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Exploring New Media Development Approaches in Mengzi City: Postprint

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Abstract

Nowadays, with the advancement of science and technology, internet-based new media has also achieved rapid development, making information transmission more convenient and diversified, thereby giving rise to a greater number of emerging industries. In recent years, Mengzi City has leveraged new media platforms such as the “Today’s Mengzi” WeChat official account, “Mengzi Mobile Express”, China Mengzi Website, “Today’s Mengzi” mobile APP client, “Charming Mengzi” Weibo, and “Today’s Mengzi” micro official website. Through sustained and impactful content creation and distribution, and by means of all-media live broadcasting, online government-citizen interaction, and citizen photojournalism exposure initiatives, the city has successfully established its own brand, expanded its publicity influence, and garnered widespread recognition and praise from all sectors of society.

Full Text

Exploring New Media Development Paths in Mengzi City

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Abstract: With the advancement of science and technology, new media derived from the internet has developed rapidly, making information transmission more convenient and diversified while giving rise to emerging industries. In recent years, Mengzi City has leveraged various new media platforms—including the “Today Mengzi” WeChat official account, *Mengzi Mobile Newsletter*, China Mengzi Website, “Today Mengzi” mobile APP client, “Charming Mengzi” Weibo, and “Today Mengzi” micro-official website. Through sustained and robust content creation and distribution, employing methods such as all-media live streaming, online government inquiry, and citizen photography exposure, the city has successfully built its brand, expanded its publicity influence, and earned widespread recognition and praise from all sectors of society.

Keywords: Mengzi City; new media; development; planning

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1. Establishing Specialized Agencies to Operate New Media Platforms

The initiative to expand new publicity frontiers through new media “two micros and one terminal” (WeChat, Weibo, and client) began in 2014. Prior to that, new media application was virtually a blank slate, with only one official Weibo account—“Charming Mengzi.” With the promotion and popularization of 3G and 4G mobile phones in 2014, alongside the widespread adoption of WeChat and rapid expansion of friend circles, the “Today Mengzi” WeChat official account was officially registered and launched on March 14, 2014. Concurrently, the *Mengzi Mobile Newsletter* and China Mengzi Website were established. Within one year, six platforms were created, including the “Today Mengzi” micro-official website embedded within the WeChat account, the “Mengzi Information” mobile APP client, and the “Mengzi Release” platform on Toutiao. To manage these operations, the Mengzi City New Media Center was established in April 2014.

2. Enhancing WeChat Content Production Capabilities

Among the many platforms launched, WeChat was prioritized for development. Based on WeChat’s unique ecosystem, the “Today Mengzi” account was positioned to “focus on major, minor, and everyday matters in Mengzi, while promoting the city’s history, culture, tourism, and people’s livelihood”—deliberately avoiding traditional discourse systems and conventional current affairs reporting. In early 2015, dedicated personnel were assigned full-time responsibility for content creation and production, actively collecting and organizing material on policy interpretation, project construction, entertainment, and lifestyle topics, which gradually expanded the platform’s influence.

As the New Media Center’s editorial team strengthened, the focus shifted to self-collection and original content production, with a mandatory requirement of one original article per person per week. Continuously pushing original articles featuring Mengzi’s local flavor and characteristics—which were widely forwarded by other official accounts—expanded the influence of “Today Mengzi” while promoting various aspects of the city’s work and enhancing its reputation and recognition. In 2017, building upon existing platforms including the “Today Mengzi” WeChat public platform, China Mengzi Website, Mengzi Civilization Website, “Today Mengzi” mobile micro-official website, Mengzi Housing and

Urban-Rural Development Website, Mengzi Poverty Alleviation Special Website, Yunnan Tong “Mengzi Information” APP platform, *Mengzi Mobile Newsletter*, and WeChat briefings, two additional platforms were created: the “Today Mengzi” APP mobile client and the “Mengzi Release” platform on Toutiao.

3. WeChat “Online Government Inquiry” Creating Strong Impact

In 2015, the WeChat “Online Government Inquiry” column was launched, accompanied by the simultaneous introduction of the “Today Mengzi Official Online Government Inquiry Community” on the WeChat platform. Citizen inquiries were processed into new media “Online Government Inquiry” supervision documents and directed to relevant departments, while responses and handling situations were publicly shared via WeChat in a timely manner. Adhering to the principle of answering every question and responding to every concern, each issue raised by netizens was taken seriously, with departments and units required to handle and reply within specified time limits. Depending on the nature of the response, cases were either addressed publicly or individually. This approach truly achieved the goal of providing responses to all inquiries and answers to all matters, building a bridge of communication between the government and netizens, creating positive influence, winning public trust, and shaping a favorable image.

