

Comparative Analysis of Online News Editing and Newspaper Editing: Postprint

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Abstract

As computer network technology and Internet application technologies advance, particularly with the widespread adoption of mobile-phone-centric mobile Internet, online information has become closely pertinent to the vast majority of individuals. Compared with traditional print news media, online news features broader dissemination channels and more convenient communication modalities. Nevertheless, online news also exhibits numerous drawbacks and manifest deficiencies. Through a comparative analysis of traditional news editing and online news editing, one can achieve a more profound and rational comprehension of contemporary news editorial practices.

Full Text

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Abstract: With the development of computer network technology and the advancement of internet application technologies, particularly the popularization of mobile internet centered on smartphones, online information has become relevant to the vast majority of people. Compared with traditional print news media, online news enjoys broader dissemination channels and more convenient transmission methods. However, online news also suffers from numerous drawbacks and evident limitations. Through a comparison between traditional news editing and online news editing, we can achieve a deeper and more rational understanding of contemporary news editing practices.

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Introduction

Compared with traditional newspaper news, online news differs significantly in its dissemination methods. However, editing—as the foundation of news transmission—remains indispensable for both online and newspaper journalism. Online news has made remarkable progress built upon computer technology development. Currently, online news and newspaper news exhibit different structural characteristics and target distinct audiences. Therefore, evaluations of their relative merits should not be one-sided. While the two approaches show substantial differences at the editorial level, they also share common ground, with similarities and differences manifesting across many dimensions.

1. Similarities Between Online News Editing and Newspaper News Editing

1.1 Consistent Editing Procedures

When newspaper editors report and edit news, their workflow typically includes processes such as manuscript organization, selection, revision, and layout design, overseeing the entire production chain of news works. Online news editing builds upon this traditional newspaper foundation by adding URLs and website links, conducting layout design for news pieces, and processing multimedia audio-visual effects to achieve integrated text-image presentation. Thus, from the perspective of news production processes, the workflows of online and newspaper news editors are largely similar.

2. Differences Between Newspaper and Online News Editing Work

2.1 Differences in Manuscript Editing

Analysis of news headlines reveals that newspaper headlines must maintain high relevance to content while ensuring grammatical correctness—a fundamental requirement. In contrast, online news headlines must provide highly condensed summaries of news events with strong appeal. As is well known, news headlines are crucial for attracting audience clicks and constitute the survival foundation of news websites. This demonstrates that to increase click-through rates, compelling headlines are the prerequisite, ensuring maximum news dissemination.

Regarding text and image editing, newspaper news primarily relies on text to reflect factual situations, placing particular emphasis on grammar, rhetorical structure, and formal written style. Conversely, online news editors operate within a relatively stable editing system, with their most prominent characteristic being concise descriptions of news facts in a colloquial style. Simultaneously, inserting topic-appropriate images during editing not only beautifies the layout but also makes news content vivid and engaging, thereby enhancing its appeal. However, we must clearly recognize that image application in online news editing remains immature, and a fixed, comprehensive editing system has yet to be established—making exploration and research important tasks for journalism scholars [1].

A major feature of online news is its ability to present news facts through multimedia formats, with audio-visual editing applications in online news editing representing a significant departure from newspaper editing. Furthermore, online news editing can insert relevant images and audio materials during the process. Thus, compared with newspaper news editing, richer and more diverse presentation forms constitute a major advantage of online news editing.

2.2 Differences in Layout Design

As a paramount element in newspaper news editing, layout design serves as a form of newspaper expression. The more novel and distinctive the newspaper's layout design, the better the first impression it leaves on audiences. Therefore, strengthening layout design constitutes an important means to enhance news appeal and reflects the characteristics of newspaper news editing. Meanwhile, professional terminology such as “opening size” and “format dimensions” frequently appears in newspaper layout design, requiring careful attention during the editing process, as profound knowledge often lies behind each term. In online news editing, however, layout design need only satisfy audience reading requirements, as it merely plays an auxiliary role in presenting news facts and maintains less stringent terminology requirements compared with newspaper editing.

