

Opportunities and Challenges Brought by Short Videos to Traditional Media

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Abstract: With the popularity of various mobile devices, short videos have attracted much attention as a new form of media due to their relatively low threshold and more flexible reporting style. Traditional media is facing a strong challenge from new media, one of the signs being that long videos are being replaced by short and concise, yet more diverse, short videos. The emergence and popularity of short videos imply that traditional media is facing intensified market competition, which has prompted many traditional media outlets to make changes in content production and distribution methods to adapt to the changing landscape. Therefore, short videos not only bring challenges to traditional media, but also unlimited development opportunities. In terms of content and distribution channels, while new media is impacting traditional media, it also brings new ideas, prompting traditional media to accelerate its transformation by focusing on optimizing content production and expanding distribution channels. On the other hand, the rise of new media has also led traditional media to pay attention to its development, making deep collaboration and integration between the two possible, further providing audiences with high-quality audiovisual experiences. For both viewers and the development of traditional media in the era of media convergence, the emergence of new media undoubtedly serves as a catalyst.

Keywords: traditional media, short videos, challenges, integrated development

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In recent years, with the vigorous development of science and technology and the popularity of mobile devices, traditional media has gradually aligned with new communication technologies and methods, giving rise to the era of integrated media. The advent of the integrated media era means a broader channel for audiences to access information and a larger volume of information. However, for traditional media, it signifies a significant transformation in the media industry ecosystem. Subsequently, major short video platforms have been launched, and short videos have gradually become cultural symbols of the media convergence era. Traditional media, inevitably influenced by this trend, has begun to establish their own new media and short video businesses.

1.2. Significance of the Study

With the popularity of various mobile devices, emerging short videos and other self-media have attracted much attention due to their relatively low threshold and more flexible reporting style. Traditional media is facing a strong challenge from emerging media, as long videos are being replaced by short and concise, yet more diverse, short videos. However, challenges always come with opportunities. The arrival of the short video era does not mean that traditional media will exit the stage. As traditional media gradually enters the field of short videos, their resources, experience, and talent advantages begin to emerge. Studying the opportunities and challenges that short videos bring to traditional media helps us better understand the communication characteristics of the integrated media era, avoid the “minefields” when implementing short video strategies in traditional media, and leverage the strengths of both traditional and new media. By synergizing their efforts in different arenas, we can provide audiences with a better audiovisual experience.

In summary, in the era of comprehensive media, information is everywhere and ubiquitous, and there are profound changes in public opinion ecology, media landscape, and communication methods. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “Traditional media and emerging media are not in a relationship of replacement, but one of iteration; it’s not about who is primary or secondary, but about mutual growth; it’s not about who is strong or weak, but about complementary advantages.” “We must adhere to the direction of integrated development and accelerate the transition from addition to integration.” In the face of continuous challenges from new media, some traditional media still exist and remain vibrant, and this phenomenon is not a coincidence. The shortcomings of traditional media such as newspapers can be improved by accelerating the development of deep media integration, thereby “making up for” those shortcomings and rejuvenating new vitality.

2. The Background of the Popularity of Short Videos

2.1. Continuous Development of New Media Technology

There are several reasons for the rapid rise of short videos in the era of the internet, with the fundamental reason being the constant innovation of smartphones. The development of smartphones has provided the necessary hardware conditions for the birth and popularity of short videos. Over time, major smartphone manufacturers have entered the market, which has not only enhanced the hardware and software capabilities of smartphones but also lowered the cost of acquiring them due to intense market competition, which has also provided a broader public base for the popularity of short videos. Consequently, the popularization of smartphones has reduced the production threshold for short videos, leading to an increasing number of people joining the short video production industry and injecting vitality into this emerging field.

In addition to the continuous development of smartphones, the growth of mobile internet and social networks has also played a crucial role in the rise of short videos. The increase in mobile devices and improvement in network speed have gradually changed user habits, with mobile internet becoming the mainstream. Meanwhile, the development of social platforms and applications such as Microblog and WeChat has constantly updated the content production and dissemination models based on them. Short videos have quickly gained popularity as a result of the hardware conditions provided by smartphones, the platform advantages offered by social networks, and the extensive user base of mobile internet users.

