

# *New Media and Intangible Cultural Heritage*

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the issue of preserving non-traditional culture has gradually come into the public eye, and related conservation issues are increasingly seen and acted upon by more and more people. The new media technology and the various derivative platforms now available provide unique strength and support for such a heritage and conservation. As new media technology continues to develop, the link between new media and the preservation and protection of non-traditional culture becomes even closer. However, as the methods and processes of conservation of intangible cultural heritage have not yet reached a very mature stage, there are many unpredictable drawbacks and problems, in addition to the many advantages of the technology itself. This paper uses case studies and data collection methods to explore the benefits and potential problems of new media technology in the transmission of intangible cultural, identifying the problems of complex environments, misplaced sovereignty and barriers to empowerment, and suggesting the outlook for the corresponding trends.

**Keywords:** new media, non-material cultural heritage, cultural inheritance

## **1. Introduction**

Both new media and non-traditional culture have a high level of interest and use in society today. First of all, new media is a new media production in the midst of changing times, a specific media model arising from a relative historical stage. In the future, it is still an unknown concept as to what form the media will take, but the new media of the present era is in fact an internet-based media, which has really made the communication of data more accurate and personalised compared to the traditional media of the past [1]. The same content can be delivered in different ways, such as video, pictures, and audio, and the new media can be recommended according to the user's needs so that the user can better accept the content disseminated. Compared to traditional media, new media has become more digital, more interactive, more accessible, and more widespread. In the 1990s, the concept of digitisation of cultural heritage emerged as digitisation was developing, covering all aspects of people's lives, and the link between media and cultural heritage became stronger. The term intangible cultural heritage was also recognised by the United Nations in 1997, giving it a high degree of international recognition [2]. China is also a major country in terms of intangible cultural heritage, with a wealth of intangible heritage items that carry on our cultural DNA. A country's development needs not only the support of hard power in science and technology, but also the support of soft power

in culture, and intangible cultural heritage is undoubtedly a vital part of this [3]. In such an international context, the existence of new media can play a critical role in the transmission and dissemination of non-heritage culture.

## **2. Advantages and Examples of Technology-Enhanced New Media Communication**

### **2.1. Dissemination Advantages**

In contrast to the old world, new media technologies have made it possible to communicate in more diverse and faster ways than in the old days. Traditionally, communication was almost limited to text and black-and-white photos and videos, but in the new media era, it is possible to present the culture in a vivid way through colour photos and videos, sound and even 3D modelling. The medium of communication has also changed from a single newspaper, to digital newspapers, digital TV, etc [4]. A lot of communication methods have been innovated, visualised and sensitised, allowing intangible culture to be brought to life in a very vivid way. The advantages of the new media are that they are more interactive, have a wider audience, and are faster, allowing for quicker delivery and feedback to the audience so that research and publication directions and methods can be developed more quickly, allowing the media and the audience to receive two-way information and feedback in a timely manner [5]. This way of allowing the public to express their opinions and interact with each other at any time and from any place, in fact, can also lead to a certain amount of attention from the media, which helps them to continue their research and exploration. In addition to giving people a better understanding of the content and not making them feel distant, it also creates a habit of interest and familiarity with the knowledge over time, so that the next time they encounter it, they will naturally follow it and spread the word. At the same time, new media technology is also a widespread technology that everyone can use with a mobile phone, so the existence of such a technology can actually provide people with many convenient channels of understanding and dissemination because if people only rely on the official one, they can also be allowed to maintain and spread the culture of non-heritage on their own, and everyone can become the guardian of non-heritage culture.

### **2.2. Advantageous Cases**

Many excellent self-publishing bloggers in China are currently innovatively spreading non-traditional culture. The famous short video producer Li Ziqi has popular videos shared with foreign netizens on foreign platforms such as YouTube. Her overseas influence is evident with a global subscriber base of over 17 million on the YouTube platform, which has over 2 billion monthly active users [6]. The main participants are herself, her grandmother, neighbors, small dogs, and cats, but not some so-called high-profile celebrities. The content is also straightforward, mostly old-fashioned videos with traditional Chinese characteristics, teaching people how to make some traditional tools, clothes, dishes and so on. However, the highest number of views on these videos is 80 million, and the average number of comments on each video is over 10,000, and they are available in dozens of languages, with English being the most frequently used. The audiences will find that she basically doesn't say much in her videos and doesn't compulsively cram the beauty of China down the throats of her audience, but instead conveys the traditional beauty of Chinese culture in a relaxed and enjoyable style. At the same time, netizens give Li Ziqi timely feedback and responses underneath her videos, and what can be found is that the comments, although diverse, are basically positive. And the reason for this is that Li Ziqi's video has a good grasp of the way to spread the Chinese story. It satisfies the psychological needs of the audience, making the beautiful wish of people to escape the real work pressure and return to the countryside a reality, and at the same time, opens up a channel for the overseas public to understand Chinese traditional culture intuitively, enhancing the identification of the domestic and foreign audiences with Chinese traditional culture. In the end, Li Ziqi's female

character image of doing everything herself in the video also evoked international female recognition, which broke many people's perceptions of traditional women, and at the same time better externalized the Chinese female character, allowing more people to understand what Chinese women are really like [7]. Li Ziqi's video has gained common recognition at home and abroad, not only telling the Chinese story, but also creating a new sense of national and cultural identity among the Chinese people, and making many foreigners aware of China's many excellent cultures, as well as making people feel the importance and significance of preserving and passing on non-traditional cultures, and even the emergence of many "Little Li Ziqi" to pass on non-traditional cultures.

