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Public Opinion Guidance and Response to Fire Emergency News in the We-Media Era: Post-print

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Abstract

Traditional news reporting methodologies possess inherent limitations, typically employing conventional media such as newspapers, magazines, and television to disseminate news information to the public. Although traditional media maintains high credibility, it exhibits certain deficiencies regarding communication forms and channels. With the advancement of technology in society, the era of self-media has emerged, wherein news is increasingly disseminated through online media. The evolution of the Internet has not only impacted traditional media but has also furnished news with more rapid channels for information acquisition and broader modes of dissemination. This paper investigates public opinion guidance and response strategies for fire emergency news within the self-media era.

Full Text

Public Opinion Guidance and Response to Fire Emergency News in the Self-Media Era

Abstract: Traditional news reporting methods have certain limitations, typically relying on conventional media such as newspapers, magazines, and television to disseminate information to the public. While traditional media enjoys high credibility, it falls short in terms of communication forms and channels. With the development of technology and society, the self-media era has emerged, and news now spreads primarily through online platforms. The rise of the Internet has not only impacted traditional media but also provided news with faster information acquisition channels and broader dissemination methods. This paper explores strategies for guiding and responding to public opinion regarding fire emergency news in the self-media era.

Keywords: Self-media era; Fire; Emergency news; Public opinion guidance; Response

2.3 Lack of Skills in Responding to Media

In the new media era, timely acquisition and dissemination of fire-related information serves as an effective means to guide public opinion and spread positive social energy, while also raising public awareness about fire prevention [1]. Today's public opinion hotspots and trends originate from sudden incidents, with news reporting serving as the primary medium for shaping discourse. The content and authenticity of news reports trigger public reflection and speculation, making it incumbent upon all media outlets to master reporting methods for sudden incidents and guide public opinion toward positive development. However, current reporting on sudden news events lacks adequate media response skills, particularly in dealing with individuals who deliberately spread negative messages online through one-sided perspectives. Without effective countermeasures, subsequent remedial actions diminish the positive impact of the event itself, leaving media outlets ill-equipped to prevent problems before they occur.

3. Strategies for Guiding Public Opinion on Fire Emergency News in the Self-Media Era

3.1 Improving the News Release System Improving the news release system represents an effective means of guiding public opinion. While China's news release system continues to evolve, certain aspects still require ongoing practical exploration to identify optimal approaches. Timely release of news information, especially regarding fire emergencies, constitutes a fundamental media responsibility. Relevant functional departments should adopt a correct and candid stance when facing sudden incidents, adhering to the principle of "report facts quickly, report causes cautiously" and following the guidelines of "speak truthfully, speak swiftly, speak first" to disseminate accurate information promptly [4]. In other words, reporting on sudden incidents requires support and coordination from relevant departments and media outlets. Fire emergencies directly concern people's lives and property; mishandling such events can trigger public anxiety and unrest. Timely release of accurate and positive news can prevent the spread of negative information. With support from relevant departments, authorities should guide public opinion in the correct direction through authoritative, conclusive, and precise statements, particularly by promptly reporting on problem-solving efforts and rescue operations to inform the public and demonstrate the government's stance on emergencies. News releases should not merely involve reading prepared statements; they must effectively structure both content and format, emphasize the Q&A session, and avoid arbitrary responses. For ambiguous issues, spokespersons should strictly adhere to existing policies and frameworks to prevent speculation. Consequently, news spokespersons must possess high professional competence and a strong sense of responsibility, strictly

following information disclosure procedures, standards, and unified messaging, while speaking from a neutral position to enhance media credibility.

3.2 Mastering Release Timing to Proactively Guide Public Opinion

Currently, online media and traditional media are in constant competition, though their integration represents the general trend in the self-media era. In this environment, reporting on fire emergencies must not only comply with existing systems in terms of content and format but also master release timing to proactively guide public opinion toward positive development [5]. For instance, when a fire occurs, various media outlets receive information instantly due to the rapid information dissemination characteristic of the big data era. However, at this stage, the fire's cause remains unclear, casualty numbers are uncertain, and firefighters may not have even arrived. Releasing news hastily would only cause panic, especially among nearby residents. Instead, authorities should issue reports after the fire is under control and the full circumstances are understood, describing rescue efforts to reassure the public. Additionally, fire departments should report news before public opinion forms, achieving the goal of truthful and priority reporting to prevent uncivil online discourse stemming from baseless speculation. Thus, mastering news release timing proves highly significant for guiding public opinion on sudden incidents.

3.3 Timely Monitoring of Public Opinion Trends While collecting, organizing, and preparing news reports, media outlets must also fulfill their indispensable responsibility of monitoring and analyzing public opinion. For sudden fire incidents, while thoroughly investigating disaster causes and rescue conditions, media should constantly focus on guiding public opinion, diligently studying information collection and extraction techniques, topic discovery and tracking methods, and sentiment analysis approaches to make timely assessments of public reactions. Beyond monitoring mainstream portal websites, media should devote greater attention to non-mainstream but high-traffic communities and forums, including those with neutral or even extreme positions. Based on evolving opinion trends, effective countermeasures should be implemented before public opinion fully forms to prevent the emergence of negative discourse. Furthermore, during the interview phase of news reporting, media should select positive statements and viewpoints for broadcast to guide public emotions and thinking toward constructive directions. Therefore, monitoring public opinion trends constitutes an essential and effective preventive measure for actively guiding discourse during fire emergency response.

3.4 Enhancing Media Response Skills Compared with traditional media, fire emergency news spreads faster online, attracts greater attention, and the internet serves as a highly concentrated space for public opinion outbreaks. While rapid online information dissemination benefits public expression and participation, it also gives rise to “internet trolls”—individuals who deliberately post destructive comments with severely cynical attitudes. Consequently, media

response skills must be effectively enhanced by focusing public attention on the harm fires cause to rescue personnel. This approach ensures that the majority of people maintain a positive mindset and actively support and focus on the issue, while negative comments from a few trolls become buried in the wave of positive discourse, rendering them harmless.

3.5 Making Good Use of Emerging Media Emerging media enables timely news dissemination through extensive channels, representing an opportunity that the new media era offers traditional media. Platforms such as Weibo, video apps, and online video websites serve as important channels for reporting fire emergencies. Therefore, authorities should strengthen cooperation with these platforms to spread messages faster and more broadly, thereby increasing click rates and elevating public discourse. Generally, fire incident reporting aims to remind and warn the public about fire prevention. Through publicity across various media, greater vigilance can be raised to effectively avoid and reduce disaster probability. Consequently, cooperation with online media should be intensified, particularly by cultivating online opinion leaders to establish positive and constructive partnerships that raise nationwide awareness of fire hazards and enable effective preventive measures.

4. Conclusion

Fire emergencies represent a key topic for public opinion guidance. Reporting on such incidents holds significant meaning. In today's highly developed information society, the emergence of self-media has amplified the power of public opinion dissemination. On this basis, producing quality news reports that guide public opinion in the correct direction constitutes an unshirkable responsibility for media while also reminding the world of the importance of fire prevention. Effectively guiding public opinion on fire emergency news in the self-media era not only helps promote correct media values but also contributes to social stability and harmony, aligning with China's fundamental concept of building a harmonious society.

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

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