2.2. Support from National Policies

Firstly, favorable policy systems have provided strong support for the development of short videos. With the rapid growth of the short video industry and the increasing importance of the cultural

industry to the country, the government has intensified its support for the new media industry and implemented effective management measures. Since July 2020, various government departments have issued documents to support the development of the short video industry. The content of these documents includes encouraging innovative management models and content production on short video platforms, promoting the production of popular science short videos to support nationwide scientific literacy campaigns, regulating and promoting the healthy development of online live streaming services, and supporting diversified independent employment opportunities such as internet live broadcasting. This series of policies demonstrates the country's emphasis on the development of the short video industry and highlights its potential and positive impact in various fields. The support from the government is due to the fact that short videos not only enrich people's spiritual and cultural lives but also have practical benefits. This support has attracted a group of knowledgeable individuals who utilize short video platforms to share more valuable content, thereby promoting the rapid spread of short videos among users of different age groups.

2.3. Penetration of Internet Culture

As the general cultural richness continues to grow, the internet has gradually become universally accessible. While internet culture is changing people's lifestyles, it also stimulates their desire for creation and expression. The relatively relaxed online environment provides users with a broad platform for voicing their opinions. New media platforms encourage users to create and share their own content, thereby lowering the barriers to creation and expression. Due to the low entry threshold and the platform's provision of novel, diverse, and rich content, users can freely produce their own content, enjoying a high degree of freedom and discourse power within the platform. As a result, these platforms have gained popularity among the general public, especially among young people with creative abilities and a desire to express themselves. In a short period of time, a large number of highly engaged users have been accumulated. These users are energetic, interactive, and proficient in content creation. Thanks to the content output of the young user group, the content on new media platforms exhibits characteristics such as diversity, youthfulness, knowledgeability, and entertainment value.

3. Limitations of Traditional Media in the New Era

3.1. Unidirectional Communication and Lack of Audience Engagement

Since the emergence of traditional media, such as "Di Bao", there has been a certain level of information monopoly, where media produces content and audiences consume it through a unidirectional channel. With the advent of the new media era, traditional media was ill-prepared for the transformative impact it would bring to communication methods. It continued to maintain the traditional unidirectional communication approach. Moreover, in order to maintain its credibility, traditional media often disregards user opinions and lacks emphasis on user interaction. There is no platform or space provided for audiences to express their suggestions. As a result, audiences can only passively receive information. With the improvement of public knowledge and cultural awareness, this one-way communication approach that neglects the voice of the public and weakens audience autonomy will not be welcomed or recognized by the masses.

The emergence of new media has changed this situation. By emphasizing interaction with the audience, it has shifted from a media-centered approach to a user-centered approach. New media content is adjusted based on audience comments and discussions in terms of information selection, editing methods, and content optimization. Through such interactive communication, audience attention and dependence gradually increase. Traditional media hardly provides platforms for readers to comment or express opinions, offering very limited services. The forms of transmission services

are also very limited. Consequently, audiences can only passively accept information, resulting in low audience engagement. New media can fully unleash people's initiative, allowing everyone to become a receiver and disseminator of information. Therefore, in today's society, the communication methods of traditional media can no longer meet people's needs, and the unidirectional communication approach is not suitable for the current social context. Therefore, people turn their attention to new media platforms that provide more services.

3.2. Formulaic Content and Lack of Appeal

In the era of new media, audiences have access to a wider range of information channels and have become accustomed to receiving information anytime and anywhere. However, traditional media is still limited by time and space and cannot produce content in real-time. In this era that emphasizes immediacy, traditional media has lost its advantage in producing news at a fast pace. Meanwhile, audiences in the new era are more inclined towards receiving quick, fragmented information. The longer text-based information published in newspapers and magazines and the lengthy videos broadcasted by television media lack the corresponding appeal. Furthermore, the content style of traditional media often tends to be serious and formal, which differs from the aesthetic preferences of the modern audience influenced by internet culture. This means that traditional media is not compatible with the audience that is exposed to online culture. Moreover, traditional media lacks innovation in content format, often lacking user-oriented thinking and resorting to simple reproduction of content. This production model may have occupied a certain market share in an era with limited information channels. However, in today's context where traditional media no longer possesses the irreplaceability as an information source, the lack of appeal in content implies a loss of significant competitive advantage. Additionally, traditional print media, for example, relies on the judgment and writing abilities of editors and journalists, as they lack the support of big data and algorithm-based recommendations like new media content. This is known as experiential production, where experienced editors and journalists make style-fixed but cautious choices based on their decades of work experience. It can be said that the content production of traditional media is still a reflection of the personal aspirations of the editor in chief. Over time, the content produced by traditional media becomes predictable and repetitive, leading to audience fatigue.