2.3 Differences in Text Editing

When reading online news, audiences' attention is affected by screen saturation and brightness, making them susceptible to visual fatigue. Therefore, editors should adopt targeted editing methods based on news fact characteristics, avoiding overly complex or ornate rhetorical devices to maintain plain text that highlights information transmission functions. This prevents impeding online dissemination speed and readers' reading comfort [2]. Additionally, online news should not adopt the lengthy narrative forms typical of newspaper news. Even when long headlines are necessary, editors should utilize punctuation to segment them, enabling readers to grasp the central ideas within short timeframes.

2.4 Differences in Editing Procedures

2.4.1 Differences Between the Two Editing Procedures Newspaper news editing maintains strict procedural requirements, with news production strictly following steps such as gathering, writing, and program addition. Consequently, newspaper editorial departments typically maintain independent procedural systems and codes for each division, which non-professional or non-editorial staff cannot access or program. For instance, in newspaper typesetting, editors must first enter drafts on input machines for initial small-sample printing, after which different staff members conduct sequential text review and proofreading. A particularly strict requirement is that edited newspaper news programs must be published through designated newspaper journals via laser film, PS layout, or specialized websites.

Online news editing breaks these constraints: it involves neither complex codes nor specialized input equipment. Editors can publish information using any communication or entry device. Numerous WeChat platforms, Sina blogs, personal websites, Baidu forums, and various popular websites and information portals have all become platforms for online editors to distribute content, with extremely simple procedures—provided that news editing and information publication remain within legal boundaries. The emergence of internet celebrities serves as an excellent case in point.

2.4.2 Differences in Editing Time and Space Newspaper and online news editing differ in their work and layout scheduling. Newspaper news editing operates under strict publication time constraints, typically divided into daily, weekly, or monthly cycles. Since newspaper news materials concern past events, editors' work is limited to office hours. Online editors, however, face no time restrictions and can conduct factual news editing and publication anytime and anywhere, immediately releasing breaking events on major news websites. This not only achieves “all-day” coverage but also highlights “instantaneous” effects. Thus, clear differences exist between the two forms in information release timing.

2.4.3 Differences in Information Resource Acquisition Newspaper and online news editing exhibit numerous differences in information resource acquisition. Newspaper editors obtain resources either through independent editorial department websites or through interactive dialogue with editors, but material selection must conform to departmental requirements. Online news editors can search and filter information from globally connected computers within massive databases, accessing any information for compilation. Moreover, during editor-reader interaction, online news editors can communicate in real-time through websites, WeChat, software message platforms, and other networked systems, thereby acquiring more diverse news editing information channels.

3. Review and Gatekeeping in Online and Newspaper News Editing

Regardless of format, all news editing must undergo procedural and scientific review processes before public release. In this regard, traditional newspaper news demonstrates stronger reviewability and is less prone to news incidents. Online news editing, however, is easily affected by network openness, potentially neglecting supervision of content authenticity. Even when illegal news content undergoes IP blocking, people can still access it through different nodes.

In the review stage of online editing, there has been a persistent lack of relevant management departments and sound legal system maintenance, resulting in the outflow of massive amounts of junk information, false information, and social order-disrupting content. Although online news itself serves as a social public opinion supervision institution, it also contains indistinguishable true and false information rampant on news websites. To address this situation: first, internet background information maintenance departments should establish strict information screening operations to effectively review and remove harmful messages; second, the state and government should establish and improve the legal system for online news editing, investigating and pursuing sources of information that endanger social order; third, an institution composed of the general public can be formed to resist harmful information, utilizing social supervision and public opinion systems to timely report and provide feedback on harmful online news, thereby constructing a comprehensive online news editing system emphasizing “effectiveness,” “authenticity,” and “comprehensiveness.”

4. Conclusion

In summary, both similarities and significant differences exist between online news editing and newspaper news editing. However, from the perspectives of communication and journalism, these differences reflect their respective advantages. Therefore, if online news editing and newspaper news editing can learn from and integrate with each other, news editing will achieve sustainable development in serving society and benefiting humanity.

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

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