

Postprint: Service Strategies for Science and Technology Journals on WeChat Official Account

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Abstract

This paper explores the positioning, advantages, target audience, and impact on traditional print journals regarding the operation of WeChat public platforms by scientific journals. Through the WeChat platform, it provides readers with push content including interactive services, journal tables of contents, articles, and micro-videos, and proposes recommendations and service strategies for the operation and maintenance of journal WeChat public platforms. Utilizing the WeChat public platform enables readers to access convenient services, develop enhanced user stickiness, establish positive interactions with editorial departments, and achieve integrated development among WeChat, print journals, and websites. Scientific journals should attach great importance to and effectively operate their WeChat public platforms, actively showcasing their image to boost journal development.

Full Text

Preamble

WeChat Public Platform Service Strategies for Scientific Journals

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Abstract: This paper explores the positioning, advantages, target service audiences, and impact on traditional print journals in the operation of WeChat public platforms for scientific journals. By providing interactive services, journal tables of contents, articles, micro-videos, and other content through the WeChat platform, this paper proposes recommendations and service strategies for the operation and maintenance of journal WeChat public platforms. Utilizing WeChat public platforms enables readers to receive convenient services, form stronger user engagement, and establish positive interactions with editorial departments, fostering integrated development of WeChat, print journals, and websites. Scientific journals should attach great importance to and effectively

operate WeChat public platforms, actively showcasing their image to boost journal development.

Keywords: academic journals; subscription accounts; WeChat public platform; media convergence; journal development

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Scientific journals should understand their own circumstances and regularly push their journal tables of contents and featured articles. Articles selected for WeChat distribution must have certain representativeness, or the authors must possess certain authority. For instance, if the author is an academician, professor, or leading figure recognized in the industry, they naturally attract significant attention, and their articles inevitably maintain high standards. Publishing such articles on WeChat enables immediate dissemination and promotion, unrestricted by print publication cycles. During the process of promoting excellent articles, editors should fully leverage WeChat's characteristics of convenient, efficient dissemination and sensational effects, presenting article-related content and knowledge points in a visually rich format to facilitate content propagation. The "Read Original" link at the end of WeChat articles can connect to full-text content on the website, allowing interested readers with professional needs to further download PDF, HTML, and XML versions of articles, presenting the "original flavor" of articles to readers in a timely manner [3]. This inevitably helps improve journal metrics such as the annual Web download rate, creating a long-tail effect that maximizes impact through small-scale dissemination [4].

WeChat is an instant messaging software developed by Tencent. As of June 2017, the combined monthly active accounts of WeChat and WeChat (WeChat's international version) reached 963 million, making it an essential application for smart mobile terminals. WeChat public platforms generally include two major categories. The first is subscription accounts, which provide new information dissemination methods for media and individuals, primarily functioning to convey information to users. Subscription accounts can send one group message per day. The second category is service accounts, which provide more robust business services and user management capabilities for enterprises and organizations, mainly oriented toward service-oriented interactive applications. Service accounts can only send four group messages per month. Scientific journals can choose subscription accounts to send hot articles to readers and can also utilize service accounts to lay a foundation for future journal operations and paid services. Currently, due to their professional media attributes, academic journals most commonly use subscription accounts. Subscription accounts for academic journals can be positioned as mobile display platforms for academic journals, centrally presenting content in a "rich media" format to enhance user

engagement between readers and scientific journals, better serve readers and subscribers, and thereby achieve benign development and mutual promotion between journal WeChat public platforms and print journals [1]. At present, the application of WeChat public platforms in scientific journals is generally not widespread, and user engagement is weak. Editorial departments need to utilize WeChat public platforms to establish good user experiences, opening a window of mass “rich media” for scientific journals.

1. WeChat Public Service Platform Can Provide Extended Services for Academic Journals

1.1 Providing Convenient Interactive Services to Form an Organic Community

Embedding links to website submission and peer review systems within WeChat public accounts enables authors and reviewers to seamlessly connect through WeChat, transforming mobile phones into mobile office tools. However, constrained by mobile screen size and system operating speed, the user experience for submission and review is relatively poor. Nevertheless, the query function is the most welcomed by authors. Combined with the system’s ability to remember user information, authors can check manuscript status anytime and anywhere through the WeChat public account, unaffected by office location or equipment [2].

