

## How Leading Websites Create Leading Videos: An Exclusive Interview with Duan Dejun, Direc- tor of Tencent Video Development and Opera- tions Center (Postprint)

**Authors:**

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### Abstract

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### Full Text

#### How Leading Websites Create Leading Video Content—An Interview with Duan Dejun, Director of Tencent Video’s Development and Operations Center

*Interview conducted and edited by the editorial department of China Media Technology*

Duan Dejun currently serves as Director of Tencent Video’s Open Platform Operations Center, having previously held positions as Editor-in-Chief and Director of Tencent Network’s Video Center, and Director of Tencent Video Operations.

**China Media Technology:** Could you discuss the proportion of short videos in traffic distribution?

**Duan Dejun:** Everyone talks about so-called short videos, but there isn’t actually a clear definition. What exactly constitutes a short video? Different platforms have varying proportions. Platforms like Kuaishou, Miaopai, and Meipai each have different ratios. We can consider a platform like Kuaishou

to be primarily UGC-based. For video websites, in terms of quantity, PGC content is far less than UGC. However, because PGC content is higher quality, it often receives more promotional resources, and their total playback volumes are roughly equivalent.

**China Media Technology:** Could you share your main experiences and insights from operating video content?

**Duan Dejun:** Long-form film and television content exhibits stronger head effects, requiring comprehensive entertainment marketing to maximize viewership, influence, and commercialization. Short videos, by contrast, are more fragmented. Users typically watch short video content while obtaining information, socializing, or pursuing personal interests. Therefore, short video operations require different scenarios and differentiated strategies. For information-based short videos, we focus on hot events, industry news reporting, and topic planning to reach users immediately, then amplify the effect through social dissemination. Vertical content, meanwhile, spreads through interest algorithms, social networks, and communities. Since self-media creators are central to short videos, platforms need to adopt more open approaches to incentivize their participation, creating a closed loop from distribution to monetization that leverages their creative capabilities.

I believe some trends have already taken shape. First is vertical segmentation, forming personalized circles. Channel differentiation and user diversion have also brought changes in user demand, with head content no longer covering over 80% of users. This formation stems from several factors: (1) technological innovation driven by machine algorithms and social media; (2) user-side consumption upgrades, such as personalized demands from younger generations and retired middle-aged and elderly users; and (3) production-side evolution from limited content to broader, more niche-oriented content.

**China Media Technology:** What have been the biggest difficulties in operations, and how have you overcome them?

**Duan Dejun:** The first challenge is content ecosystem management. Self-media content is all-encompassing and vastly different, creating various issues. Whether in strategy formulation, content safety review, or content standardization and normalization, all require extensive detailed work. As a more intuitive form of expression compared to traditional text and images, video visualization is an irreversible trend. Through content, we can influence users and guide consumption, achieving higher cost-effectiveness and greater user loyalty. Therefore, we see that traditional mobile information platforms, including Tencent News and NetEase News, as well as social platforms like Weibo and QQ Space, are all vigorously developing short videos.

The second challenge is monetization. Due to their short duration, conventional pre-roll advertising significantly impacts user experience, particularly in information flow formats where pre-roll ads are typically no longer suitable. Personalized information flow ads are more acceptable. However, because video contains

more information, tagging is more difficult compared to text and images, leaving substantial room for algorithmic optimization. Current personalized advertising experiences are not yet mature. Native advertising based on content itself is gradually emerging, but only self-media creators with certain popularity and influence can attract advertisers, and this remains in its early stages.

Some monetization trends we observe include: first, visualization; second, increasingly obvious trends of head and vertical content relying on content marketing for monetization; and third, new platforms attracting advertisers, such as Snapchat abroad and some emerging domestic live streaming platforms. Advertisers seek more precise targeting through the extension of long-tail demand. Video PGC content is gradually expanding from single entertainment to vertical fields, with more precise audiences and high content commercialization potential. KOLs and self-media creators have increasing influence in guiding consumption, and advertisers are gradually accepting marketing forms represented by self-media and content integration.

**China Media Technology:** What do you believe are the future product models for short videos?

**Duan Dejun:** Short video is a form of content expression; there isn't a standalone product called "short video" that can be reduced to this single concept. Currently defined short video product models include Kuaishou's mobile UGC community model, Tiantian Kuaibao and Toutiao's interest-based algorithmic recommendation model, and Weibo and WeChat's social media dissemination model.

Short video itself primarily exists in the form of video self-media (UGC and PGC), which began exploding in the last three to four years. In 2015, it experienced a wave of wild growth, with the number of self-media creators and playback volumes, as well as platform strategies, all reflecting this heated state. Today, the total amount of original PGC has long exceeded ten thousand and continues growing, with the industry becoming more rational and seeking value beyond wild growth. For platforms, the ultimate purpose of support and policy 倾斜 is to pursue value.

