

Transformation and Innovation of Television Programs in the New Media Era: Postprint

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Abstract

With the rapid development of science and technology, various new media technologies continue to emerge, and competition among media has become increasingly fierce. As a traditional form of media, television faces formidable challenges against this backdrop. To achieve healthy development in the current intensely competitive environment and secure broader audience support, television programs must respond to the actual needs manifested by contemporary audiences and proactively pursue transformation and innovation. This paper first provides a brief overview of new media, then explores the shortcomings of television programming in the new media environment, and proposes strategies for transformation and innovation.

Full Text

Abstract

With the rapid development of science and technology, various new media technologies continue to emerge, intensifying competition among media outlets. Television, as a traditional media form, faces severe challenges in this context. To achieve healthy development and gain greater audience support in today's competitive environment, television programs must actively transform and innovate based on the actual needs of contemporary audiences. This paper first provides a brief overview of new media, then examines the shortcomings of television programs in the new media landscape, and proposes strategies for transformation and innovation.

Keywords: new media; television programs; problems; innovation strategies

Introduction

Television programs were once a popular form of entertainment that many people enthusiastically engaged with after work, bringing joyful moments to count-

less viewers. However, with the development of new media technologies and the proliferation of entertainment options, television program ratings have experienced a significant decline, with growing numbers of people losing interest in watching television. Faced with this unfavorable situation, television programs must keep pace with the times, transform and innovate their production approaches, carefully analyze current audience needs, and create content that truly addresses those needs. Only through such measures can they reverse their declining fortunes and regain widespread audience support.

1. Overview of New Media

New media represents a new form of media built upon the foundation of traditional media, primarily utilizing advanced information technology, digital technology, and other innovations to transform conventional media formats. While new media does not differ substantially from traditional media in terms of communication value, it diverges significantly in communication methods and philosophy. Relying on electronic information technology, new media has undergone major changes in communication modalities, presenting itself to the public in more novel forms that better meet contemporary demands.¹ Another key characteristic of new media is its interactivity. Compared with traditional media, new media offers stronger interactive capabilities, and information acquisition and viewing are more flexible, no longer constrained by the time limitations of traditional television programming. Audiences can make choices according to their own schedules, transforming from passive recipients into active participants in the communication process.

2. Analysis of Problems in Television Programs Under New Media

When comparing television programs with current new media formats, several disadvantages and weaknesses become apparent, primarily manifested in the following aspects.

2.1 Unclear Positioning

For a television program to achieve success, its positioning must be clearly defined before production, with a corresponding style and substance developed around that positioning. Only then can the final product be truly attractive to audiences. However, examining the current state of television program production, many programs suffer from unclear positioning, resulting in ambiguous direction during later production stages, lack of distinctive features and innovation, and compromised overall viewing experiences.²

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2.2 Singular Program Formats

Although numerous television programs exist today, an examination of specific program types reveals a phenomenon of homogenous formatting. Many television programs engage in trend-following and imitation during production; when a particular program type gains audience favor, numerous similar programs inevitably emerge. This creates a situation where quantity does not translate into diversity. Furthermore, current television program production lacks reform and innovation, with some advanced production technologies not being promptly applied to program recording. This deficiency affects not only the visual effects of television programs but also the diversity of program production itself.

2.3 Insufficient Interactivity

The most significant drawback of television programs in the new media era is insufficient interactivity. Although many television media have added interactive segments to their programs, the content of these interactions has failed to stimulate audience participation interest or fundamentally grasp audience needs. The traditional “we broadcast, you watch” format persists, diminishing viewer interest.³ When combined with problems such as outdated programs and poor quality, this inevitably leads to low ratings, resulting in zero-viewership situations for many television programs after broadcast.

3. Transformation and Innovation of Television Programs Under New Media

For television programs to achieve higher ratings and win broader audience support in the new media landscape, they must transform and innovate their production approaches. Specifically, they should address the aforementioned problems, making up for deficiencies and achieving improvement through transformation and innovation. This will enable television programs to possess both the advantages of traditional media and the strengths of new media, thereby gaining stronger competitive positions in the media market.

3.1 Actively Utilizing New Media Platforms

The vigorous development of new media has significantly impacted traditional television programs because, unlike the one-way communication of traditional media, new media eliminates temporal and spatial limitations on information access. This reduces audience reliance on traditional television programs, as people increasingly choose various websites and mobile applications to obtain desired content. Faced with this trend, traditional television programs must actively utilize new media platforms to innovate their forms and content. To this end, traditional television programs should actively cooperate with online platforms to create refined and specialized programming. In the context of rapid

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new media development, audience demands have become more personalized and diversified, requiring programs to innovate their positioning and formats.⁴ First, reform program broadcast times and frequency. For instance, major news programs could increase their broadcast frequency. Simultaneously, distinctive features should be incorporated to enhance program attractiveness. Second, program content can be disseminated through platforms such as public buses, subways, Weibo, and WeChat. This not only increases dissemination channels but also breaks through temporal and spatial limitations to regain audience support. Third, television programs can establish topic discussions on their official Weibo accounts and websites, collecting audience feedback and identifying topics of interest, then editing corresponding specialized programs based on this input. This approach expands the scope of television programming and ultimately improves ratings.

3.2 Enhancing Audience Visual Experience

With the rapid development of modern science and technology, program recording technology continues to evolve and innovate, delivering more intense visual experiences to audiences. Consequently, audience expectations for television programs are also rising. Therefore, improvements and innovations in television program recording technology are necessary, applying more advanced techniques to enhance visual experiences while creating more diverse program types to compensate for the current lack of variety.⁵ For example, when recording a music variety show, virtual implantation technology can be employed to enhance background effects. This technology, currently used in some large-scale galas in China, can produce strong visual effects by integrating real studio figures with virtual three-dimensional scenes. Its application in background production can provide more diverse scenes that better match musical pieces. Additionally, new technologies can be leveraged to change singular program formats, creating distinctive program types that enrich television programming. Unique programs are more likely to capture audience attention.

3.3 Creating Characteristic Interactive Programs

In the new media era, television programs should fully leverage their advantages, innovate in production, and create more distinctive interactive programs to compensate for the interactivity deficiencies of traditional television. New media's primary advantage lies in its greater interactivity. Relying on new media platforms enables better interaction with audiences and enhances their participation, which clearly aligns better with contemporary viewing preferences. Therefore, television program transformation and innovation can fully utilize this aspect. Building upon traditional production methods and leveraging the interactive advantages of new media platforms can break the limitations of one-way information transmission, allowing audiences to participate in interactive

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projects through mobile devices while watching programs. This increases audience engagement, makes programs more distinctive and attractive, and significantly helps improve ratings.⁶ For example, when recording a variety show, to make it more unique, prize quizzes or guessing games can be incorporated, with audiences participating through WeChat public accounts or mobile apps. Notably, the questions designed must be highly interesting, and participants should have a relatively high probability of winning to stimulate participation enthusiasm.

Conclusion

In summary, the rapid development of new media has substantially reduced traditional television program ratings. For traditional television programs to survive and thrive under these circumstances, they must pursue transformation and innovation, thoroughly analyze audience needs, and fully utilize new media platforms to expand their reach, achieving integrated development of traditional and new media. Simultaneously, more advanced recording technologies should be introduced into program production to enrich program types and enhance visual experiences. Furthermore, television programs must address their interactivity deficiencies by incorporating interactive elements, thereby creating more distinctive programs that better satisfy audience demands for diversity.

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

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