1.2 Pushing Journal Tables of Contents and Excellent Articles

Scientific journals should regularly push their journal tables of contents and featured articles. Articles selected for WeChat distribution must have certain representativeness, or the authors must possess certain authority. For instance, if the author is an academician, professor, or leading figure recognized in the industry, they naturally attract significant attention, and their articles inevitably maintain high standards. Publishing such articles on WeChat enables immediate dissemination and promotion, unrestricted by print publication cycles. During the process of promoting excellent articles, editors should fully leverage WeChat’s characteristics of convenient, efficient dissemination and sensational effects, presenting article-related content and knowledge points in a visually rich format to facilitate content propagation. The “Read Original” link at the end of WeChat articles can connect to full-text content on the website, allowing interested readers with professional needs to further download PDF, HTML, and XML versions of articles, presenting the “original flavor” of articles to readers in a timely manner [3]. This inevitably helps improve journal metrics such as the annual Web download rate, creating a long-tail effect that maximizes impact through small-scale dissemination [4].

1.3 Combining with the Journal's Own Characteristics

Due to space constraints in print magazines and limitations of paper carriers, pushing micro-videos and interview audio in WeChat public accounts can produce unexpected effects [5]. For example, surgical journals in medicine can comprehensively display specific surgical operations—actions and techniques that are often difficult to understand in print can be fully demonstrated in videos and animations. Dermatology journals can display dermatological disease differentiation and characteristics through images or animations. Demonstrations of traditional Chinese medicine acupuncture and massage techniques, case presentations, and medical images can also be centrally displayed through public accounts, with much stronger effects than print versions. For instance, an article titled “Famous Physician’s Essence” published in the August 2017 issue of *Tianjin Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine* featured “Director Jia Yingjie’s Treatment of Postoperative Fatigue Syndrome in Breast Cancer Patients through ‘Regulation’ Instead of ‘Tonification.’” Subsequently, the editorial department interviewed Director Jia Yingjie, a renowned traditional Chinese medicine expert and oncology department director from Tianjin, and released a micro-video on the WeChat public account. In the video, Director Jia explained and clarified the principles of “regulation instead of tonification” and its clinical application, addressing the confusion faced by traditional Chinese medicine clinicians when treating cancer patients. Upon release, the video immediately generated tremendous response among readers and clinicians. Through the “Read Original” function below the public account post, the editorial department further satisfied readers’ and clinicians’ demands to read the original article. Simultaneously, the number of readers purchasing and subscribing to that issue increased significantly, prompting the editorial department to request additional printing from the printing house. This concrete example fully demonstrates the synergistic effect of micro-video → public account → website → print journal, with the micro-video as the source of the event creating a sensational effect that progresses and boosts promotion layer by layer, effectively publicizing the article, the journal, and simultaneously promoting the interviewee himself. The interviewee and the editorial department form an organic entity, transforming from a contributor to fully utilizing the journal’s public account platform for mutual promotion and win-win outcomes. Building on this interview, the *Tianjin Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine* editorial department developed a distinctive “Expert Insights” micro-video interview column, achieving tremendous response among readers and clinicians and establishing a unique and characteristic feature among traditional Chinese medicine journals.

1.4 Enhancing Editors’ Sensitivity to Submitted Articles

By fully utilizing the “Statistics” function in WeChat, which includes user analysis, graphic analysis, menu analysis, message analysis, and webpage analysis, the “Graphic Analysis” section is most relevant to journal editors. Through specific numbers and trend charts for graphic page reads, original page reads,

shares, forwards, and WeChat collections within 30 days, editors can conduct specific analyses of reading trends and frequencies and export Excel spreadsheets for intuitive analysis of readers' true needs and interests regarding an article. This guides editors in manuscript selection and organization processes to make discerning choices and correct judgments. By analyzing specific metrics such as whether articles are opened from graphic pages, public account sessions, moments, shares, or collections, editors can determine which promotion method is more efficient for each article, enhancing promotion efficiency and achieving twice the result with half the effort [5].

1.5 Enhancing Interaction with Readers

Through the voting function in WeChat, readers can select their preferred journal cover, article sequence, or topic themes, avoiding the “constraints” of editors' own thinking while enhancing the journal's dissemination, interactivity, and sensational effects—functions that editors in the print and computer eras wanted to achieve but couldn't, now easily realized through WeChat's voting function in just a few simple steps, taking days or even hours to understand readers' most authentic needs and urgent ideas. By utilizing the featured author comment function, operators can display valuable and novel viewpoints in the background, promoting interaction between readers and authors, and between readers and operators. Previously, editors in offices could never guess readers' inner feelings and questions when reading academic articles. Through comments, editorial departments can instantly understand readers' thoughts, and through editors as “media,” enable communication between readers and authors to answer questions, discuss, and progress together. This also guides scientific journal operators toward better operation, broadens their thinking, increases operation and maintenance experience, and enhances efficiency, fully breaking the limitations of traditional print and online journals [6].

