

Adapting International Communication to the Mobile Internet and Social Media Era: The Case of Hungary (Post-print)

Authors: Zhao Zhengyu

Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

With the continuous development of communication technology, particularly the ongoing upgrades of smartphone systems, communication technologies, and infrastructure, mobile Internet continues to accentuate the timely and interactive characteristics of traditional Internet while offering greater convenience and real-time capabilities, exerting tremendous influence and appeal especially among the younger generation and emerging as the direction of Internet development. This paper provides recommendations for conducting new media-based international communication in Hungary and for the convergence of emerging and traditional media in China's communication to Hungary, through precise description and analysis of the development status of Hungary's Internet, mobile Internet, and social media, as well as projections for future development.

Full Text

Preamble

Adapting International Communication to the Mobile Internet and Social Media Era: A Case Study of Hungary

Abstract: As communication technologies continue to evolve, particularly with the upgrading of smartphone systems and communication infrastructure, the mobile internet has not only amplified the timely and interactive characteristics of traditional internet but has also become more convenient and real-time in usage. This has generated tremendous influence and appeal, especially among younger generations, establishing itself as the direction of internet development.

This paper provides a precise description and analysis of the development status of Hungary's internet, mobile internet, and social media, along with projections for future growth. It offers recommendations for conducting international

communication in Hungary primarily through new media approaches and for integrating emerging and traditional media in China's communication efforts toward Hungary.

Keywords: International communication; New media; Hungary

Chinese Library Classification Number: TU981

Document Code: A

Article Number: 1671-0134(2017)05-058-03

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2017.05.015

Author: Zhao Zhengyu (China Radio International)

1.2 Proportion of Different Access Methods

According to the “Household and Enterprise Information Equipment and Usage (2012 Annual)” statistical analysis report released by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, abbreviated as KSH) in August 2013, internet users in Hungary account for 71% of the total population (see Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]). Data from the same source indicates that Hungary's population was 9.932 million at the end of 2012, meaning the number of internet users in Hungary is approximately 7.05 million—a remarkably high penetration rate.

The main internet access methods for Hungarian households include dial-up, xDSL (a general term for various types of digital subscriber lines), cable TV internet (access via cable television networks), and wireless internet, including mobile terminal access, along with other methods such as residential or enterprise local area networks. KSH has been tracking prepaid user numbers for various internet access methods since 2003 (see Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper]). The data from 2003 to 2012 reveals two clear conclusions. First, Hungary's internet usage is growing rapidly, with annual user growth rates exceeding 25% almost every year. With the exception of traditional dial-up access, which is declining, new methods such as dedicated lines, cable TV internet, and wireless access have all achieved growth due to advantages in bandwidth and convenience. Second, by the end of 2012, wireless internet access, represented by mobile internet, had become the dominant internet access method in Hungary, surpassing the combined total of other methods.

1.3 Age Analysis of Hungarian Internet Users

According to the same “Household and Enterprise Information Equipment and Usage (2012 Annual)” report, Hungarians aged 16-24 and 25-34 show high proportions of internet usage (see Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper]), while usage among the elderly remains low. Overall, however, the distribution is relatively balanced, with youth and middle-aged individuals forming the absolute majority of internet users.

Under the EU definition, internet users are categorized into three types: regular

internet users (referred to as “netizens” hereafter), defined as those who have been using the internet for more than three months and browse at least once a week; irregular users; and occasional users. Hungary still lags behind the EU average in terms of the proportion of internet users relative to total population (see Figure 1). However, stimulated and supported by EU plans, Hungary’s internet usage is bound to increase further.

The EU Commission adopted the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) in 2010, which is crucial for achieving the Europe 2020 strategic goals. The Digital Agenda specifies 101 concrete policy measures across seven major areas, including the digital single market, interoperability, standards, digital literacy, digital skills, digital inclusion, and leveraging ICT for EU societal welfare. Across these parameters, Hungary still has considerable gaps compared to the plan.

2. Development of Hungarian Internet Media and Social Media

Hungarian online media can be divided into three categories: first, websites operated by traditional media; second, commercial company websites, or pure online media; and third, self-media including blogs, microblogs, and online communities.