4. Strengthening Comprehensive Capabilities of “Today Mengzi” WeChat

A key operational concept for the “Today Mengzi” WeChat platform is “planning,” implemented through both column development and activity organization.

Regarding columns, in addition to maintaining the flagship “Online Government Inquiry” column, several other impactful columns were launched, including “Exposure Platform,” “You Help Me Assist,” “Express News,” and “City Creation.” The “Exposure Platform” initially featured weekly illegal parking information provided by traffic police but evolved to mobilize citizen participation in photographing and exposing uncivilized behaviors. By partnering with merchants to provide material rewards for submissions, the campaign expanded participation and scope, effectively boosting Mengzi’s efforts to create a National Civilized City and consolidate its National Sanitary City status. “You Help Me Assist” is a charitable initiative that collects used clothing from citizens through online mobilization and offline community collaboration, partnering with the Honghe Hematopoietic Stem Cell Love Public Welfare Team “Love Follows” to periodically deliver clothing to impoverished populations in mountainous areas. The “Express News” column leverages WeChat’s popularity for current affairs publicity, providing concise and clear reporting of the latest news and promoting the day’s content from the *Mengzi Mobile Newsletter* to meet diverse information

needs.

Regarding activities, numerous online and offline initiatives have been planned and implemented in recent years. First, the city strengthened brand promotion of Mengzi Cross-Bridge Rice Noodles through a sustained WeChat series campaign, releasing promotional articles at an average frequency of one per week to reinforce Mengzi's identity as the hometown of this iconic dish. Second, various interactive activities were conducted on WeChat, including a knowledge competition commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Victory of the Anti-Japanese War, a quiz on studying the Seventh Plenary Session of the Seventh Committee of the Prefectural Committee, and a "Most Beautiful Teacher" selection vote, which engaged cadres and employees across departments and units as fan users. Third, the "One Old Photo Witnesses a City" collection campaign was launched to evoke nostalgia and participation. Fourth, at major event sites, QR code scanning campaigns offered local products like Northwest Le apples, water, and basins to strengthen offline fan growth. Fifth, a "Today Mengzi" WeChat direct sub-account was opened, establishing fan groups and foodie groups to enhance comprehensive interaction and communication with followers.

5. Effective WeChat All-Media Live Streaming

Since the end of 2015, the Mengzi City New Media Center has applied WeChat live streaming technology to dynamically broadcast important meetings, major festivals, and emergency events through all-media live streaming on the WeChat platform. In 2017, the center comprehensively conducted thematic live streaming using mobile live streaming software, creating powerful network publicity effects. The entire editorial team was mobilized for full-process coverage, presenting the latest and fastest information from scenes through graphics, audio and video, aerial photography, and VR360° panoramic shooting.

During the live streaming of the annual Mengzi City People's Congress and Political Consultative Conference, meticulous planning and preparation enabled comprehensive coverage. While friend circles and WeChat groups were flooded with live reports, "Today Mengzi" WeChat simultaneously published precise graphics interpreting the Government Work Report. Using "Today's Headlines" headers to promote the opening ceremonies and new leadership teams created a superimposed publicity effect that further expanded click rates and influence. Citizens could witness the grand occasions of the two sessions through WeChat and learn about the government's work plans and measures for the year in real time, achieving excellent publicity results.

6. Multi-Technology Applications

To further promote integration between traditional and new media, significant investment was made to build the "Today Mengzi" mobile APP client operation management system with its own service system and cloud platform, beyond simply integrating TV and newspaper news on WeChat. In terms of hardware,

to ensure smoother and faster video and audio playback on the “Today Mengzi” APP, high-speed cloud background servers, VMS system transcoding servers, TV live encoding devices, and broadcast live encoding devices were purchased, forming a powerful cloud platform online storage array that provides hardware support for integrating broadcast, TV, and services on the APP.

In terms of software, integration was achieved across Mengzi TV Station, Mengzi Radio Station, *Mengzi Newspaper*, and the New Media Center’s TV, broadcast, newspaper, and WeChat content on the APP, giving “Today Mengzi” mobile APP substantial news volume and making it a powerful government new media publicity platform. While integrating traditional media, the APP possesses greater interactive attributes of new media and links with WeChat and Weibo through personal registered accounts, enabling every article to be shared on WeChat and Weibo while immediately publishing netizens’ views and opinions. Additionally, the APP integrates the “Mengzi Mall” e-commerce platform, enabling online sales of Mengzi specialty products and achieving organic integration of local image publicity with agricultural specialty product display and marketing.

The APP’s launch enabled timely live streaming of TV, newspaper, and broadcast content, full integration of WeChat content, Mengzi Website, and *Mengzi Newspaper* electronic edition. Compared with WeChat integration, it offers smoother and faster video playback, officially ushering in the era of having all Mengzi all-media information at one’s fingertips.

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

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