

On Fire Safety Communication Strategies in the New Media Era: Postprint

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Abstract

Currently, China has entered a new media era characterized by informatization, automation, and digitalization. The advent of this era has further propelled the rapid development of China's economy, while also bringing great convenience to people's daily lives and enabling them to easily access external information. The arrival of the new media era has not only reformed traditional paper-based communication methods, but also further expanded the ideas and channels for propaganda, thereby enhancing propaganda efficiency. In recent years, fire incidents remain relatively frequent, and new media fire safety propaganda work still faces many problems, resulting in propaganda effects not being particularly evident, which has attracted the attention of fire departments. In the new era, how to better utilize new media to strengthen fire safety propaganda work has become a key focus for fire departments. This paper analyzes the current state of fire safety propaganda against the backdrop of the new media era and proposes recommendations for propaganda strategies.

Full Text

Abstract

China has entered a new media era characterized by informatization, automation, and digitization. This era has accelerated economic development and brought great convenience to daily life, enabling easy access to information. It has transformed traditional print-based communication, expanded both the thinking and channels for propaganda, and significantly improved efficiency. However, fire accidents remain frequent, and fire safety propaganda in the new media context faces many problems, resulting in limited effectiveness that has drawn attention from fire departments. How to better leverage new media to strengthen fire safety propaganda has become a key focus. This paper analyzes the current status of fire safety propaganda against this backdrop and proposes strategic recommendations.

Keywords: new media era; fire safety propaganda; current status; strategies

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Introduction

In recent years, with continuous societal progress and rapid scientific and technological development, China has entered a computer network era dominated by informatization, automation, and digitization. The new media era has further propelled rapid economic development while bringing tremendous convenience to daily life. Every aspect of people's lives is heavily influenced by new media, particularly through the popularization of mobile internet, which enables them to grasp external information without leaving home. The fundamental difference between new media and traditional media lies in its extremely fast dissemination speed, wide reach, convenience, and massive influence, making it the primary carrier and platform for fire safety propaganda. The advent of this era has not only reformed traditional print-based fire safety propaganda methods but also expanded propaganda thinking and channels, significantly improving efficiency. The purpose of fire safety propaganda is to popularize fire safety science and technology among the public, provide fire prevention education, enhance public fire safety quality, and reduce the threat of fires to people's lives and property. However, fire accidents remain frequent, and new media fire safety propaganda still faces many problems that yield limited effectiveness, drawing concern from fire departments. This has created a deadlock: fire departments themselves do not prioritize propaganda, and other enterprises and institutions care even less. Over time, this prevents the achievement of expected propaganda effects and goals, causing fire safety propaganda development to stagnate. Therefore, how to better utilize new media to strengthen fire safety propaganda in this new period has become a focal topic that deserves attention.

1. Current Status of Fire Safety Propaganda in the New Media Era

1.2 Single Propaganda Medium and Monotonous Content

The traditional media era was dominated by newspapers, television, and radio, whereas the new media era is characterized by mobile internet, computer technology, and digital technology. Compared with traditional media, new media offers greater timeliness, interactivity, and diversity, and its application to fire safety propaganda can substantially improve dissemination efficiency. However, heavily influenced by traditional thinking, China's fire safety propaganda remains largely at the level of radio, newspaper, and television promotion, failing to keep pace with the times by applying advanced equipment and facilities

to propaganda work. Citizens in the 21st century favor novel things, technology, and the internet—for most young people, the internet is essential to their lives. Using outdated, monotonous propaganda strategies and methods cannot keep up with contemporary audience information consumption habits. For instance, most factories still rely on hanging banners or holding lectures for fire safety propaganda, while schools merely conduct talks and distribute brochures. These approaches run counter to audience habits and new media development trends, naturally yielding unsatisfactory results.

1.3 Outdated Communication Models and Lack of Contemporary Relevance

As is well known, fire departments are special institutions whose purpose is to serve the people and minimize fire accidents. The Fire Protection Law explicitly stipulates that fire safety propaganda is a basic duty of all department staff and demands everyone's attention. Surveying current fire safety propaganda, it is evident that some fire units still lack proper understanding of its importance, considering it insignificant and neglecting current efforts, resulting in serious formalism. Many units' propaganda remains at the level of superficial performance merely to complete superior-assigned tasks, with some only paying attention after major fires occur, always relying on accident lessons to raise public awareness. Some departments maintain a “not my business” attitude, believing propaganda is solely the fire department's responsibility. This creates a deadlock where fire departments themselves do not prioritize propaganda, and other enterprises care even less, preventing achievement of expected effects and causing stagnation.

With rapid scientific and technological development, new media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and QQ have emerged and gradually influenced people's lives. These platforms represent new information dissemination technologies that have become primary communication methods in the new media era. However, many fire departments have not seized this opportunity; their communication models remain outdated, still relying on newspaper columns, radio programs, and news broadcasts that lack timeliness and contemporary relevance. Today, most people own mobile phones, with many being heavy users (“smartphone addicts”). Continuing to use banners and flyers for fire safety propaganda cannot capture young people's attention and may even generate resistance. Consequently, propaganda fails to achieve expected results and lacks the contemporary feel required in the new media era.

