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Editorial Literacy in the New Media Era (Post-print)

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Abstract

The rapid development of new media poses significant challenges to traditional media and is reshaping the dissemination modalities and effectiveness of news and information content. Within this macro-context, traditional media have been actively adjusting their strategies and embarking on the path of media convergence development. Against this new backdrop, the question of how media editors and journalists can enhance their editorial literacy has emerged as a critical research topic. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of news gathering and editing in the new media era and their impact on traditional methods, thereby exploring the essential competencies and capabilities required of editors in this new media landscape.

Full Text

Preamble

Editorial Competencies in the New Media Era

ChinaXiv Collaborative Journal

Abstract: The rapid development of new media has impacted traditional media, transforming both the methods and effects of news information dissemination. In this context, traditional media have adjusted their strategies, embarking on a path of media convergence. This new situation makes it a crucial research topic how media editors and journalists can enhance their editorial competencies. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of news gathering and editing in the new media era and their impact on traditional methods, exploring the competencies and abilities editors should possess in the new media age.

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In recent years, with the rapid development of digital information technology, new media represented by the Internet has grown from inception to maturity, transforming traditional news gathering and editing methods, creating new news content products, media communication patterns, and market shares. The vigorous development of new media and strong policy support have propelled traditional media forward in this tide to develop new media, integrate with new media, and expand their economic and social benefits through new media channels. In this process, as media professionals, editors must improve their editorial competencies to effectively respond to the various challenges of the new media era.

1.1 Stronger Timeliness. In the traditional media era, even the most time-sensitive media—television, radio, and morning newspapers—required certain editing time. Live television and radio programs were also subject to technical limitations that introduced delays. However, the advantage of network technology lies in its rapid information updating speed, unconstrained by factors such as editing, printing, post-production, distribution, and transportation. Information can be disseminated within the first moment, even synchronized with news events, expanding infinitely and making news communication more efficient, convenient, and rapid, enabling audiences to receive first-hand information instantly.

1.2 Interactivity. In traditional media, news dissemination was unidirectional: television, radio, and newspapers transmitted information while audiences passively received it, with no interaction whatsoever. The development of new media has completely shattered this paradigm. Through computers, mobile phones, laptops, and tablets, audiences receive news disseminated by new media and can express their opinions through likes, shares, and comments, enabling effective interaction with news editors. This has realized bidirectional, interactive news communication. Simultaneously, audience comments and interactions enrich and expand the content and variety of news information, broaden the scope of topic selection for new media news products, and make audiences increasingly important in the new media era.

1.3 Enhanced Three-Dimensionality. Media convergence is the most prominent characteristic of news information products in the new media era. Newspaper periodicals are print media, carrying information through text and images; television media combines video and sound; while radio transmits information solely through audio. The development of new media technology has transformed the communication mediums of news information products, making media convergence an inevitable trend. In the new media era, text, images, sound, and video can all be integrated to create comprehensive, three-dimensional news information products that enable audiences to understand information content more intuitively.

1.4 Information Volume in the New Media Era

The development of new media technology has not only spawned numerous new media platforms and transformed the media landscape, but also broken through the limited space of newspaper layouts and time constraints of television and radio. New media can establish massive databases based on the importance of news information, interpreting news from different perspectives. Meanwhile, the convenience of information search in the big data era allows historical events and related information to serve as derivative reading products for news information, meeting the diverse needs of readers.

2.1 Changes in Communication Rights and News Gathering Methods

In the traditional media era, editors served as gatekeepers of news information, firmly controlling the initiative over news content, with all news products undergoing the traditional three-tier review process. However, the rapid development of new media information technology has led to the proliferation of self-media, with WeChat public accounts, microblogs, and other platforms enabling everyone to become disseminators of information, making each individual a publisher and gatekeeper of media content. Due to the stronger timeliness and interactivity of new media, the communication power of traditional media has been significantly weakened. News gathering and editing methods have also changed; the layout space and broadcast time of traditional media are no longer the primary platforms for news release. Many traditional media have gradually altered their information release sequence, with priority for news content publication shifting toward new media platforms. Communication methods now combine text with video and audio.

