

## Innovation in News Programs of Provincial Television Stations in the Digital Media Era (Post-print)

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### Abstract

Digital media constitutes a contemporary emerging medium characterized by duality, diversity, and timeliness. It also demonstrates substantial differences in communication modalities; compared to traditional communication models, digital media can collect and transmit vast amounts of information, thereby playing an irreplaceable role. On the other hand, news programs of provincial television stations are currently experiencing a bottleneck period, necessitating disruptive reforms in broadcast timing, content, and format. This paper integrates the characteristics of digital media with the traditional advantages of television news programs, taking the bottleneck of provincial television station news programs as its starting point, and elaborates on three levels: updating concepts, increasing channels for live reporting, and enhancing interaction on online platforms.

### Full Text

### Digital Communication Research

### Innovation in Provincial TV Station News Programs in the Digital Media Era

**Abstract:** Digital media represents a contemporary emerging medium characterized by duality, diversity, and timeliness, with fundamentally different dissemination methods compared to traditional models. It can collect and transmit vast amounts of information, playing an irreplaceable role. Conversely, provincial television news programs currently face a bottleneck period, requiring disruptive reform in broadcast timing, content, and format. This paper examines the characteristics of digital media alongside the traditional advantages of television news programs, using the bottlenecks of provincial TV news as a starting

point to elaborate on three key dimensions: updating concepts, expanding live reporting channels, and enhancing online platform interaction.

**Keywords:** Provincial television stations; news programs; digital media; innovation

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Modern provincial television media relies heavily on news programs as its main force, with broadcast times typically ranging from 6:30 to 7:00 PM—finishing before CCTV’s *News Broadcast*. However, an increasing number of viewers now choose to watch entertainment or information programs on other channels during this time slot, overlooking news programs. This phenomenon arises because existing provincial TV news programs no longer capture audience attention, compounded by the impact of internet news programs in the new media environment, as well as the dullness and outdated formats of provincial TV news. To maintain a foothold for news programs, provincial stations must pursue continuous innovation and restructuring. Television professionals should carefully consider these innovation methods without sacrificing traditional advantages for minor gains. Only by appropriately building on strengths, addressing weaknesses, and filling gaps can provincial TV news programs remain invincible.

### 1.1 Strong Authority of Television News Programs

The primary advantage of provincial TV news programs lies in their exceptional authority. Television news inherently maintains high standards, never reporting rumors or unverified information. Content must uphold three responsibilities: accountability to viewers, to facts, and to society. Consequently, the authenticity of reports must withstand scrutiny, reflecting events that positively impact society. These specific factors ensure television news programs possess undeniable authority, constituting a significant advantage over network media dissemination. No matter how major an event appears online, the public will not fully confirm it without television news verification. In this regard, TV news programs hold absolute superiority.

### 1.2 Broad Audience Base of Television News Programs

The ultimate goal of news programs is to inform the public about social phenomena and conditions, with audience size influencing news editorial direction. Compared to online news, provincial TV news programs offer viewers greater authenticity, while older demographics remain skeptical of internet news. This situation enables provincial TV news programs to win larger audiences, representing another major advantage. Innovation in TV news programs can incorporate changes based on audience preferences. The notion that “you can’t please everyone” does not apply here—the vast majority of viewers choose TV news precisely for its authority and comprehensiveness. Therefore, enhancing comprehensiveness can attract more viewers, creating a virtuous cycle where audiences choose TV news for its thoroughness and authority, ultimately establishing its

dominant position. In summary, maintaining the traditional advantage of broad audience appeal while building upon it is essential.