According to the 2011 “Hungarian Media Report” released by the Hungarian research institution MediaPiac, Hungary has 7,756 media outlets of various types, including 5,507 print media, 1,382 internet media, 803 television stations, 280 radio stations, and other media types.

2.1 Development of Hungarian Media on New Media Platforms

In terms of quantity, traditional media still accounts for a relatively large proportion. However, Hungarian traditional media has actively transformed during the internet and mobile internet era. Major Hungarian newspapers such as *Hungarian Voice*, *Hungarian National*, and *Hungarian News*, as well as major magazines including *Observer*, *Hungarian Orange*, *Hungarian Democracy*, and *HVG*, have all established websites. Major national and private radio stations such as Hungarian Radio, Info Radio, Danube Radio, and Pop Music Radio, along with television stations including Hungarian National Television, Danube TV, RTL Club, Hungarian National Channel 2, Hungarian Information TV, and Hungarian News TV, all maintain their own news websites with distinctive features. Print media websites highlight their news gathering and editing capabilities, publishing text news and commentary; radio websites offer online listening and audio program archives; and television websites provide video content and live streaming.

Index and Origo are Hungary’s top two portals, similar to China’s Sina and Sohu. In addition to news distribution, they provide multiple internet services including email, blogs, video, and dictionaries. According to Alexa traffic statis-

tics, Index and Origo rank fifth and seventh respectively. Similar to China's major portals, these two have developed comprehensively, successively acquiring several well-developed specialized Hungarian websites to support their business. For instance, Index's blog service and sports news sub-site rank among the top in Hungarian online media, while Origo's acquisitions include the online electronic dictionary MTA Sztaki, the Origorandi dating site, and the IWIW social media platform.

According to statistics from the Hungarian domain registration institution—Hungarian Internet Coordination Center (www.nic.hu)—the number of Hungarian top-level domains (ending in .hu) exceeded 640,000 in 2014 (see Figure 4 [Figure 4: see original paper]), with over 60 domains per 10,000 people. It should be noted, however, that growth has slowed since 2012.

2.2 Development of Hungarian Social Media

Important forms of Hungarian social media include blogs and social networking sites. According to the U.S. government report “Social Media Outlook: Hungary” released in 2011, 58% of Hungarian netizens regularly read blogs. Major Hungarian blog sites include Blog.hu (affiliated with portal Index), blogspot.hu, and Goldenblog (affiliated with the renowned magazine HVG).

Regarding social networking sites, according to statistics from the “Internet World Stats” website, by the end of 2012, Facebook had 4,265,960 registered accounts in Hungary, representing 42.95% of the total population and 60.49% of all netizens. In addition to Facebook, influential local social networks include IWIW.hu (under Origo), which was Hungary's largest social network before being surpassed by Facebook in 2011, with 4.2 million users (2010 data). Other local platforms include baratikor.com with 2.5 million registered users and the Hungarian sub-site of myvip.com with 2.6 million registered users.

In terms of microblogs, the same U.S. government report indicates that by 2010, there were approximately 40,000 Hungarian users on Twitter, including 38,000 users accessing through YAMM, a Hungarian Twitter client (Wikipedia data). For video sharing, YouTube and local platforms Inda and IWIW are all popular among Hungarians.

2.3 Media Influence Comparison

According to a survey on “Media Influence on Youth” published in April 2013 on the website of the renowned market research group Ipsos's Hungarian subsidiary, 67% of Hungarian youth obtain news through television, 60% through the internet, 9% through mobile phones, 17% through radio, and 10% through newspapers and magazines (note: individuals could select multiple sources, resulting in overlapping percentages). Additionally, 13% of young respondents indicated they never follow news. The surveyed youth were aged 15-29. The survey shows that the most important news websites are Origo and Index, followed by 63% and 43% of interviewed youth respectively. Other sites include

hirado.hu, metropol.hu, and hirszerzo.hu. Forty percent of respondents also indicated they read news through Facebook, and 30% share news on the platform.

Another survey on “Product and Commodity Information Acquisition Index” reveals that when obtaining information about a product or commodity, 76% of Hungarians use the internet, 67% use television, and 48% rely on family and friends. The corresponding international averages are 68%, 61%, and 53% respectively. This comparison shows that Hungarians rely more heavily on the internet to understand product information.

