

The Transformation Path of Local Television News in the New Media Environment: Postprint

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

Abstract

This paper primarily focuses on analyzing the transformation path of local television news in the new media environment. Considering the tremendous impact that current new media development has exerted on the development of local television news, it conducts in-depth exploration and research from four aspects: constructing a news resource exchange platform, carrying out local media convergence, exploring and integrating local characteristics, and deepening value-added services of local television news. The purpose is to enhance the quality of local television news in the new media environment, thereby paving the way for improving the quality of life of local communities.

Full Text

Transformation Path of Local Television News in the New Media Environment

Abstract: This paper focuses on analyzing the transformation path of local television news in the new media environment. Considering the tremendous impact that new media development has brought upon local television news, this study conducts an in-depth exploration from four key dimensions: constructing news resource exchange platforms, developing local media convergence, discovering and integrating local characteristics, and deepening value-added services for local television news. The objective is to enhance the quality of local television news in the new media era and lay the foundation for improving the quality of life for local communities.

Keywords: new media environment; local television; news transformation
Classification Code: G206.2 **Document Code:** A **Article ID:** 1671-0134(2018)03-115-02 **DOI:** 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2018.03.048

1. The Role of Local Television News

1.1 Local Television News as Regional Communication Symbols

Every region possesses its own news programs that foster a sense of belonging and identity among local citizens. For local television news programs, this sense of belonging constitutes the foundation for sustainable development. From Maslow's perspective, belonging represents a higher-level human need. In today's information-rich era where communication has completely broken geographical barriers, transforming the world into a "global village," audiences increasingly prioritize local news alongside their need for external world information. Generally, local television news adheres to the principle of localization, which to some extent ensures that audiences' need for identity and belonging is satisfied.

1.2 Local Television News as a Bridge Between the Public and Government

Local television news serves as a mouthpiece for both the government and the people, not only communicating party and state policies to the masses but also conveying public sentiment to the government, thereby functioning as a crucial bridge connecting the two. However, local television news should not merely recite information verbatim or serve as a carrier of lengthy documents. Instead, it must visualize complex policies and present them in accessible ways, particularly regarding matters concerning people's livelihoods. The materials compiled for local news must closely align with public needs, examined from the audience's perspective, with public participation and news value serving as the core of news production. The focus should lie in selecting news materials and encouraging audience participation. Only by carefully observing public demand and actively engaging audiences in news interaction activities can local television news achieve a sense of belonging.

2. The Profound Impact of New Media on Local Television News Development

In the media market, several characteristics of local television stations constrain their core competitiveness. First, their technology and infrastructure cannot compete with large-scale television networks. Second, local stations have limited coverage, relatively low public attention and media influence, and their audiences are generally limited to local residents, resulting in naturally lower ratings compared to new media platforms. Third, local stations share a common disadvantage with large television networks: their news timeliness is weaker than that of new media. New media can publish information online at any time and simplify the information production process, whereas local television news must undergo collection, editing, and review—a highly complex production process.

Driven by technological advancements, new media has achieved remarkable

progress. With continuous development, information platforms such as Weibo and WeChat have gained widespread utilization, delivering a tremendous impact to traditional television news. Under the “Go, Transform, and Reform” policy, China’s television news industry has embarked on a path of transformation and upgrading. Local television stations must keep pace with evolving communication concepts and methods; otherwise, they will struggle to maintain their position in society. For China’s local television stations, the emergence of new media has created significant challenges. Major television networks and CCTV have begun leveraging their technological and financial advantages to enter the new media arena. Taking CCTV as an example, while squeezing local stations’ ratings, it also diverts their audiences through digital platforms, further narrowing the survival space for local television. In this new media environment, the emergence of smartphones, computers, and other new media channels has fundamentally transformed how the public accesses news information, leaving increasingly limited room for local television news development. Furthermore, new media’s internet-based dissemination possesses timeliness and universality that local television news lacks, subjecting local television to further compression. In response, local stations must focus on improving news content quality, expanding news sources, and fully leveraging their leadership advantages to face new media challenges confidently.