## **2. Bottlenecks in Provincial TV News Programs**

### **2.1 Homogeneous News Content**

As provincial-level broadcasters, stations should continuously innovate news presentation modes, develop news production technologies, enrich content, and enhance quality. Most provincial TV news content focuses primarily on political and economic news, with civilian life news as secondary material, creating imbalanced coverage across categories. Stations should broaden news gathering channels to fundamentally resolve content homogeneity. Drawing from each province's unique objective conditions, they can extract news information from different angles for script creation. Simultaneously, stations should establish interactive mechanisms with audiences to understand public needs and report on public demands. This both enriches news content and ensures program ratings, while deepening understanding of various enterprise departments to align news with provincial development, promoting growth and enabling viewers to comprehensively understand provincial dynamics, thereby better developing the local news media industry.

### **2.2 Low Data Utilization and Non-Intuitive Communication Methods**

As China's television industry benchmark, CCTV exemplifies excellence in both program production and content worthy of emulation by provincial stations. To make complex data more intuitive and accessible, CCTV employs dedicated personnel to create pie charts and other visualizations using digital media technology, presenting necessary data directly through tables and statistical graphics. This demonstrates sophisticated production and conveys news content most intuitively—from production to broadcast—expressing direct meaning through concise, clear formats that are pragmatic and optimize information transmission. This serves as an excellent model for provincial stations. The prerequisite for attracting viewers with quality content lies in expressing news meaning through the most direct, purest methods—complete and concise news delivery without digression. In this regard, all provincial stations should learn from CCTV. Despite lacking CCTV's powerful editorial capabilities, they must strive to create news segments that audiences can intuitively understand, eliminating viewer confusion and making reasonable explanatory arrangements with statistical graphics for professionally complex news content.

### **3.1 Updating Concepts and Integrating Program Formats**

Innovation in TV news programs must first update traditional value concepts, discard outdated ideological concerns, integrate program formats, adjust content according to digital media era characteristics, eliminate poorly-rated segments, and provide unique insights in news publication to guide public opinion,

thereby establishing TV news authority. Zhejiang Satellite TV's *News One Degree Deeper* received widespread acclaim and discussion upon broadcast, proving that news programs can win audience favor. Program format integration transforms the dull, rigid original news format into interactive, authoritative content that remains close to the public. After a news story airs, audiences can participate in official Weibo discussions or see netizen hot topics interspersed within the program. This not only makes viewers feel that TV news has become more interesting but also mobilizes public enthusiasm, creating a sense of participation that enhances audience attention to news programs.

### 3.2 Expanding Live Reporting Channels to Stimulate Audience Engagement

Multiple approaches can stimulate audience engagement. As mentioned above, integrating program formats with network elements can bring content closer to public life. Another approach involves expanding live reporting channels. Current TV live reporting is limited to program broadcasts, with field journalists connecting to studio anchors. This method lacks authenticity and interactive engagement with viewers. Therefore, expanding live reporting channels becomes paramount. Provincial stations can develop a mobile live-streaming app organized by time slots or content categories, positioning live feeds at news scenes to enable direct audience attention to social hotspots or events. Live broadcasting's advantage lies in its authenticity and ability to immerse viewers in the event atmosphere, allowing focused attention on topics of interest. During TV program broadcast, live discussion highlights should be summarized to give viewers a sense of familiarity and authenticity, thereby driving ratings and changing existing perceptions. Both CCTV and provincial stations affirm the importance of news programs, adhering to the "news-based station" standard by adding news channels that keep the public informed about current events. Integrating live methods into news channels increases public interest, though implementation remains challenging and requires social support and active response.

### 3.3 Incorporating Fresh Content to Enhance Audience Interest

Provincial stations should appropriately change their news presentation style, moving away from the traditional two-anchor format. Viewers often perceive news as merely a performance by two anchors—a format lacking innovation that eventually loses audience interest. Therefore, provincial stations should incorporate fresh content aligned with contemporary trends and audience needs to rebuild interest. After a news story airs, a third anchor can explain related content such as causes, background, and similar events, enabling comprehensive audience understanding. During news broadcast intervals, stations can air additional content like "Today in History," injecting more fresh material into provincial TV news programs to maintain ratings and steer TV news in a new direction.

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

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