

## Analysis of the Current Situation and Development Trends of the Self-Media Industry (Post-print)

**Authors:** He Jingyi

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### Abstract

The advancement of the era and the development of information technology have profoundly transformed the communication modalities and pathways of the media industry. This paper commences from practical realities to analyze the current state of the self-media industry, and subsequently employs the SWOT analytical framework to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges confronting the self-media industry. It is hoped that through this analysis of the self-media industry, the information dissemination capabilities of self-media can be maximally explored.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

**Journal:** ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal Media and Development Research

**Title:** Analysis of the Current Situation and Development Trends of the Self-Media Industry

**Abstract:** The progress of the era and the development of information technology have greatly changed the communication methods and channels of the media industry. This paper analyzes the current situation of the self-media industry from a practical perspective, and then employs SWOT analysis to examine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. It is hoped that through this analysis, the information dissemination function of self-media can be maximally explored.

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By He Jingyi

## 1. The Concept of Self-Media

Self-media, also known as “citizen media” or “personal media”, refers to a new form of media where private, grassroots, widespread, and autonomous communicators use modern, electronic means to deliver both standardized and non-standardized information to unspecified majority audiences or specific individuals. The traditional media industry is dominated by professional media organizations with relative official authority and professionalism, where people can only receive information unidirectionally—for instance, watching news on television or listening to radio frequencies, where the acts of “watching” and “listening” are one-way streets. In contrast, the self-media industry allows people to express their views on current affairs at any time, such as through comments on Weibo posts or messages on WeChat public accounts, enabling feedback and interaction after reception.

## 2. Current Situation of the Self-Media Industry

Today, people are no longer satisfied with the traditional one-way reception of information; they hope to participate in discussions about social hot-button issues and policies. This has led to the rise of self-media with its two-way information dissemination. Platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Toutiao have rapidly developed in recent years and increasingly shifted toward mobile devices, making self-media communication more convenient and portable. Moreover, with the development of the Internet, the carriers of self-media have evolved from text-based formats to live streaming, short videos, and other forms, creating a landscape characterized by “two-way communication,” “decentralization,” and “diversification.”

[Figure 1: see original paper] Overview of the Development of Domestic Self-Media

## 3. SWOT Analysis of the Self-Media Industry

Below, we employ SWOT analysis to examine the self-media industry from four perspectives: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Traditional media such as television and newspapers require more specialized knowledge and undoubtedly represent a “high-threshold” industry. The emergence of self-media has significantly lowered this threshold, allowing everyone to use the Internet to express their opinions and transforming “bystanders” into “participants.” All sectors of society can create their own self-media platforms.

### 3.1 Strengths

**3.1.1 More “People-Friendly”** All sectors of society can create their own self-media platforms. [Figure 2: see original paper] Occupational Structure of Internet News Users. At the same time, everyone can access articles, images, videos, audio, and other content published on self-media platforms at any time. Different types of materials cater to different people’s interests, expanding social networks. Furthermore, while finding relevant content quickly in the cluttered text of newspapers is cumbersome, browsing self-media platforms like WeChat public accounts allows for easy searching, saving, and bookmarking of desired content, making the experience more user-friendly.

**3.1.2 Fast Dissemination** When an event occurs, self-media creators can quickly analyze and report on it, much faster than the scheduled broadcasts of news programs. This “instantaneity” is particularly evident on WeChat and Weibo. The mathematical “Six Degrees of Separation Theory”—which posits that any two strangers can be connected through at most six intermediaries—is manifested through the continuous forwarding in social circles and on Weibo, rapidly increasing audience reach. The speed of information dissemination far exceeds that of official media’s single-platform, single-perspective approach.

**3.1.3 Professional Content** Given the numerous specialized industries in China, traditional media professionals reporting on industry news without adequate expertise can lead to significant inaccuracies in content. Self-media benefits from diverse backgrounds, with many industry insiders participating on these platforms. Their experience and knowledge structure are often stronger than those of journalists, making the content they disseminate and discuss more professional.

### 3.2 Weaknesses

**3.2.1 Low Credibility** The vast number of online self-media platforms, combined with user anonymity, creates space for unchecked behavior. Some self-media outlets excessively pursue click-through rates while neglecting journalistic authenticity, exemplified by entities like “UC Shock Department.” These “clickbait” practitioners lower their ethical standards, using exaggerated and sensational headlines to attract audiences. This phenomenon can lead to a “boy who cried wolf” scenario, potentially causing public distrust of self-media.

**3.2.2 Inadequate Legal Regulation** Although the government has implemented some Internet management policies to restrict searches for sensitive terms, regulatory gaps remain. WeChat Moments frequently contain “shocking” words and videos that face no legal intervention unless reported by others. Therefore, how to legally regulate and guide self-media urgently requires collective societal effort to develop effective strategies.

### 3.3 Opportunities

**3.3.1 Internationalization** Self-media content suffers from poor sustainability and low timeliness; most people will not revisit content after viewing it once. To adapt to social development trends, self-media needs to update hot topics promptly while also innovating to prevent serious homogenization issues. As shown in Table 4, overseas information accounts for 72.1%. With improving living standards, people's attention to overseas information is increasing. The author also subscribes to a WeChat public account run by an international couple, and through their videos, has learned about some differences between Chinese and Western cultures, broadening personal horizons.

[Figure 4: see original paper] Sources of Self-Media Material Collection

**3.3.2 Intelligentization** When opening self-media clients like QQ Music or Tencent News, they push content you might be interested in based on your usual preferences. In this regard, self-media can become more intelligent in the future compared to the mass-oriented approach of traditional media.

[Figure 3: see original paper] Types of Self-Media Material Collection

### 3.4 Challenges

**3.4.2 Users** Content issues can easily lead to user aesthetic fatigue. However, to attract new users and maintain self-media activity, the aforementioned "clickbait" practices emerge, creating a vicious cycle that causes people to lose trust in the platform.

**3.4.3 Platforms** Self-media primarily relies on platforms for rapid development. Developing on a single platform is not fast enough, while rapid multi-platform development can easily involve copyright issues, leading to restrictions on self-media by platforms. More seriously, if a platform is acquired by another company, it could lead to the "extinction" of self-media on that platform.

**3.4.4 Business Models** Self-media's commercial development is limited to tips and advertising endorsements. Recently, due to unsuccessful negotiations between Apple and WeChat, WeChat's tipping function was shut down, blocking a revenue stream. This demonstrates that overly simplistic business models are detrimental to the long-term development of self-media.

## 5. Conclusion

Through SWOT model analysis of self-media, this study finds that despite certain weaknesses and challenges, and although some of the information disseminated lacks standardization and rigor, its strengths and opportunities remain considerable, placing the industry overall on an upward trend. Therefore, the self-media industry will have a very promising development prospect.

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(Author's Affiliation: The Affiliated High School of Renmin University of China)

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

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