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Format Innovation and Post-print Transformation of Broadcast News Programs in the New Media Context

Authors: Ma Xiaoli

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Abstract

The development of new media has ushered humanity into the information age. Facilitated by the widespread popularization of computer information technology and multimedia networks, the novelty and creativity of broadcast news programs have been enhanced, with current broadcast news programs exhibiting new characteristics primarily manifested in aspects such as immediacy and interactivity, grassroots orientation and freedom, as well as authenticity and supervisory capacity.

Full Text

Preamble

Abstract: The development of new media has ushered humanity into the information age. With the widespread adoption of computer information technology and multimedia networks, broadcast news programs have gained enhanced novelty and creativity. Contemporary broadcast news programs now exhibit several distinctive characteristics, primarily manifested in their speed and interactivity, grassroots nature and freedom, and authenticity and watchdog function.

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By Ma Xiaoli

1. The New Media Era and Broadcast News Programs

Narrative presentation of news information breathes life into dry facts, enhancing program vitality and audience affinity. China Central Radio conducts real-time tracking reports on major news events, while its diverse interview, special topic, cultural, and arts programs penetrate various social dimensions—including politics, economics, history, culture, and folk customs—reflecting Chinese perspectives. This approach requires broadcasters to deliver news in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, emphasizing the display of personal linguistic style with a notable tendency toward humor and wit, thereby fulfilling a positive role as information dissemination media. Such programs have become important channels for news communication, emphasizing both reporting accuracy and linguistic rigor.

Globally, websites are increasing at a rate of 80 per day, and nearly 3,000 newspapers in China have already established an online presence. New media has profoundly impacted broadcast news programs. The advent of the new media era has endowed contemporary broadcast news with novel characteristics, while traditional broadcast programs face numerous opportunities and challenges in this new landscape. How to adapt to the trends of the times and actively guide the healthy dissemination of broadcast news programs has become a critical issue.

2. New Characteristics of Broadcast News Programs in the New Media Context

As a hallmark of information globalization, the rapid development of new media has provided broadcast news programs with a novel dissemination platform, offering advantages unavailable to traditional media. This has endowed contemporary broadcast news programs with new characteristics, primarily manifested in speed and interactivity, grassroots nature and freedom, and authenticity and watchdog function.

2.1 Speed and Interactivity

News pursues timeliness, and the rapid dissemination of breaking news is the goal of all traditional media. The emergence of new media has provided a platform for swift news transmission, fundamentally transforming the scope and speed of information dissemination. It has eliminated the lag inherent in periodical publishing, broken through temporal and spatial constraints, and dramatically shortened transmission time, thereby achieving rapid news propagation.

Contemporary broadcast news programs have achieved a qualitative breakthrough in audience interaction and convenience, moving beyond the single-mode transmission model. Audiences are no longer passive recipients; they have become information creators themselves. In today's era of ubiquitous blogs and microblogs, information recipients are also news producers and

publishers—everyone can be a journalist, editor, or commentator. The rigid boundary between editors and readers has been dissolved. These programs, favored by the public for their timeliness and focus on people’s livelihoods, play a vital media role in social life and information transmission, serving as an important channel connecting compatriots at home and abroad and as a window to understand the world. This requires broadcasters to adopt a vivid tone in their delivery.

2.2 Grassroots Nature and Freedom

With the rapid development of computer and new media technologies, China’s mass media industry has embraced new dynamics and transformations. Under intense life and work pressures and fierce competition, people experience sub-optimal physical and psychological health. Consequently, advocating harmony and happiness and providing spiritual relaxation have become important tasks and trends for broadcast news programs. Unlike past news presentations, contemporary news gives voice to the new era through awakened self-awareness, and “we-media” has emerged accordingly.

2.3 Authenticity and Watchdog Function

China is currently in a critical period of social reform, with various complex contradictions emerging. The call for building a harmonious society is growing louder, and various livelihood issues have become the focus of public attention. In response to these concerns, the value orientation of broadcast news plays a guiding role in shaping public opinion. In the new media environment, broadcast news programs treat raw news with greater caution, report on livelihood issues rationally, actively guide the public, and fulfill their functions as information media and correct public opinion supervisors.

To create truly popular broadcast news programs, producers must maintain correct value orientations and possess high-level news production capabilities from a new media perspective. Modern broadcast news values increasingly emphasize transforming news into events, events into characters, characters into stories, stories into details, and details into vivid audio. New media-era broadcast news programs employ narrative storytelling methods, using characters’ stories to express viewpoints while using sound to capture representative details. Guided by this value orientation, events and characters in broadcast news become more vibrant, and through personal narratives and detailed expression, news becomes more authentic, engaging, and endowed with greater authenticity and supervisory function.

