

On the Social Influence of WeChat Official Accounts in the New Media Era (Postprint)

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Abstract

With the development of science and technology, the forms of social media have undergone transformation, wherein mobile media, primarily represented by Weibo, WeChat, QQ social platforms, and Toutiao, have become the principal channels for disseminating social information, news, and video programs, and the information consumption habits of audiences have changed accordingly. In the era of new media, news information has largely transcended the constraints of time and geography, gaining user favor through high degrees of information interactivity and news accessibility. In view of this, this paper takes “WeChat” as an example to explore the social influence of WeChat public media, and proposes specific research ideas for the reference of readers.

Full Text

On the Social Influence of WeChat Public Media in the New Media Era

Abstract: With the development of science and technology, social media forms have undergone significant transformation. Mobile media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, QQ, and Toutiao have become primary channels for disseminating social information, news, and video content, fundamentally altering audience habits. In the new media era, news and information have largely overcome temporal and geographical constraints, gaining user favor through high interactivity and seamless access. In light of this, this paper takes WeChat as a case study to explore the social influence of its public media platform, proposing specific research approaches for readers' reference.

Keywords: WeChat; public media; social influence; problem research

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1. Main Functional Advantages of the WeChat Social Platform

WeChat has emerged as an instant social networking and consulting service system, distinguished by its seamless information accessibility and user-friendly design. Unlike traditional media, WeChat's core advantages lie in its socialized applications, real-time communication capabilities, data sharing features, third-party auxiliary services, and capacity for delivering short, streamlined, and fast-breaking news. As an information dissemination platform, WeChat's primary functional advantage stems from its unique information transmission characteristics and sophisticated user-group information matching mechanisms. Compared to Tencent's QQ—another social media tool under the same corporate umbrella—WeChat prioritizes simplicity and convenience, emphasizing social ecology integration. While QQ offers powerful features including group tribes and friend dynamics, its interface layout and visual interaction design are comparatively complex. WeChat, by contrast, employs a straightforward and intuitive approach, facilitating direct social ecological sharing through micro-videos, brief text, and images for immediate content presentation. By the end of 2016, WeChat's user base reached 726 million, surpassing QQ's 693 million users to become China's largest social tool. This growth reflects WeChat's clear trend toward media integration, incorporating numerous media platforms to achieve cross-boundary consolidation while maintaining its social functional advantages. Through the development of public service platforms, social sharing systems, and supplementary online payment functions, WeChat is evolving into a diversified foundational system tool.

2. The Emergence of WeChat Public Media

Driven by the wave of new media and mobile social networking, numerous brand media outlets have undertaken internet-based transformations, establishing new media platforms through QQ, WeChat, and mobile news terminals. WeChat Public Platform has become the preferred choice for these media organizations for two primary reasons. First, WeChat's massive user base provides media platforms with access to extensive audience groups. Second, WeChat offers high sharing efficiency and information transmission effectiveness, enabling news and information to disseminate through diverse channels with broad reach. Supported by third-party technologies, media platforms can utilize open-source data codes to develop various application platforms for third-party linking services, thereby effectively enhancing user stickiness and data connectivity while ensuring high-quality user experiences. WeChat public media represents more than mere media brands; rather, it constitutes a comprehensive platform ecosystem

that facilitates information interaction and sharing, elevating the efficiency of social news dissemination.

3. Manifestations of WeChat Public Media's Social Influence

Compared to traditional social tools, WeChat communication is more concise, fluid, and rapid, with higher information sharing efficiency and greater extensibility and compatibility.

3.1 Public Value Influence

As numerous media organizations have established presence on the WeChat platform, the social influence of WeChat public media has rapidly intensified. The emergence of influential WeChat media figures and platforms—such as “10 O’Clock Reading,” “Life Wishes,” and “Logical Thinking”—has attracted substantial follower bases. Consequently, knowledge marketing and value-based information sharing have become primary methods for these public media platforms to achieve commercial monetization. Value influence constitutes the core of WeChat Public Platform’s social impact, encompassing spiritual values, knowledge value, entertainment culture, and social concepts as the most prominent characteristics of these platforms. Although their social influence primarily targets online user groups, the value concepts and diverse group attributes formed through the internet affect every individual follower. This phenomenon can be described as an internet-ecology-based fan economy or, alternatively, as a social group effect centered on value influence. Regardless of age, identity, status, or wealth, all internet users are equal before these WeChat public media platforms, possessing both the right to receive information and the freedom to acquire beliefs. These platforms satisfy users’ spiritual needs through media value concepts, demonstrating sufficient value influence and robust content production capabilities.