### 3. Challenges of Using New Media for the Transmission of Non-Traditional Culture

#### 3.1. Content Analysis

This paper takes the texts on the hotlist of non-heritage culture released by major media on Sina Weibo platform in December 2022 as the research object. By searching the search interface of Sina Weibo with "non-heritage culture" as the keyword, there are 109 related hot texts so far, and according to the data analysis, Sina Weibo generated a total of 126,285 hot searches in 2021, an average of 346 per day.

A total of eleven of these articles are selected for analysis in this paper (table 1), and are broadly divided into two broad categories according to their type: presentation and introductory. The presentation category means that the primary purpose of the news article is to present one of the non-heritage crafts or other things, showing it in detail. The presentation text is now generally more general, with more information and descriptions of events but mostly not too long, focusing on the video that follows, and rarely a text-only news article. The introductory text is usually an ample introduction and explanation, focusing on aspects of the programme and the topic to be introduced.

Table 1: Statistics of information related to intangible cultural heritage.

Hot search titles	Hot search time	Number of comments	Number of likes
Cultural Journey to Delight in Non-Foreign Heritage (Individual)	2022.12.11	2384	14000
Cultural Journey Pleasure for Non-Foreign Heritage (Global Museum)	2022.12.14	1310	3507
Dali Non-Heritage Kama Culture (Individual)	2022.12.15	46	711
Sa! Opening the Life of Su Shi with Martial Arts Style (Sichuan Observation)	2022.12.22	60	115
Non-traditional culture is the most beautiful card for telling China's story (CCTV News)	2022.12.12	422	2569
Craftsmen! 00s carry on the 18 flips of non-traditional heritage (People's Daily)	2022.12.3	780	4500
Oriental aesthetics is far more advanced than imagined (Sina Hotspot)	2022.12.22	3	25

Table 1: (continued).

Non-fiction culture in film and television dramas (CCTV Entertainment)	2022.12.11	28	626
These amazing world non-foreign heritage are all from China (Communist Youth League Central)	2022.12.2	131	478
Baguettes are on the non-heritage list (CCTV Technology)	2022.12.1	374	6841
See the fingertip art of the non-traditional glass inheritors (Sina Zhejiang)	2022.12.8	11	20

In a platform with as much visibility and attention as Weibo in China, there is still relatively little attention paid to news about the heritage of non-traditional culture published by new media. According to official media information from Sina, the number of active users of Sina Weibo exceeded 450 million in March 2020, which is still growing quickly. This is a platform with a large population base, but the number of views and likes on content related to non-heritage culture is very small. The news released by both the official media and the self-published media rarely attracts the attention of users. In fact, non-traditional culture has a critical role and significance for the heritage and development of a country and cannot be ignored.

### 3.2. Problem Analysis

#### 3.2.1. The "Mixed Bag" of the New Media Environment

As the threshold for entry into the self-publishing industry is very low, while satisfying everyone can become a self-publisher, we also find that the low threshold also brings a lot of bad things. Because of the personalised nature of self-publishing, there is no unified body or department to keep a strict eye on the content. And it is the presence of these different points that allow people to see multiple perspectives, but at the same time, creates many problems of unequal information and poor information. The overall communication environment needs to be improved through social monitoring, government regulation and other relevant guidelines and laws and regulations [8]. In contrast to the daily news, the transmission of non-traditional culture is a longer and more formal form of content, so while the power of self-publishing is very much needed, we also need to be aware of the potential drawbacks of this. In this way, we can make the most of our strengths and avoid any possible discrepancies between the content and the facts, or problems with the way we communicate, so that our heritage can be transmitted in the right way and in the right form.

#### 3.2.2. Misattribution of Discourse Sovereignty in the Netflix Economy

Since the age of self-media has continued to develop, the self-media industry has also spawned a new breed of stars: the 'netroots'. And Netflix is also a common business derivative of the media age, the fan age and the discourse age [9]. They have a greater voice than celebrities in society today, and have a much stickier fan base. However, most netizens nowadays have a low threshold, rarely have a high level of academic knowledge or an apparent pursuit, and almost anyone can become a netizen and get a piece of the action. But nowadays, self-publishing is a vital part of the news, as people pay more attention to producers and they are more frequent. It is not a good phenomenon for netizens to

make a show of their weirdness and saber-rattling, as this can lead to a bad trend. Proper Netflix should have clear self-values and be able to bring positive content orientation to society before they can be called emerging stars in the age of self-publishing. Making money and deriving corresponding commercial benefits from videos is critical support for those in the self-publishing industry, but it is not contradictory to passing on non-traditional culture. By taking advantage of the new media era, it is possible to better convey the culture of non-traditional heritage by reordering it to be more important than making commercial profits. It is only when the netizens of the new media age realise this and most of them strive to develop and move closer to it that the Chinese can really put the heritage culture into practice. People of every age have different responsibilities and missions in every age. In today's ever-growing age of self-media, we must make good use of the advantages of convenience and two-way interaction brought to us by the current media to jointly promote the development of the age of self-media and the inheritance of non-heritage culture.

