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Research on the Reform Path of China's Mainstream Television News in the New Media Context (Postprint)

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Abstract

In the new media context, television news has encountered developmental bottlenecks. To better advance the development of television news, this paper analyzes how current new media technologies have impacted mainstream television news across news carriers, forms, content, and other dimensions. Concurrently, it argues that television news media must seize opportunities and prioritize development across three dimensions: leveraging professional advantages, optimizing service functions, aligning with consumer demands, reforming service styles, relying on diversified technologies, and innovating presentation forms.

Full Text

Research on Reform Paths for Mainstream Television News in China in the New Media Context

Abstract: In the new media context, television news has encountered development bottlenecks. To better promote the development of television news, this paper analyzes how current new media technologies have impacted mainstream television news in terms of news carriers, formats, and content. It also argues that television news media need to seize opportunities and focus on three key areas: leveraging professional advantages and optimizing service functions; aligning with consumer demand and reforming service styles; and relying on diverse technologies to innovate presentation forms.

Keywords: New Media; Television News; Path

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Television news is a means of delivering news through sound, images, text, and other forms to audiences via television screens, primarily utilizing modern electronic imaging technology. Before the development of new media, mainstream television news in China was deeply loved by the masses for its timeliness and richness. Through television news, people could quickly learn about domestic and international events. However, with the development of new media, this traditional medium has faced tremendous impact. The “disadvantages” of television media—such as one-way information transmission, time constraints, carrier limitations, and fixed formats—have weakened audience preference. The characteristics of new media news, including speed, diversity, timeliness, multi-carrier availability, and interactivity, have become new demands of the audience. In the new media context, mainstream television news in China finds itself in an awkward position. How to achieve a “breakthrough” for television news and realize sustainable development has become an important issue facing mainstream television news.

1.1 Impact of New Technology News Carriers

In the new media context, computers, mobile phones, and other carriers display news from around the world in real time through internet technology. Most audiences now prefer browsing news via computers and mobile phones, while the number of people watching news on television has gradually declined. According to statistics, mobile internet news users have reached 625 million, accounting for 84% of netizen usage, while the average daily time spent watching television news has decreased to 154.6 minutes, with the proportion of all-day television viewing dropping significantly.

This shift in audience preference for news carriers has impacted television news. The audience no longer regards television as the primary medium for news consumption, while online news carriers continue to expand their influence. Consequently, the value of television news is being gradually eroded in the process of audience carrier selection.

1.2 Impact of Diverse News Publishers

In the new media context, news publishing is no longer the exclusive right of traditional official outlets. Everyone can become a news producer and publisher. People can use their mobile phones to casually shoot a video or record audio and publish it online, creating simple and informal news formats. Moreover, such news is unrestricted by time or location, and audiences can participate in news interaction, achieving timely and interactive functions. However, mainstream television news often faces certain limitations in reporting content, generally confined to formats such as news bulletins, features, and commentaries, with

content following certain “routines.” These traditional patterns have, to some extent, affected audiences’ selection of television news.

1.3 Impact of Richer News Content

In the new media context, relying on internet technology, news content in dissemination has become richer. Various elements such as text, video, and images can be integrated and displayed. Content is not constrained by traditional television news formats, and expression is more accessible and concise. Content can both integrate into ordinary life and be elevated to in-depth interpretation. Audiences can browse different content expressions on the same news topic within a short time, gaining more news perspectives. This internet-based news provides audiences with diverse choices in news content, and people have become more accustomed to capturing news content of interest through the internet.

However, mainstream television news often faces certain limitations in reporting content, generally confined to formats such as news bulletins, features, and commentaries, with content following certain “routines.” These traditional patterns have, to some extent, affected audiences’ selection of television news.

2.1 Leveraging Professional Advantages and Optimizing Service Functions

Mainstream television news faces inherent gaps compared with new media technology news in terms of news production and dissemination due to limitations in carrier forms, institutional structures, and personnel. For instance, regarding news timeliness, online news can broadcast immediately—a person can capture and disseminate timely information with a simple snap, whereas television news requires processing before publication. This determines that television news holds no advantage in timeliness. However, in the new media era, the pursuit of timeliness is not the audience’s only priority; the “interpretation” of news represents a deeper demand, which has become an important advantage for television news. While online news may only present documentary messages intuitively, satisfying people’s desire for immediate information, audiences simultaneously hope for official interpretation of the causes and developments behind the messages. This provides space for television news to leverage its professional advantages and deliver quality services.

One advantage of television news is its official status, which enables multi-angle investigation and interpretation of news, excavating valuable information behind news stories, highlighting truth, and transmitting positive energy to better serve the public. Therefore, mainstream television news must fully utilize this advantage to conduct “secondary excavation” of news, giving full play to the interview advantages of television news to dig deeper into facts and provide multi-angle interpretations of truth to satisfy audience demands. For example, CCTV’s “Focus Interview” program frequently concentrates on hot topics of social concern and provides comprehensive coverage and interpretation of facts.