3.2 Strong Information Penetration

WeChat public media exhibits strong information penetration, liberated from temporal and geographical constraints through anytime information interaction and anywhere news access. These platforms are not bound by location or time—wherever internet connectivity exists, public media presence follows. This strong temporal-spatial penetration means WeChat public platforms operate completely independent of time, place, or environmental factors, accompanying users wherever they go. This trans-spatial information dissemination model represents a capability that traditional media cannot match. Relying on internet and mobile internet infrastructure, WeChat public platforms can instantly inform users about any hot news event occurring in society. WeChat’s interactive and promotional methods, combined with its user base structure, create a facilitating effect whereby information transmitted on public platforms

easily captures attention and enables convenient real-time interaction. From this perspective, WeChat public platforms possess strong temporal-spatial penetration capable of generating social 舆论 attention within the shortest possible timeframe.

3.3 High Sharing Efficiency

High sharing efficiency represents another major characteristic of WeChat public media's social influence. Specifically, WeChat public media constitutes an information dissemination system formed around internet-based social platforms, possessing strong information transmission capabilities that enable accurate news delivery based on information type. In the new media era, precise information placement has become a focal concern for media platforms, with major media brands continuously seeking solutions for effective information delivery that maximizes sharing efficiency. As a new media mechanism built upon mobile social networks, WeChat public media leverages the internet's powerful information interaction and resource sharing efficiencies to expand user group coverage comprehensively and facilitate the dissemination of news and various information types across all social domains. Typically, each WeChat public media platform's audience shares similar characteristics, including unified value concepts and information perception patterns. Centered on specific user groups, WeChat public media can deliver news information promptly and rapidly, accurately addressing users' information pain points and satisfying their information needs.

3.4 Broad Social Attention

Social attention and brand influence constitute the most important competitive core for public media—those possessing the largest follower bases and favorable social images achieve the highest exposure rates. As a crucial organizational component of the social media system, WeChat public media exerts significant influence on both internet and social information environments. In the mobile social networking era, enterprises, individual media creators, government agencies, and social functional departments have all established their own WeChat platforms for information release. This widespread adoption determines that WeChat public media commands broad social attention, where any information released to users may become a social focus topic. This extensive attention connection grants WeChat public media high social exposure rates, meaning any social event or news information may gain exposure on WeChat, including both positive and negative information. Consequently, effectively regulating online information dissemination behavior has become a pressing issue for government information regulatory authorities.

3.5 Diversified Service Channels

As a successful social tool, WeChat's online payment functions and platform expansion capabilities have opened new service domains for public media. Strong

information interactivity and data sharing have enhanced the public influence of WeChat public media. Major news media outlets establishing presence on the WeChat platform can output information and consulting services instantly, thereby effectively increasing information influence while expanding the shared space for news information. Simultaneously, WeChat public platforms can engage in information exchange with other media platforms and enterprise online office service platforms, sharing consulting information and obtaining news materials in real time. Compared to other media platforms, WeChat public media's greatest advantage lies in social sharing—any news information can be extended to all social domains through the WeChat platform in the first instance, with WeChat users able to output information through their social circles for rapid dissemination. As part of Tencent's social network ecosystem, Zhang Xiaolong (WeChat's founder) considered expansion domain services from the platform's inception, allowing any media platform to apply for WeChat public accounts, subscription accounts, and service accounts to maintain two-way connectivity. Third-party mobile software can connect with the open-source WeChat platform and utilize WeChat authorization for login, representing a convenient information operation model that traditional information platforms cannot offer. WeChat public media can thus diversify expansion services to satisfy users' mobile sharing needs.

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

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