

A Preliminary Analysis of Strategies for Innovating and Revitalizing Current Affairs News in Local Television Stations (Postprint)

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Abstract

With the rapid development of China's economy, people's living standards have been effectively improved, resulting in heightened demands for television programs. As a significant program category for local television stations, current affairs news still confronts numerous developmental challenges, accompanied by mounting audience skepticism. Therefore, local television stations must promptly realize innovation and revitalization in current affairs news to create personalized program content and effectively attract viewership. This paper first delineates the importance of current affairs news programs, and subsequently contends that substantive development can only be achieved through innovation and revitalization in reporting content, format, and other related dimensions.

Full Text

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An Analysis of Innovative Measures to Vitalize Political News Programs in Local Television Stations

Abstract: With China's rapid economic development, people's living standards have improved significantly, leading to higher expectations for television programs. As a crucial component of local TV stations, political news programs still face numerous developmental challenges, with growing audience skepticism. To create distinctive content and effectively attract viewers, local television stations must urgently innovate and vitalize their political news coverage. This paper first highlights the importance of political news programs, then argues that substantive development can only be achieved through innovation in both content and form.

Keywords: local television stations; political news; innovative vitalization measures

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Political news holds a significant position among all programs at local television stations. However, influenced by various factors, current local TV political news remains primarily focused on conference coverage, with outdated reporting methods and content, resulting in substantial audience loss. Only through innovating and vitalizing the content and form of political news reporting—making it both informative and emotionally engaging—can audiences be effectively attracted. This places higher demands on local TV journalists, who must continuously innovate in their practical work to promote the healthy development of political news programs. Drawing on years of experience in journalism, this paper reflects on current approaches to innovating and vitalizing political news.

With the emergence of countless news media and satellite TV programs, CCTV and provincial stations compete fiercely for audience attention, providing viewers with abundant choices. As science and technology rapidly advance, the Internet has penetrated every sphere of society, and people now have numerous mobile and network terminals to access news from multiple channels. This has created enormous pressure on local TV stations, whose political news programs must innovate and vitalize to survive.

2. Political News Must Be Oriented Toward Audience Needs

The main content of political news includes daily leadership activities, party and government work, and events of significant public concern, primarily covering local economic development and various aspects of people's livelihoods. Local political news should focus on local people and events, possessing distinct regional characteristics that can closely connect with local residents' production and daily lives—all of which provide rich resources for local TV political news.

Local TV political reporting must stand from the people's perspective, genuinely prioritizing their needs. Journalists must humble themselves further, going among the masses to report news closely related to their vital interests. They should shoulder the responsibilities of guiding public opinion and social supervision, care about people's daily lives, improve their information technology skills, and refine their working methods. By connecting with ordinary people's lives, they can report on social hot topics and current focal issues that concern them. Political news can present both sound and images to audiences simultaneously, giving it tremendous advantages and unique characteristics. It only needs to be vivid, accurate, and accessible to effectively attract viewers, timely

convey national policy information, and report on issues happening in ordinary people's lives.

3. Political Reporting Requires Innovative Methods

Political news typically uses leadership activities or conference news as primary source material. The content relates to policies and should focus on issues of public concern. However, the reality is that local stations lack sufficient news gathering and editing capabilities. When receiving news assignments, they often fail to grasp situations in a timely manner, with journalists spending much of their time scrambling for materials and producing patchwork reports. Such coverage tends to be dry, lacking valuable information, hollow and tedious throughout, resulting in unappealing news that audiences dislike—a situation extremely common in news gathering and writing.

The author believes that past reporting methods must be innovated for better development. News creation should both grasp key points and effectively convey higher-level directives, writing about what practical problems meetings have solved from a bystander's perspective. News reports can also incorporate illustrations to highlight key content, focusing on broadcasting issues related to policies that concern the masses, thereby demonstrating the vitality of political news.

Based on the actual work situation and some activities or events that attract significant public attention, political news should conduct in-depth research and analysis of reported events by incorporating news background, news links, reporter's notes, news commentary, and other elements to present more authentic and comprehensive events. Simultaneously, databases can be established to extract relevant content during reporting to display richer information, fully leveraging the depth, breadth, and thickness of news reporting to stimulate the "vitality" of political news and ensure audiences receive more complete information, thereby improving communication quality.