Although sometimes appearing to be a minor issue, the program interprets the underlying impact of events in greater depth and thoroughness, helping the public better understand the truth and more easily draw lessons and experience. This provides enlightenment and satisfies audience needs, representing a key reason why “Focus Interview” remains beloved by the masses.

Another advantage of television news lies in serving social livelihood. Relying on its own strengths to better serve people’s livelihood constitutes important guarantee for television news to gain a firm foothold in the new media landscape. First, meeting spiritual needs of the masses. In modern society, with rapid economic development, people’s pace of life has accelerated. While satisfying material improvements, they also crave spiritual fulfillment. Grasping these needs and providing timely news interpretation represents an important advantage of television news in serving the public. For example, every Spring Festival, CCTV produces a series of spiritually enriching programs themed around the “New Year,” capturing hot topics such as how to practice filial piety, how to return home, how to accompany family, and how to face “forced marriage” pressures. Through various forms of interpretation and guidance, audiences can gain spiritual enlightenment and harvest from watching such content.

Second, serving local economies. Mainstream television news possesses certain guiding value and can excavate local economic development experiences to produce interpretive reports on economic development topics, thereby promoting experiences and serving people’s livelihood and economy. For instance, many television news programs release content on tourism, innovation, and entrepreneurship, excavating characteristic elements and highlighting key experiences to provide reference resources for people seeking economic development, which is deeply loved by the public.

2.3 Relying on Diverse Technologies to Innovate Presentation Forms

In the new media context, audience news selection emphasizes two prominent characteristics: intuitiveness and freedom. Intuitiveness means audiences prefer watching “first scene” footage through multi-angle videos, while freedom means they can watch television news anytime and anywhere without being restricted by broadcast schedules. Therefore, television news must rely on diverse technologies to innovate presentation forms. First, utilize diverse news interview technologies to present the first scene from multiple angles. With the rapid development of information technology, the subjects and angles for obtaining video and images have become more diverse. Various sky-eye systems, shop surveillance cameras, personal mobile phones, and home cameras all provide important resource guarantees for news acquisition. In particular, the emergence of drone camera technology offers entirely new spatial perspectives for news presentation. Television news must fully utilize these technological carriers to obtain dynamic news videos, audio, and images in the first instance to satisfy audience demands for intuitiveness. Meanwhile, television news can also employ digital simulation technology, live demonstrations, and historical scenario reconstruction to

provide audiences with richer news presentation forms.

Second, graft network technology to achieve dynamic television news broadcasting. Traditional television news is restricted to specific time slots, and people sometimes miss news due to other commitments. By relying on network technology, news can be grafted online, enabling audiences to watch missed news anytime and anywhere. Simultaneously, through the integration of television news with new media news, the television news model can be transferred to online platforms. By arranging news broadcast schedules, audiences can follow their preferred news anytime and anywhere and achieve news interaction, thereby enhancing the interactivity of television news.

3.2 Aligning with Consumer Demand and Reforming Service Styles

Capturing consumer demand represents the key for mainstream television news to develop influence in the new media context. In the new media environment, audience demands for news in terms of format, content, and style have become diversified, forming a stark contrast with traditional television news models. This represents both a weak point and an opportunity for television news. First, highlight personalized needs. Traditional television news features broad mass appeal, which, while advantageous for interpreting universal news topics, has paid insufficient attention to individual demand differences and inadequately refined and categorized news content. In the new media context, audience demands for news have become more diverse. Television media need to refine news content, particularly by skillfully collecting audience demand points through online platforms, and then providing rich news topics through television platforms to satisfy personalized choices.

Second, adopt a “straight to the point” narrative style. To ensure news completeness, traditional television news often presents the entire news process to audiences, with key points generally placed in the latter half. In the new media context, people prefer direct presentation, and “fragmented” news browsing is becoming an audience orientation. Therefore, mainstream television news must reform traditional styles by being straightforward in narrative, directly presenting points of concern, conflict, emphasis, and focus to audiences, while interspersing interpretations to deliver news. This approach attracts audiences from the beginning, and after watching the entire short news piece, they can still understand the whole story.

Third, adopt a narrative that “gets close to the people.” Traditional television news often maintains an official stance with serious content, which, while ensuring news effectiveness, has limitations in resonating with the masses. Therefore, to better cater to audiences, television news needs to be more intimate in narrative, more vivid in form, and closer to ordinary people in content, making it easier for audiences to engage with television news. For example, broadcasting interesting stories from daily life, narrating neighborhood gossip, and stepping into people’s everyday lives truly integrates television news with the masses.

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

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