2. Issues Requiring Attention in WeChat Public Service Platform Application

2.1 Positive Interaction

Articles published in WeChat public accounts can be promoted through one-to-one personal sharing or through established WeChat groups and moments for one-to-many promotion. Promotion in WeChat groups and moments often produces unexpected sensational effects due to subscribers' shared or similar professional backgrounds, experiences, age structures, education levels, and interests. A single point of interest can lead to attention to a journal, then sustained attention, and ultimately conversion into loyal readers or even journal contributors—such examples are numerous. Articles in WeChat public accounts function similarly to “trial versions” of software, “preview versions” of games, or promotional samples in supermarkets and shopping malls, playing an important role in journal promotion.

Multi-channel promotion of journal WeChat public platforms should be utilized, including promoting the journal's public account on the journal cover, website, and APP, leveraging academic conferences, utilizing resources from supervisory and sponsoring units, and actively promoting through industry associations such as scientific journal societies, traditional Chinese medicine societies, and integrated traditional Chinese and Western medicine societies to increase attention and form positive interaction between the journal and its WeChat public account. By inserting QR code images and business cards of the public account in emails during communication and exchanges with experts, scholars, authors, and readers through websites and email, everyone involved in the editorial department's daily work can perceive the existence of the editorial department's WeChat public account and actively participate. Combining the advantages of academic journal print editions, academic journal websites, and academic journal WeChat public platforms forms a three-dimensional, multi-layered network that disseminates journal articles stereoscopically and hierarchically [7].

2.2 Appropriate Pushing Rhythm

Scientific journals should not push too many articles on WeChat public platforms, nor too frequently. They should avoid inconsistent efforts and irregular posting, as large fluctuations in article publication volume can cause continuous declines in public account attention. Statistics show that the number of articles published in public accounts is not directly proportional to attention levels, indicating that content quality is key [8].

Editorial departments should strive to overcome difficulties rather than retreat when encountering challenges or adopt a casual, tentative attitude toward developing public accounts. Scientific journals should act within their capabilities, consciously and systematically adjusting and fixing publication volume to enable healthier and more sustainable public account operation. Imagine how many readers would be willing to continuously subscribe and read a scientific journal with a limited audience and strong professional focus if article pushing were occasionally suspended or excessive?

2.3 Conforming to WeChat Public Platform Characteristics

Due to WeChat platform audiences' unique reading habits and fixed reading times, WeChat reading differs from previous concentrated reading sessions, instead primarily utilizing fragmented time such as "on the subway," "while waiting for someone," or "before sleep." Since certified subscription accounts can only send one message per day, the choice of push time becomes particularly important. Pushing between 16:00-18:00 or 20:00-21:00 positions articles relatively higher in subscribers' accounts, facilitating selection and reading, improving article open rates and readership, and maintaining reader engagement with the public account [9].

WeChat has its own characteristics and audience groups. Academic journal

editors should actively transform their conventional thinking to align language structure, presentation forms, textual features, and reading habits with WeChat, enhancing subscribers' reading interest and increasing freshness and sensitivity. Simultaneously, attention must be paid to copyright norms, the appropriateness of internet language usage, and other derivative issues arising online.

Scientific journal editorial departments should pay full attention to every detail in operating and maintaining WeChat public accounts. Starting from details—from the moment the subscription account is followed, through welcome message selection, column choices, and reply function design—strive for novel forms, lively and concise language that attracts attention, and alignment with the aesthetic characteristics of active WeChat audiences. Starting from details such as public account push timing, grasp the characteristics of “Internet +” to form positive promotion, interaction, and coordinated development with print media and websites [7]. WeChat, as a media platform, allows subscribers to follow an academic journal with a simple scan and to unfollow with a casual click. Therefore, academic journal editors and new media editors should maintain constant vitality and vigilance, enhancing reading comfort, article readability, and language liveliness to ensure subscribers always feel fresh and never experience aesthetic fatigue [10-11].

By properly utilizing and applying this service platform, scientific journals can be displayed multi-dimensionally and comprehensively on the WeChat public platform. Seizing development opportunities presented by WeChat public platforms, fully leveraging WeChat's development dividends, recognizing all requirements and regulations of WeChat public platforms, and thoroughly understanding their internal logic and audience needs enables mutual promotion and integrated development among print journals, online journals, and WeChat public platforms, fostering faster and better development of scientific journals [12-14].

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