1.4 Insufficient New Media Talent and Imperfect Mechanisms

The comprehensive quality and professional competence of fire safety propaganda personnel directly affect propaganda effectiveness. The phenomena of single media channels, monotonous content, and outdated communication models sufficiently demonstrate the lack of new media talent in current fire safety propaganda teams. Effective propaganda work actually requires professionals

in various fields, including interviewing and writing, photography and videography, post-production editing, and graphic design. Due to the shortage of such composite talent, the ability and means to apply new media in fire safety propaganda are limited, unable to keep pace with the times, and have not yet formed a standardized propaganda structure. Furthermore, relevant work mechanisms for fire safety propaganda are imperfect. For example, the absence of strict hiring systems leads to uneven quality in propaganda teams. Similarly, the lack of a robust public opinion crisis mechanism allows new media dissemination to backfire, as the public only sees randomly filmed fire or fatality incidents by civilians. Without positive guidance, the prevalence of new media creates serious negative impacts on fire safety propaganda, thereby affecting the positive image of fire departments.

2. Strategies for Fire Safety Propaganda in the New Media Era

2.1 Develop New Media Awareness and Utilize New Media Effectively

The advent of the new media era marks a significant transformation in people's lives, making information dissemination more convenient, rapid, and diverse. This not only provides greater development space for fire safety propaganda but also elevates its dissemination efficiency substantially. Therefore, facing this new development situation, fire departments must develop new media awareness, treating new media as an important propaganda platform and making good use of it to enhance public fire safety consciousness and knowledge through more efficient and convenient methods. For example, effectively utilizing WeChat can raise public fire safety awareness. WeChat, with nearly 900 million users in just six years, demonstrates its immense influence, and information dissemination through it can achieve multiplier effects. Many organizations have already created public service platforms on WeChat to send text, images, and other content to followers. Fire departments should follow this approach, skillfully using new media to establish official WeChat accounts that daily send fire safety tips and relevant laws and regulations in graphic-rich formats. Simultaneously, citizens can ask questions on these accounts, enhancing interactivity and making propaganda effects increasingly prominent. Additionally, fire departments can create a dedicated fire safety APP for learning about fire prevention, reporting hazards and violations, understanding fire situations, and even checking the approval progress of construction project fire safety reviews or verifying the authenticity of certificates for public gathering places. This would implement a series of measures benefiting the public.

2.2 Broaden Channels and Innovate Propaganda Models

Today, driven by societal progress, people's living standards have greatly improved, as have their media literacy and information discernment capabilities. Traditional, outdated, and monotonous propaganda methods weary audiences,

who prefer more entertaining information reception processes. Fire departments should therefore seize this psychological characteristic, fully utilize modern communication media, and broaden channels while innovating propaganda models to increase audience attention. Fire departments can strive in the following areas to create audience-friendly propaganda forms: First, cooperate with game design companies to develop mobile games about fire safety knowledge to attract audience attention and raise fire safety awareness. Second, keep pace with the times by using video formats for propaganda, such as producing public service advertisements, micro-films, or promotional videos, and playing brief fire safety videos before movies in cinemas. Third, fully utilize popular platforms like Weibo, QQ, and WeChat for fire safety propaganda by creating fire safety discussion QQ groups or establishing official WeChat accounts to intensify propaganda efforts. Fourth, make full use of advanced new media resources such as subway mobile TV, bus video screens, and shopping mall LED displays. Of course, traditional propaganda methods should not be abandoned, as fire safety propaganda must also reach audiences of different age groups.

2.3 Cultivate New Media Talent and Improve Work Mechanisms

To fundamentally improve work efficiency, fire departments must focus on cultivating new media talent and strive to build a high-quality, high-caliber fire safety propaganda team. First, establish strict hiring systems to recruit high-quality, composite talent into fire departments. Simultaneously, appropriately allocate personnel to complete propaganda team staffing and ensure adequate personnel are devoted to fire safety propaganda. Second, strengthen professional knowledge and technical training for propaganda personnel to enhance their fire safety consciousness and sense of responsibility, and further improve their ability to respond to emergencies and public opinion. Third, provide substantial funding support to enable them to flexibly master and apply modern propaganda equipment, thereby diversifying propaganda methods to align with audience preferences. Finally, improve work mechanisms to standardize behavior and enhance capabilities. For example, establish clear post responsibility systems to raise accountability; construct new media safety early warning mechanisms to prevent negative social impacts from fire-related public opinion incidents and improve crisis management capabilities; perfect reward, punishment, and performance evaluation mechanisms to increase enthusiasm and initiative for propaganda work; and improve relevant management systems to form a standardized work structure.

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

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