3.3. Single Communication Channel and Insufficient Communication Effectiveness

In the past, due to limited economic development and immature technological conditions, audiences had limited choices, and traditional media, such as newspapers, served as the primary source of information. However, with the development of information technology, audiences' attention towards traditional media has been decreasing. Self-media, which is convenient, fast, and not restricted by geography or space, has become an important way for many people to access information. Insufficient subscriptions and low ratings of traditional media have led to a sharp decline in advertising revenue, threatening the survival of some print and broadcasting media. In recent years, the closure of many print media and the suspension of broadcasting reflect the decreasing dependence of audiences on traditional media. Nowadays, the number of people who still watch TV programs and subscribe to newspapers is decreasing, and most of them are middle-aged and elderly individuals. This implies that the influence and communication effectiveness of traditional media among certain age groups are declining. This limitation arises from a single communication channel. Over time, it can be foreseen that traditional media will reach fewer and fewer people, further impacting its social credibility. If there is no voice and appeal from traditional media in the public opinion field, the consequences are unimaginable and uncontrollable.

4. Advantages of the Integration and Development of Short Videos and Traditional Media

4.1. Filling the Gap in Interactivity of Traditional Media

Different from traditional print and television media that adhere to tradition and maintain a serious style, the most important feature of short videos is their distinct interactivity. Short video producers mostly come from grassroots backgrounds and engage in content production either out of interest or as a career. Therefore, they pay great attention to maintaining relationships with their audience. It is precisely because of this interactivity that short videos have established a development tone that is approachable and popular since their inception.[1]

In the era of short videos, catering to the interests and preferences of viewers is crucial. It is not difficult to find that the comment section in short video apps is highly active, with thousands of comments often found under popular short videos. Authors do not exclude interacting with the audience in the comment section or even actively requesting comments or forwarding for sharing. This is in stark contrast to the one-way dissemination of content in traditional media. It is this interactivity that creates a friendly image for short videos and allows them to easily capture the interests of ordinary audiences, which is lacking in traditional media. It is worth mentioning that new media pays attention to the updates and iterations of internet technology and is eager to apply new technology to its products. In addition to traditional video comment interactions, short videos also rely on big data technology for precise content recommendations. This invisible reinforcement of the connection between the audience and the content producer through personalized recommendations leads to more in-depth interactive content and higher interaction frequency. In recent years, with the rise of live streaming in the field of short videos, the interaction between the audience and short videos has become even closer. Live streaming interactions, compared to previous forms of interaction, are more intuitive and emphasize bidirectionality and immediacy. The level of audience participation continues to increase, undoubtedly further enhancing the interactivity of new media.[2]

The respect that new media shows for the audience's status has also gained recognition from the public. This interaction effectively demonstrates the equal coexistence and interdependence between new media and the audience. New media gains traffic while the audience gains a certain degree of discourse power, increasing the likelihood of quickly accessing content of interest and exercising public opinion supervision on the internet. Objectively, the positive interaction between new media and the audience has also promoted the democratization of public opinion supervision in Chinese society.[3]

4.2. Improving the Traditional Content Production Model

Television, newspapers, and other media absorb numerous professionals to produce content through a fixed mode of gathering, writing, editing, and reviewing. This professional and fixed production model ensures the authority and rigor of the content, but it also suffers from formulaic and stereotypical issues. In the era of converged media, new media enables users to produce and disseminate content through its unique user-generated content (UGC) model. By leveraging its platform advantages, various characteristics are rapidly magnified. The emergence and popularity of UGC have further highlighted the disadvantages of the content production model of the traditional media, which is monotonous [4]. The lack of appealing content is also a significant reason why traditional media is becoming increasingly weak in market competition. Therefore, after the rise of new media, the traditional PGC (professionally-generated content) production model has gradually been challenged by the UGC model of social media. The simple operation and easy reading characteristics of UGC model began to be favored by users, and social media began to have a large number of users. This flexible and diverse style depends entirely on the producer's willingness and

ability, encountering fewer objective limitations [5]. It supplements the shortcomings of traditional media in terms of the breadth and quantity of content production, enriches the style and form of content production, and provides audiences with a completely different audiovisual experience compared to traditional media content. It satisfies the audience's need to receive new content anytime and anywhere and their curiosity. Although the content produced under this production model may vary in quality due to the lack of gatekeeping, it objectively conforms to the main theme of enriching spiritual and cultural life, serving as an important supplement to the mainstream public opinion content.[6]

