

Little Lychee Broadcast: Developing the Post-print of Television News IP in the Era of Shared Media

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Abstract

This paper takes the news content product “Xiao Lizhi Broadcast”, developed by Jiangsu Radio and Television Integrated Media News Center and simultaneously launched on new media and television platforms, as a case study. It shares practical experiences in television news regarding converged content planning, converged product innovation, and converged channel dissemination in the context of media convergence.

Full Text

Preamble

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Title: “Little Lychee Broadcast”: Creating a TV News IP in the Shared Media Era

Abstract: This paper examines “Little Lychee Broadcast,” a news content product simultaneously launched on new media and television platforms by Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation’s Integrated Media News Center, as a case study. It shares practical experiences in TV news convergence regarding content planning, product innovation, and channel dissemination against the backdrop of media convergence.

Keywords: media convergence; TV interaction; content IP

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1. Birth: Adapting to New News Communication Scenarios

In 2017, media convergence advanced substantially, with the direction of integrated media development becoming increasingly clear. The integrated media ecosystem represents an open, shared system centered on user data, built upon diverse products, supported by multiple terminals, and extended through in-depth services. We have gradually entered an era of shared media. Against this backdrop, Jiangsu Broadcasting's Integrated Media News Center has continuously sought innovation, assembling TV and new media editorial teams to jointly create a converged news IP product with recognizable branding and a loyal user base, enabling shared content and integrated dissemination.

"Little Lychee Broadcast" employs the cute and endearing cartoon anchor "Little Lychee," utilizing audio, video, text, animation, H5, and other means to produce news products that enhance information visualization and engagement. Our traditional media actively embraces new scenarios for news communication, strengthening audience proximity, service orientation, and integrated interaction across content editing, publishing patterns, and presentation methods.

In the planning stages before the 2014 National Two Sessions, the Integrated Media News Center proposed creating a "virtual anchor" image that would resonate with audiences, particularly netizens, to present news reports more vividly while facilitating social media dissemination. Thus, "Little Lychee" was born, aligning with Jiangsu Broadcasting's "Lychee" brand positioning. The cartoon anchor "Little Lychee" made its debut during the 2014 National Two Sessions coverage, with a specially tailored segment "Little Lychee Micro Broadcast" airing daily on Jiangsu Satellite TV's flagship news program "Jiangsu New Horizon" throughout the Two Sessions period. In this way, "Little Lychee" entered the public consciousness with a friendly and endearing image.

Following the Two Sessions, the challenge became how to effectively utilize the "Little Lychee" image. The Integrated Media News Center grappled with integrating TV news reporting, virtual anchor imagery, and mobile social dissemination to build an IP. We observed that mobile internet was profoundly transforming our lives and, consequently, news communication scenarios and user habits. People increasingly relied on mobile terminals for news consumption. Seizing this momentum, we continued leveraging the "Little Lychee" image through regular content segments on mobile internet platforms (primarily the center's Weibo and WeChat accounts "Jiangsu News" and the Lychee News app) while maintaining the segment on television's Jiangsu Public News Channel interactive program "Net World" as "Lychee Life Show." Thus, a distinctive news product was launched simultaneously across television and online platforms.

2. Content: Balancing News Value, TV Interaction, and User Curiosity

Building a content IP requires balancing its lifecycle and content extensibility. A WeChat team report on “2015 WeChat Official Account User Behavior Research” indicated that users prefer news products that are “practical and opinionated.” Tencent Penguin Intelligence’s “Post-90s News Consumption Insight Report” also emphasized that for young people born in the 1990s, content accuracy is fundamental, but they also crave novel and interesting content. Dynamic news with video, GIFs, and other multimedia formats is more popular than text-only news. Short videos and H5 represent new means for constructing news scenarios, with 2-5 minute video news being most readily accepted by users.

“Little Lychee Broadcast” relies on multiple publishing channels including television and social media platforms. Its content encompasses high-traffic social platform topics such as current affairs reporting, hot news, social events, service information, and inspirational stories. In terms of presentation, it integrates graphics, video, H5, and other formats, paying greater attention to user reading habits. During editing, editors consistently convey “Little Lychee’s” attitude, giving this virtual anchor a “distinctive voice” when broadcasting news. Using witty and humorous language makes “Little Lychee” more vivid and characterful, allowing users to become immersed and resonate with the content during consumption.

2.1 Integrated Two Sessions Reporting: Making Political News More Accessible

Following its debut at the 2014 National Two Sessions, “Little Lychee” has frequently appeared in subsequent Two Sessions coverage, becoming a featured segment. The program’s “Little Lychee Micro Broadcast” segment uses virtual anchor “Little Lychee” as the host, approaching from a people’s livelihood perspective to discuss “What are you most concerned about at the Two Sessions?” with netizens. It conveys netizens’ voices through various new media formats including WeChat voice messages, Weibo graphics, and short videos. On WeChat, graphics and GIFs are used to create accessible content like “Super Powerful! The Fruit from This Tree Benefits the Entire World,” which explains government work reports in simple terms, making netizens more willing to engage with “high-level” political reporting. The combination of television’s distinctive segments and vivid social platform interaction brings Two Sessions coverage closer to audiences.

