2009, total bidding volume had reached 9.256 billion yuan. When compared with CCTV's previous advertising revenue, the growth rate was substantial, approaching nearly 80%. Since 2009 was not long after the last financial crisis, many analysts used this as an opportunity to comment that China's advertising industry would not be affected by the global economic crisis, and that most Chinese enterprises maintained confidence in economic recovery based on current market conditions. However, the reality showed significant differences, primarily manifested across various industries. While CCTV's advertising business demonstrated considerable growth, other sectors such as automotive, finance, and real estate exhibited

downturns during this period. The advertising market conditions in China's real estate and automotive sectors best represent the development status of these industries. In 2009, according to statistics from relevant advertising departments, real estate and automotive advertising accounted for only 40% of total media advertising revenue.

Based on surveys summarizing corporate advertising investment plans, approximately half of enterprises planned to reduce their advertising expenditures, about 30% intended to maintain current levels, and only around 20% planned to increase advertising investment during the economic crisis.

### **1.2 Increased Capital Investment**

As advertising represents a highly profitable sector, many groups have focused their attention on advertising investments. Most representative are venture capital organizations and private capital entrepreneurs, who primarily target industries such as national energy, environmental protection, and new media. These sectors receive significant national attention and generate relatively high profit value. Currently, as the government's media access policies gradually liberalize, strategies that were previously difficult to implement in the media advertising industry now have opportunities for realization under present social conditions. This has, to a certain extent, increased the attention of venture capital funds and private entrepreneurs toward the advertising industry. Due to these companies' sustained focus on the new media sector, new media can conduct larger-scale financing and attract more capital into the industry.

### **1.3 Wireless Value-Added Services**

Currently, the video industry, particularly the magazine sector, has experienced significant market impact due to the arrival of new media. To adapt their development models to present market realities, these enterprises have actively pursued industry transformation. Most electronic magazine and video providers have proactively contacted mobile communication service providers. By converting their content, they have established intangible goods and provided them to relevant video and e-book websites through wireless networks. These websites then modify their charging methods according to actual consumption patterns to align with market conditions. Consumers select paid purchase options based on their actual needs, while video and e-book providers share profits with the websites to maximize gains and promote industry development.

### **1.4 National Policy Support for New Media**

After a considerable period of early development and growth, new media has passed its initial development stage and gradually expanded into a crucial phase of innovation in core product competitiveness. In this stage, only content with substantial innovation that can attract consumer attention can achieve development in the current market economy environment. Today's society is one of

information explosion; how to make readers interested in one' s content has become the primary concern for personnel at video content websites. Particularly, cloud computing technology is currently developing well, and government departments have recognized this industry' s development prospects, consequently introducing various policies to support its growth. The government obtains certain benefits from enterprise development through taxation.

## 2. Application of New Media Technology: WeChat

As the most commonly used social software, WeChat' s primary function is to satisfy people' s daily communication needs. Therefore, most scholars tend to believe that WeChat' s main purpose is to fulfill people' s everyday life requirements. The primary reason WeChat stands out among numerous social applications is that its functions better meet people' s daily needs. Researchers have summarized WeChat' s functional design philosophy as initially aimed at facilitating easier contact among acquaintances—that is, enabling direct communication with QQ friends through voice calls and other features while establishing more accurate user networks. However, traditional voice calls and message-sending functions have gradually failed to meet people' s usage demands. Consequently, to continue attracting users, WeChat successively introduced features such as “People Nearby” and “Shake.”

The emergence of these functions has diversified WeChat' s overall capabilities and further enhanced its social functionality. In WeChat' s design system, Moments is a crucial feature. In Moments, recording and sharing constitute the core of its development, strengthening user connections during the sharing process. Although platforms like Weibo and QQ have achieved information exchange to some extent, WeChat enables deeper communication.

The reasons why WeChat can stand out among numerous social software applications can be summarized as follows. First, WeChat allows users to send emoticons, voice messages, and videos according to their desired expressions, expanding people' s social circles. Voice, video, and text functions make connections among WeChat users closer, promoting interpersonal relationship development. Second, WeChat not only enables communication among acquaintances but also creates possibilities for strangers to establish friendships. The “People Nearby” feature can search for nearby WeChat users, while “Drift Bottle” allows users to receive messages from people worldwide, thus invisibly constructing a network of connections among WeChat users.

Due to WeChat' s significant impact on people' s lives and its substantial satisfaction of daily communication needs, it has gradually exerted considerable influence on society. However, current research on its impact remains limited, primarily focusing on three aspects: social interaction, ideological and political work, and news dissemination. Regarding social interaction, compared to previous communication tools, WeChat not only enables voice communication but also facilitates text and video exchanges. Therefore, by gradually influencing

people' s communication methods, WeChat has become an indispensable tool. Secondly, it impacts people' s horizons; since WeChat can disseminate external information, users have opportunities to access more information.

### 3. Future Prospects for New Media Technology

As new media technology usage becomes increasingly widespread, demands for its centralization have gradually increased. Since traditional digital storage occupies substantial space, information storage may become dispersed. Integrated new media technology enables exchange among multiple information types while allowing more flexible and accurate expression of relevant matters. Current trends indicate that digital media' s market share is gradually declining, being replaced by emerging internet media industries. Therefore, the primary development direction for new media technology should be network-oriented.

In summary, technological progress drives new media development, with satisfying people' s actual needs being the primary development direction. New media technology will inevitably become increasingly perfected through development. From the current actual situation, the new media technology industry has broad development prospects, primarily oriented toward networking and centralization. Computers and mobile devices as carriers will continue to significantly influence people' s lives in the future.

The advancement of internet digital technology provides a technical foundation for new media development, while traditional media dissemination methods are gradually weakening. However, new media development cannot completely overshadow traditional media, as changes in China' s audience groups also evolve with social transformation, and new social development forms will emerge under new environments.

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

*Source: ChinaXiv—Machine translation. Verify with original.*