If I were to summarize some trends in short videos with a few keywords, they would be: (1) **Socialization:** a core appeal of short videos is that good content gets widely shared and passed along through word-of-mouth in social circles; (2) **Personalization:** machine algorithms, intelligent interest recommendations, and subscriptions across platforms like Tencent Video, Tiantian Kuaibao, Tencent News, Toutiao, WeChat Moments hot articles, and QQ Space; (3) **Verticalization:** niche and vertical content, thanks to technological development, can more accurately reach users and accumulate fans; and (4) **Multi-platform:** everyone is doing it, and what tests each platform is traffic distribution and monetization capabilities.

**China Media Technology:** How do you effectively attract top content creators during operations?

**Duan Dejun:** Through the Penguin Media Platform, we provide comprehensive video services for individual/self-media, media, enterprise, government, and other organizational video users, encompassing four key capabilities: (1) traffic distribution through machine intelligence algorithms that recommend content to interested users; (2) video services including video upload and content management, original content protection, and live streaming; (3) multi-platform promotion through Tencent's matrix of media, social, and interest-based platforms; and (4) commercial monetization through traffic and subsidies to provide channels for self-media creators to realize commercial value.

Tencent's multi-platform distribution capabilities and influence, including media information platforms, social platforms, and interest-based algorithmic recommendation capabilities, are the most competitive aspects for head content.

**China Media Technology:** How do you achieve order-of-magnitude leaps in traffic and user numbers during operations?

**Duan Dejun:** The Penguin Media Platform's greatest advantage is one-stop upload with distribution across Tencent's entire platform. Self-media creators can distribute video and graphic content to Tencent Video, Tencent News client, Tiantian Kuaibao, and other media platforms, while integrating WeChat and QQ social platforms and pushing to QQ Browser and other platforms. This enables more extensive and precise exposure for content, helping self-media creators achieve content distribution and interaction with fans, thereby accumulating and 沉淀 fans.

The biggest drivers for traffic and user numbers are: first, multi-platform distribution capabilities; second, improved algorithmic recommendation efficiency; and third, our revenue-sharing and subsidy monetization incentive policies.

**China Media Technology:** Your company's content distribution bears the responsibility of guiding value orientation and shaping netizens' interests. How do you balance the economic and social benefits of content operations?

**Duan Dejun:** Supporting original content and encouraging creators has always been our primary principle. We consistently encourage positive, healthy, and valuable content output. Our cooperation with the China Association for Science and Technology on the Science Film Hall project is a typical example. The Science Film Hall is positioned as "appreciating wonderful science films and creating informative and interesting videos," aiming to gather high-quality science and science fiction film resources, encourage excellent science film uploads, stimulate audience discussion, enable public education through entertainment, further improve scientific literacy, and encourage the public to shoot science videos and write science scripts, promoting the development of the science popularization industry and laying the foundation for more and better science resources.

The Science Film Hall has dedicated channel entrances on both the Tencent Video website and app, divided into functional blocks for science fiction films,

documentaries, feature films, and micro-videos. Audiences can enjoy excellent domestic and foreign science and science fiction films, documentaries, and upload their own original science videos to the Science Film Hall. They can also participate in activities such as video script creation, interactive viewing, and science flash mobs initiated by the Science Film Hall.

**China Media Technology:** Some say that IP and ecosystem are the next 风口 for the internet entertainment industry. Does your department have plans to create IP, and what future measures will you take?

**Duan Dejun:** For so-called IP, I believe the basic conditions are: it must achieve a closed loop from traffic acquisition to fan accumulation and finally monetization. We evaluate an IP based on several key points: playback data including viewership, user numbers, and user profiles; user stickiness including WeChat and Weibo user numbers and interaction data, video comment volume, forwarding volume, likes, user duration, completion rate, and CTR; market position—whether it seizes opportunities first when new dividends appear in its field; and monetization including platform advertising revenue sharing, product placement, user payment, e-commerce, and other added value (tips, props).

So how do we evaluate the quality of original self-media IP content? I summarize it in the following aspects: it must have a spirit, meaning its spiritual core and values; it must have form, meaning its style, temperament, and uniqueness, such as Papi Jiang's fast-forward style; it must have popularity, including fan volume and playback volume, with special emphasis on core fan groups that have emotional dependence on the content, such as military fans of "Military Sub-ranking"; and it must have vitality, meaning a longer life cycle, extensibility, and derivability to complete the closed loop.

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

*Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.*