2.3 Major News Event Reporting with Attitude

Beyond closely following online hot topics, “Little Lychee Broadcast” also focuses on major news events. During the Nanjing Youth Olympics, it produced infographic news pieces “Ultimate Tips for Nanjing Youth Olympics” and “The

History of the Clumsiest Mascot Lele's Comeback," published on social platforms. In these, "Little Lychee" and mascot Lele appeared as good friends, jointly recommending Nanjing Youth Olympic events, venues, and athletes. The lighthearted and engaging format resonated strongly with young audiences, winning the "Nanjing Youth Olympic News Award."

December 13, 2014 marked the first National Memorial Day for Nanjing Massacre victims. "Little Lychee Broadcast" launched a series of original plans for this occasion. "Little Lychee Takes You Through Nanjing's Image Time Travel" used GIFs to compare present and past views of Nanjing landmarks including the Presidential Palace, Zhongshan Gate, and Purple Mountain, contrasting wartime devastation with today's prosperity and peace. This tapped into shared national emotions, reaching nearly 1 million cumulative viewers. Simultaneously, an H5 collection page for "One Sentence Memorial" gathered over 100,000 messages. "Nanjing Residents, Must Remember Today" was another special edition meticulously produced by "Little Lychee," jointly promoted with influential local self-media alliances, achieving over 2.2 million total views. By never absent from major news reporting and reprocessing TV news content through new media methods and perspectives, we create converged content products with attitude.

2.4 Public Welfare Actions: Warming the Brand

Additionally, "Little Lychee Broadcast" leverages the Integrated Media News Center's large-scale live broadcasts and public welfare actions to launch themed specials. Drawing upon the strong brand of traditional media, it builds an IP public welfare image. For example, on June 5 Environmental Day, it launched a "Protect Our Home" special, combining television live broadcasts to advocate for earth care and green homeland protection. The "Qingming Festival Special" released travel and traffic guides, calling for civilized commemoration. It also produced special plans integrated with the center's "Be With You" campaign for left-behind children and "One Degree Warmer" campaign for disadvantaged groups. While promoting programs, it solicited help requests and told aid stories from netizens. This transforms virtual anchor "Little Lychee" into a "warm man," possessing not only attitude but also warmth, narrowing the distance between us and our audience.

2.5 Service Information and Artistic Style: Extending Content Dimensions

Emphasizing service and distinctive voice represents another label for "Little Lychee Broadcast" content. Albums combining autumn health preservation like "Quintessentially Jiangsu Autumn," mango rain season's "A Love-Hate Relationship Called Mango Rain," and early spring pieces like "Follow the Fragrance, Let's Flirt with Plum Blossoms Together in Early Spring" are both visually appealing and substantive, attracting numerous fans.

3. Dissemination: Integrated Promotion and Multi-platform Release

Since its inception, “Little Lychee Broadcast” has maintained a weekly schedule, producing over 140 episodes. It consistently prioritizes the “audience” in both content and communication methods, employing internet thinking to create content, integrated promotion, and brand operation.

Emphasizing Operational Patterns: Unlike television programs with fixed broadcast times, mobile platforms have two “reading peaks” at noon and 10 PM. “Little Lychee Broadcast” releases weekly episodes around noon, catering to user habits to achieve higher reach.

Emphasizing Multi-platform Release: Under the trend of media convergence, promoting “Little Lychee Broadcast” on new media platforms attracts younger audiences, expands TV news dissemination scope, broadens news coverage, and enhances media influence. Simultaneous three-dimensional dissemination across network, television, IPTV, and other platforms achieves diversified release of news resources.

Emphasizing User Experience: Content on the same theme published across television and social platforms undergoes content adaptation based on platform characteristics. Television uses the animated “Little Lychee” image for thematic packaging, with the virtual anchor providing transitions, creating more television context. Mobile platforms enhance user experience through greater H5 usage, employing H5 voice, video, images, emotional interaction, scenario marketing, jump links, and other forms to attract user attention, drive broad participation, and generate emotional resonance.

Emphasizing Brand Innovation: Through weekly regular pushes, “Little Lychee” gradually cultivates user appointment consciousness. Beyond the microphone-holding image, we have innovated various “Little Lychee” images such as wearing a rice dumpling for Dragon Boat Festival, carrying a camera on the front lines, and a Superman image for Father’s Day, all deeply loved by users.

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

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