2.2 Impact on Editorial Social Responsibility and Professional Ethics

Editors and journalists are primarily responsible for the effects of news information dissemination; their editorial spirit and social responsibility determine the direction of public opinion development. Their work should promote social progress and foster healthy social customs. However, the massive volume and timeliness of information in the new media era often cause editors and journalists to lose their discriminative ability in this ocean of information. Large amounts of criminal information, uncertain events, and accident information flood various media platforms, affecting audience psychology and creating negative social impacts. Driven by economic benefits and the desire to attract more followers, some editors and journalists have weakened their social responsibility, deviating from journalistic principles and causing property losses.

3.1 Firm Political Literacy

Yu Guoming, a professor at Renmin University of China, believes that “In the information age, people need news, but even more so, they need interpretation of news. Professional perspectives, analytical tools, and methods will help audiences understand the truth of the world more authentically.” In the new media era, the three-dimensional reporting format of news information content requires media to integrate various forms such as text, images, video, and sound. Editors and journalists need to master integrated news content communication methods that combine gathering and editing, actively conduct news planning in the all-media environment, and focus on in-depth reporting. On one hand, they should analyze, integrate, explain, and evaluate hot topics, questionable issues, and difficult problems; on the other hand, they should extend the news production chain and communication value chain through innovative news production and dissemination methods, making news more substantial and profound to highlight media influence. Additionally, due to the strong interactivity of new media, the interaction between news information content and audiences has become closer. To attract more audiences and plan news content that better meets their needs, editors and journalists must transform themselves promptly. In this highly interactive new media era, they should become hosts of news information products, selecting hot topics and guiding readers and authors to exchange information on media platforms, thereby guiding correct values.

3.2 Strong Learning Ability

New media technology is developing rapidly, particularly information communication technology, making media convergence an inevitable path for many traditional media. The new media era imposes new requirements on editors: innovating news production and communication methods, innovating in news writing and manuscript editing, extending newspaper and periodical news information into multiple communication forms, and actively providing audiences with information beyond information. Adapting to new media technology development and utilizing various media gathering and editing technologies has become a basic competency for editors and journalists. To master these new information technologies, they must actively learn and explore various new media communication forms such as websites, online video, microblogs, WeChat public accounts, and mobile applications, promptly learning new gathering and editing techniques to keep pace with the times and meet the challenges of the new media era. Another aspect of learning involves new professional knowledge. In this new era, not only has the media field undergone significant changes, but under the wave of “Internet Plus,” all sectors of society are experiencing profound transformations. As providers of news information content, editors must keep pace with the times, strengthen their learning, continuously enrich their knowledge base, and become versatile generalists mastering various types of knowledge. For specialized media, editors must also master more industry-specific knowledge. Taking the author’s own magazine *China Work Safety* as

an example, editors must systematically engage with issues and events in key safety production industries such as coal mining, hazardous chemicals, non-coal mines, and construction engineering, grasp the latest developments in China's work safety efforts, and understand and familiarize themselves with the priorities and challenges in these industry sectors. Only then can they effectively organize manuscripts. If editors lack professional knowledge and publish or edit erroneous manuscripts, it will cause significant losses to work safety production efforts, and in serious cases, may even trigger production safety accidents due to misleading information, resulting in property damage and harm to people's lives.

3.4 Innovative and Collaborative Capacity

Under the traditional media framework, media organizations only needed to handle gathering, editing, printing, and distribution as relatively independent, self-contained processes. However, in the new media era, content gathering, editing, printing, and distribution are no longer isolated tasks but form a complete activity. Producing a news information product requires topic planning and selection, interview and manuscript organization, followed by post-production and printing based on content needs. When necessary, video and audio must also be integrated. After content completion, subsequent review, editing, publication, and marketing distribution must be promptly followed up to truly create a three-dimensional news information product. Due to timely interaction and massive information volume, news products also require timely feedback reception and in-depth editing. All these demands require editors in the new media era to possess strong innovative and collaborative capabilities, enabling them to produce the strongest works within the most effective timeframe through seamless coordination across all stages.

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