### **3.2.3. Barriers to Empowerment in the New Media Age**

In the new media era, although the major platforms have brought a vibrant choice for users to transmit and pass on the culture of non-heritage, and have also attracted the attention of some capital in society, gaining a certain amount of capital and human support. But because of this, there is also a horse-trading effect that extends from the Netflix economy. While gaining capital support has to a certain extent, promoted the spread of non-heritage culture, as many capitalists have the channels of dissemination and the flow in their own hands, it results in the flow of many ordinary non-heritage practitioners who do not enter their companies being divided up, and the platforms are able to give them even less attention. To a certain extent, the involvement of capital has also led to a widening gap between the participation of netizens and non-netizens, making it more difficult for some genuine non-genetic inheritors who are not netizens to be on the edge of the information ocean and to take advantage of the media and medium brought by the new era to carry on the heritage culture [10]. Therefore, in the new media era, it is necessary to get out of such a strange circle and give the flow of the platform to those who need it so that they can say what they want to say and deliver the message they want to deliver, and every useful word can be heard and valued by everyone, which is the role that the media platform should really play in the new era.

## **4. Observations and Recommendations in Response to Questions**

To pass on, the culture of non-traditional heritage must be transmitted vertically and horizontally together. In today's new media era, which has led to the development of countless self-published media, we should not only make good use of the advantages brought about by the new media era, so that each and every non-genetic inheritor can be known and valued by everyone, so as to deliver the relevant content of non-traditional culture, but also tell our own Chinese story to the outside world, and make good use of the unique advantages of self-published media and the convenient communication ability and wider dissemination ability brought about by self-published media, so as to better contribute to the inheritance and innovation of non-traditional culture and even more culture, science and technology, so that culture can also keep up with the pace of the times and continue to innovate.

Let Chinese stories and non-traditional cultures truly take to the world stage, so that more people around the world can get to know them and protect them together. Behind every piece of non-traditional culture is the accumulation of history and the wisdom of generations, a common treasure of humanity that deserves to be understood and protected by everyone. Therefore, some relevant advice is also given. Although this is an era where new media is very dominant and many people have started to turn from audiences to communicators and create their own media, traditional media



has actually not completely withdrawn from people's view and still occupies a very important place in people's lives, for example, for many official contents and news, people will actually still be more inclined to trust the reports of traditional media. But, for example, the short video platforms, Tiktok, Racer, etc., are now very popular and many people spend a lot of time watching various types of videos in them on a daily basis, so nowadays, many people's first source of content maybe this kind of self-publishing platform, and will then go to official websites for information verification. So, in this new era, what the public needs to do is to make good use of the advantages of self-media and traditional media, combine them, complement each other's strengths and truly make use of the advantages of self-media brought to people in this new era, so as to better contribute to the preservation and transmission of traditional culture. In a sense, the preservation of non-heritage culture is the same as the development of the media, which requires constant innovation and the development of new products in order to revive the "old products". A new term 'cultural and creative products' has emerged as a result of the combination of new media and internet technology with the culture of non-heritage [11]. What can be found through the propaganda of the Internet and the use of new media technology is that the new media nowadays is not actually something that develops completely independently, but its development also needs to be developed and promoted jointly by various parties. Suppose the development of intangible heritage is combined with self-media. In that case, it cannot only develop self-media to enrich the daily life of the public but also drive the co-development of intangible culture from various aspects, promote the wide dissemination of intangible culture in various forms, make people aware of the importance of intangible culture, and let intangible culture enter people's lives and even accompany them with a new look and form. To reduce the marginalisation of intangible cultural heritage in people's lives, to make people genuinely enjoy such an important culture, and to mobilise everyone to work together to safeguard it.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper analyses the current situation, the advantages and the challenges facing the development of non-traditional culture in the contemporary new media era, and proposes relevant views and solutions. Through specific case studies and the collection of relevant data, the advantages and problems of preserving non-traditional culture in the new media era are argued and analysed, further illustrating the importance of preserving non-traditional culture and the importance of relevant content analysis. It is an extension of the human spirit and needs to be protected and valued by everyone. And with the influence of the new media age, the connection with intangible cultural heritage will become stronger and stronger in the future, and more people will surely realise the importance of passing on intangible cultural heritage and identify more problems, promptly question and participate in passing on intangible cultural heritage.

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