4.3. Expanding the Relatively Single Communication Channel

The value of content is realized through communication. The communication channels of traditional media are relatively fixed, mainly newspapers, television programs, and other traditional platforms. However, as representative channels and platforms of credibility, they are limited by various objective factors in terms of content control and selection. They need to consider broadcasting costs, market response, and potential public opinion influence. On the one hand, such strict control and review mechanisms can purify the public opinion environment. On the other hand, this rigid communication model also reflects the importance of channels for content in the era of media. The short video matrix refers to a strategy and model of promotion on multiple short video platforms [7]. It leverages the attribute that the overlap of users between multiple platforms is relatively small, while gaining attention and exposure on different platforms, aiming to increase the overall exposure of brands or products. Matrix communication can enrich the forms of content, increase user stickiness, make the content more influential, and have a higher degree of dissemination, which is lacking in the communication model of traditional media. [8]

Taking the “Fangzhi Sichuan” new media communication matrix, which started operation in 2021, as an example, the establishment process of this communication matrix fully embodies the Internet thinking. The new media communication matrix of “Fangzhi Sichuan” covers “two microblogs, eight accounts, one platform, one store, one magazine, one museum, and one shop”. It achieves the integration from online to offline, from virtual to physical, and from promotion to sales. This comprehensive and wide-ranging communication matrix takes into account user groups of all ages, achieves online and offline linkage, traditional media and new media linkage, network and television linkage, and linkage between new media platforms, etc. The emphasis on various forms of linkage ultimately forms a joint force, enabling the previously unpopular Fangzhi culture to surpass 100 million visits within a year. This is the optimized publicity effect brought by the new media communication matrix.[9]

Therefore, the establishment of a communication matrix is an important expansion of the original communication channels. With the massive resources and high-quality content of traditional media as the core, the means of a new media communication matrix centered around short videos are used for external radiation. This can ensure the rigor of content output and enrich the forms of content, making high-quality content known to more people. At the same time, diversified new media services can further enrich the user experience, accelerate their own transformation and upgrading, conform to the trend of integrated development, and play a very important role in enriching the cultural ecology.

5. Conclusion

Short videos in the new media landscape are a product of recent developments in the information age, and the audience can easily consume their content. Simultaneously, short videos themselves represent a new mode of news dissemination, allowing the audience to gain deeper insights into actual news content and better understand the beginnings and developments of relevant events. The development

of short videos in new media provides opportunities for traditional media, but there are still some challenges and the need for further innovation in the specific transformation and integration process. In order to promote the development of traditional media and maintain its leading role, it is essential to actively draw inspiration from the development patterns of short videos, enabling traditional media to align with the trends of the times.

The integration and development of traditional media and short videos are beneficial for integrating the resource advantages of both sides. In the foreseeable future, the stratification of traditional media will become more apparent. Traditional media actively embracing short videos for platform transformation and upgrading, or cooperating with well-known new media platforms in various fields, will seize the opportunity to diversify and provide users with a variety of short video news products. This optimization of industry layout can further enhance visibility. However, some local traditional media may encounter challenges such as low traffic and insufficient user stickiness. Overall, the role of short videos in the secondary development and utilization of promotional channels and content materials for top traditional media will become more prominent [10]. The content advantages and rigorous review process of traditional media big brands will further optimize the perceived lack of content credibility and the stereotypical impression of excessive entertainment in the minds of some audience groups towards short videos. This is beneficial for short videos to further meet the core needs of users and fulfill the media responsibility of disseminating excellent popular culture. [11] With the further development of technology and the emergence of professional talents, we have reason to expect high-efficiency integration and development of short videos and traditional media in various fields. Regardless of the development outcome, the development goal must be to bring users high-quality content and high-quality user experience.

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