These surveys demonstrate that while traditional Hungarian media, particularly television, still wield considerable influence, the impact of online media and social media is also growing daily. Based on the findings in Sections 1 and 2, Hungary is a highly informationized society, with over 80% of youth and middle-aged individuals online. Hungary’s media landscape is relatively mature, with print, broadcast, online, and social media all well-developed. In the internet and mobile internet sectors, products from major international corporations such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube occupy substantial market share and maintain a dominant competitive advantage.

3.1 Chinese Media Communication with Hungary

3.1.1 China Radio International’s Communication with Hungary

China Radio International’s Hungarian service began broadcasting on July 26, 1976, targeting Hungary and Hungarian-populated regions in surrounding areas. Currently, it provides three programs daily totaling approximately 150 minutes. Since 2010, it has cooperated with the local Budapest classic frequency FM92.1 to broadcast programs introducing Chinese culture, society, and tourism. In October 2003, the Hungarian website of CRI Online officially launched at hungarian.cri.cn. The service operates three Facebook accounts covering news, traditional Chinese medicine, and tourism, with nearly 40,000 followers.

3.1.2 CCTV’s Communication with Hungary

CCTV’s Chinese International Channel (CCTV4), English Channel (CCTV9), Spanish Channel (CCTV-Espanol), and French Channel (CCTV-Francais) are broadcast in Hungary via Hotbird and PAS1R satellite signals. Cable TV subscribers in Budapest using DIGI TV or UPC network services can also watch these channels, including CCTV4.

3.1.3 Chinese Newspapers’ Communication with Hungary

Xinhua News Agency and *Economic Daily* maintain bureaus in Budapest. Additionally, China News Service and Phoenix TV have established cooperative relationships with the local Hungarian Chinese-language media *Xin Dao Bao*, stationing special correspondents there.

3.2 China's Communication Strategy Toward Hungary

Currently, China's overall image among the Hungarian public remains largely shaped by "third-party" narratives, primarily from dominant Western television news channels (BBC, CNN), news agencies (AP, AFP, Reuters), and commentary in newspapers and specialized financial media. Changing this situation will require considerable time, but the corresponding foundation has already been laid through continuously developing bilateral political and economic relations, increasing Chinese investment in Hungary, and growing enthusiasm for Chinese language education.

We believe China's communication efforts toward Hungary should focus on three main aspects. First, it is necessary to shape China's image at the national strategic level. While China is currently cultivating "core socialist values" among its domestic population and establishing theoretical and institutional frameworks, this core value system should be extended internationally. The shaping of China's international image must be elevated to a strategic level, involving not only relevant media organizations but also all government departments and enterprises engaged in foreign affairs, operating in a coordinated manner.

Second, China should establish "flagship" media outlets to compete directly with television news media such as CNN, Bloomberg, and BBC World News. Simultaneously, domestic media should be encouraged to "go global" by signing cooperation agreements with Hungarian media and service providers, operating according to market principles to initially solve the problem of being "visible and audible."

Finally, China must emphasize the development of emerging mobile media and social media, increasing investment of capital and human resources. In terms of communication formats, it should adapt to the forms of mobile internet and social media while appropriately modifying content to suit these platforms to achieve authentic communication effects.

References

- [1] Jin Lei. An Analysis of the International Communication Strength of BBC and CNN[J]. *Communication and Copyright*, 2017(01): 162-164.
- [2] Zhou Xiang, Han Weizheng. Research on Enhancing China's International Communication Power Through Image-Based Social Media[J]. *Academic Journal of Zhongzhou*, 2017(3): 166-172.
- [3] He Yiyang. Measurement and Analysis of Social Network Media Market Structure[J]. *News World*, 2015(09): 99-101.
- [4] Wu Yufeng. Analysis of the Stages and Characteristics of Chinese Culture's Dissemination in Hungary[J]. *Shanxi Youth*, 2016(18): 60-61.
- [5] Tai Yuri. A New Exploration of the International Background of Eastern European Transformations—Taking the International Conditions of Hungary's Transformation as an Example[J]. *Contemporary World and Socialism*, 2017(01): 70-77.

[6] Zhou Hua. Research Report on Austrian and Hungarian Media[J]. Media, 2015(24): 53-54.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.