The following event serves as an example: Approximately 400,000 people from Zhejiang work and attend university outside the province. To ensure these college students and migrant workers can return home for the Spring Festival on time while saving travel expenses, and to help them feel warmth during their journey home, the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee and Provincial Government have vigorously organized the "Love Journey Home" activity before the Spring Festival since 2013. Despite budget constraints and insufficient editorial staff, Zhejiang Satellite TV dispatched multiple journalists to regions with concentrated Zhejiang migrant workers, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hebei, and Jiangsu, to conduct on-site interviews. They focused on reporting on returning college students and migrant workers before the Spring Festival, using continuous reporting methods to launch the "Government Responsible for Your Homecoming" series. The journalists captured numerous touching stories of students and workers during their return journey, as well as scenes of family

reunions, combining television images with live sound to create strong visual impact for viewers. Through continuous reporting and live connections, this news series achieved an emotionally moving and inspiring effect, pushing the theme of “Caring for College Students and Migrant Workers Returning Home” to a climax. While moving audiences, it also fulfilled the educational function of political news and achieved good ratings.

4. Political News Must Truly Realize Its Public Opinion Supervision Function

As China’s reform and opening-up further develops, political news must continue to play its role in conveying government policy information and reflecting issues of public concern, guiding social hot and difficult issues, and actively publicizing various decisions and arrangements of party committees and governments. It should report not only positive content but also dare to expose negative social phenomena. Currently, some party committees and governments believe political news hinders the smooth advancement of government work, while some media organizations think their development depends on local governments and therefore dare not report negative phenomena. However, for healthy media development, news organizations must emphasize supervision, using public oversight to solve existing problems among governments and staff to fulfill their mission.

In 2014, during an education practice campaign, Zhejiang Satellite TV boldly reported on phenomena such as “inaction and lazy action” among government staff, conducting in-depth coverage of officials who were perfunctory, muddled, or failed to handle affairs according to law or on time. This prompted organizational and personnel departments to implement a recall and training system for unqualified cadres, including dismissal, demotion, and termination, effectively changing the “inaction and lazy action” phenomenon. In this event, Zhejiang Satellite TV played an important role, using the “Four Winds” construction campaign as an opportunity to dare to expose negative phenomena within the cadre team, causing such officials to lose their positions. The series of reports ensured the smooth progress of this work while also gaining broad audience recognition.

5. Political News Must Also Refine Its Operations

The greatest advantage of political news is that it combines both sound and images, and can integrate multimedia technologies using WeChat, Weibo, and the Internet to rapidly disseminate its reports across various fields. Innovating its communication methods can yield better results. Local TV political news must further refine its operations to vitalize reporting and leave clear impressions on viewers.

However, due to the inherent characteristics of television news broadcasting, audiences can only watch once without being able to save content. By combining

rich and diverse multimedia technologies and promptly uploading political news to WeChat public accounts, Weibo, the Internet, and various other media platforms, audiences can watch anytime and download for repeated viewing, solving the linear transmission limitation of television news. What often leaves deep impressions on viewers are the details of an event. Using bureaucratic jargon and clichés only annoys audiences. Therefore, journalists must conduct in-depth on-site research, possess strong news sensitivity, and be skilled at capturing and amplifying event details to create excellent news stories.

For example, when Zhejiang Satellite TV reported on the story of “Xu Liang, the Sheep-Raising Poverty Alleviation Team Leader,” journalists skillfully captured every detail of his life eating and living with the masses to illustrate the larger theme. Key details included: Xu Liang initially failing to gain farmers’ understanding due to unfamiliarity with local customs; later winning trust by buying meat and vegetables to share meals and lodging with villagers; inventing sugarcane leaf sheep-raising technology; and helping villagers solve funding shortages for sheep farming. Through these vivid people and events, the report portrayed the authentic scene of cadres sharing joys and sorrows with the people, demonstrating the major theme of “Going among the masses to build genuine fish-and-water relationships” and revealing cadres’ practical actions in transforming their work styles.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the reform and innovation of political news cannot be accomplished overnight. Political news possesses rich methods in news language and reporting techniques. Only when journalists are adept at discovering news from their surroundings and daily life can they vitalize political news programs. Political news staff must prepare for long-term efforts, persevere, maintain innovative enthusiasm in political news work, and start from small matters and details to create more quality programs, strengthen their appeal, and improve communication effectiveness.

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