However, the reality is that local television stations suffer from severe shortages in funding and technology. Operating independently makes it difficult to compete with new media and may even lead to unnecessary losses that reduce their core competitiveness [1]. Therefore, constructing news resource sharing platforms to integrate internal news resources across stations, strengthening business cooperation, improving news output quality, ensuring full resource utilization, and expanding news information can promote integrated development of local television stations.

3. Transformation Path for Local Television News in the New Media Environment

3.2 Integrating with Local Media to Provide Targeted Services

The primary purpose of integrating with local media is to enable the public to access television news through multiple channels. By leveraging new media advantages, traditional television news can be integrated into the internet, breaking the geographical limitations of conventional local television stations. To achieve this, local television stations must apply new media technologies to achieve online dissemination of news programs. Media convergence can be realized through opening Weibo accounts and operating WeChat official accounts, while content convergence involves transforming single video formats into diversified content combining images and videos. This allows community members to access the latest local information anytime and anywhere via Weibo or WeChat, regardless of television access.

Additionally, local television news can utilize the interactive functions of new media platforms to provide venues for public communication and suggestion-sharing, facilitating future program development. Interactive features such as “like” buttons can also enhance the dissemination scope of news programs.

3.3 Integrating Local Characteristics to Enhance Audience Engagement

In the new media environment, numerous media outlets produce grounded, accessible news to meet audience demands—an advantage that local television news can effectively leverage. By segmenting audiences and deeply exploring local characteristics to incorporate into news content, local stations can satisfy the substantive needs of local communities. Although local television stations may lag behind major networks in terms of information volume and influence, their news reports are closer to the actual lives of local residents, giving them geographical advantages. Therefore, local television news should center its transformation on producing programs with local characteristics, capturing hot topics of local concern, creating special columns, analyzing and reporting news from local perspectives, and even inviting local residents into the studio to generate emotional resonance and increase attention to local television news [3].

Furthermore, innovation efforts are essential, including the rational application of diversified production methods to enhance the openness and realism of television news, making it more acceptable to audiences. This type of news reporting, integrated with public social life, will inevitably increase audience favorability. Consistent efforts in this direction will strengthen local influence.

Beyond news production, local television stations must genuinely integrate local characteristics into news content, assuming responsibility for shaping urban image and highlighting urban spirit. Conversely, the economic and spiritual lives of local citizens can also serve as high-quality materials for local television news production. A quality program can not only satisfy local audiences’ emotional, spiritual, and life needs but also effectively enhance their sense of pride. This pride and satisfaction will naturally transform audiences into loyal viewers.

3.4 Enhancing the Effectiveness of Local Television News

To expand value-added services for local television news, stations must first conduct comprehensive market evaluations of local news markets. Under the premise of understanding actual public demand, they should segment the television news industry and clarify their own position. Everywhere, audiences exhibit characteristics of large scale and high dispersion. The key is to avoid indiscriminate approaches and instead provide different services for different news consumers to satisfy personalized demands.

Second, local television must demonstrate its unique style, leaving deep impressions on audiences through distinctive characteristics. Next, stations must address audience pain points by tackling real issues concerning people’s economic

and daily lives, helping them solve problems, and showcasing local television's humanistic concern [4].

In summary, value-added news information services should be audience-centered. When producing television news programs, stations should proceed from two aspects: First, prioritize local news to highlight the actual status of local communities, reporting on daily events to give audiences a general understanding of local affairs before appropriately covering some national news [5]. This enables local residents to stay informed about major events in their surroundings and enriches their lives. Second, enhance the practical value of local television news by drawing on foreign news broadcasting models, periodically inserting service-oriented news segments with rapid updates to effectively achieve integration between online and television platforms. Based on this approach, local stations can broadcast local weather conditions every ten or thirty minutes during news programs, providing valuable information for local communities and thereby increasing audience engagement.

Conclusion

The rapid development of new media has fundamentally challenged the dominant position of traditional television news. In this new era, local television news must ensure authenticity, timeliness, and innovation in its reporting, particularly emphasizing interaction with local residents and understanding public sentiment to produce news programs with local characteristics. Only through these measures can local television ensure its sustainable and healthy development.

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

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