3. Positioning and Development Trends of Broadcast News Programs in the New Media Era

3.1 Content Selection

In recent years, “talking news” and “chatting news” have become mainstream trends in broadcast news programming, with numerous local stations following suit by blending news with entertainment and presenting it in new formats. Although this approach offers many advantages and development potential, not all news content is suitable for such treatment. Broadcast news programs must scientifically select content and innovate strategically rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Social and local news can employ “talking” or “chatting” styles to enhance audience communication and interaction, while news concerning national welfare, political positions, and major events must maintain standardized, serious reporting.

Therefore, broadcast news programs must carefully screen and thoughtfully consider their content selection, focusing on life news related to audience interests and local or specialized news that will attract attention. After careful editing and processing, this information should be delivered to audiences through flexible and diverse formats.

3.2 Coordination Between the “Speaker” Role and the Announcer’s Personality

As “talking news” programs have rapidly gained popularity, various regions have emulated the trend, launching distinctive news talk shows that transform the role of “announcer” into news “storyteller”—transmitting not only sound but also ideas and compassion. Language is the most important tool for announcers and hosts. A qualified announcer or host must possess rich cultural and scientific knowledge and solid language competence, along with strong oral and written Chinese expression abilities. Clear and accurate pronunciation, correct articulation, and pure tone quality are essential prerequisites for good broadcasting. A host’s lively language, natural tone, moderate rhythm, and magnetic voice enhance linguistic appeal. Mastery of phonetic variation patterns, pauses, and stress changes in speech flow, along with the ability to express ideas proficiently and articulate insights systematically and profoundly, constitute fundamental qualifications for broadcasting and hosting.

Naturalness and fluency represent what contemporary audiences demand from audio language creation. Building upon standardized news broadcasting and within the overall style of “combining firmness with flexibility, rigor with vitality, and cordiality with simplicity,” announcers must develop broad knowledge of politics, economics, history, geography, literature, customs, and habits to fully display their artistic individuality in news broadcasting. Announcers and hosts must cultivate profound artistic skills, striving to integrate the rigidity of journalistic principles with the flexibility of linguistic expression through unique life insights, aesthetic ideals, and modes of expression.

Announcers' processing of news material inevitably injects personal emotional factors, forming unique storytelling styles. Different individuals create different storytelling approaches, resulting in diverse news presentation formats and artistic environments for innovative programs such as "talking," "commenting," and "chatting" news. Personal broadcasting style often defines and determines a program's overall character. However, many contemporary "talking news" programs deliberately emphasize the broadcaster's personality as their signature feature, leading to imitation and cliché. For instance, the currently popular "dramatized news" trend widely copies humorous and amusing styles, often sacrificing the essential communication effectiveness of news broadcasting due to excessive pursuit of entertainment.

"Talking news" programs should focus on cultivating the broadcaster's substance and personal charisma, positioning program characteristics around the broadcaster's personality to truly allow them to "broadcast" news rather than blindly following trends or abandoning the program's original features. The future development of "talking news" will inevitably be a new media era characterized by diverse broadcasting styles and flourishing variety.

3.3 Development Trends in the "Citizen Star" Era

Broadcast news program information should undergo two transformations. First, it must shift toward information delivery. In today's information economy era, audiences no longer passively receive news but actively select useful information they need. Second, it must transition from flat to in-depth information. While most news consists of brief messages requiring only basic understanding, some issues cannot be explained through simple reporting and require deeper excavation of relevant information. This demands that broadcast news programs provide appropriate in-depth reporting on topics of public concern. For example, when the government recently introduced consecutive real estate regulation policies, broadcast news programs could thoroughly explore deeper aspects of these policies to interpret the news for audiences.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the rise of new broadcast news programs is inseparable from mainstream social consciousness and the distinctive features of the era. It represents a key driver of China's social informatization development and an important guarantee for rapid development of the social information economy. New media-era broadcast news programs must stay close to people's lives, select topics of public concern, choose livelihood-related materials from the motive of serving the public, make comprehensive preparations, deeply analyze the underlying significance of news hotspots, properly resolve contradictions, guide public opinion, and exert positive social influence.

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(Author's affiliation: Tianjin Wuqing District News Center)

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

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