

# ***Research on the Social Promotion of Animal Protection Concept in the Self-media Environment***

**Moran Geng<sup>1,a,\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*School of International, Hebei University, Qiyi East Road, Baoding, China  
a. 20202501015@stumail.hbu.cn*

*\*Corresponding author*

**Abstract:** Based on previous research, this study integrates and summarises the roles of existing animal video publishers and the main contents of their videos in a self-media environment, and discusses the focus of the videos produced under different production motives on the dissemination of animal protection concepts, explores the social benefits of the videos in promoting the cause of animal protection, and seeks a more suitable development and promotion method for the promotion of animal protection concepts in the self-media era. The video is a more suitable direction and way to promote animal protection. Video on the self-media platform has a more personalised and non-compulsory nature than traditional mass media. Due to their different roles, different video publishers have different motives for producing videos, such as expressing their opinions and hobbies, promoting their organisations or seeking help, or promoting the cause of animal protection. The content of the videos corresponds to the identity of the video publisher. Individual publishers tend to share their daily life or express their opinions, so their videos are often more interesting and less professional, which is conducive to wide distribution on the platform. Group publishers are usually more polished but more commercial in nature. Organisational publishers often produce videos to promote their organisation or seek help, while official publishers such as NGOs tend to be more pure and professional in promoting ideas and popularising science. Depending on the type of video content, videos on animal topics on self-publishing platforms have had different impacts on society, such as creating an atmosphere for animal protection, creating public opinion to fight for animal rights, and conveying animal protection ideas and related knowledge. The closed loop between the identity of the publisher of the animal video, the content and motivation of the video and the social impact helps to achieve a more comprehensive and personalised dissemination and popularisation of animal protection ideas on the less well-planned and less structured self media platforms.

**Keywords:** communication studies, animal protection, self-publishing, video communication

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, the cause of animal protection has received increasing public attention, a global body of animal protection theory is taking shape, and public recognition of the concept of animal protection is growing [1]. The gradually prevailing trend of pet ownership has also provided a boost

for the public to cast their eyes on the front of animal protection. However, even so, vicious incidents of animal cruelty and infringement of animal rights, such as live monkeys taking brains, animals by mail and black-hearted pet shops, still occur from time to time, and the concept of animal protection has not yet become widespread [2].

In order to promote and popularise the concept and knowledge of animal protection, mass media such as newspapers and television have traditionally served as the main medium to appeal to the public, with videos mainly appearing as public service announcements, propaganda films and documentaries [1]. In recent years, however, the influence and audience reach of traditional media has been gradually reduced as self-media platforms have become more prevalent in public life. Public service announcements and promotional films were the main form of propaganda, and their narratives were often didactic, contributing to the widespread dissemination of basic animal protection concepts, together with documentaries, in the early days of animal protection [1]. Today, however, there is a greater need for a more precise, more comprehensible and more spontaneous mode of communication than a popular one.

In the era of media convergence, Stream Media has gradually flourished and the audience's attention has gradually shifted from media such as TV and movies to self-media platforms such as Tik Tok, YouTube and Bilibili [1]. As a result, more types of animal videos have been created spontaneously in the self-media environment, and are being distributed among different groups of people through the new media generated by the mobile Internet. Many of these animal videos are edited and published without the primary aim of promoting animal protection, but they also create an animal-friendly atmosphere in the social environment, providing a good social foundation and environment for the understanding and practice of animal protection [3]. There are also videos that are still based on the purpose of animal protection, but are more diverse and relevant to the daily lives of the audience than the knowledge-infused videos of the traditional communication model. Among them, the call for animal rights and the fight against animal cruelty form the mainstream perspective on animal protection in today's self-media environment. Appeals for animal rights are widely disseminated in this media environment, and the vicious incidents of "animal cruelty" often create a huge public outcry.

Now we media environment has become the main front for the public to appeal for animal protection, and mainstream media has also been in line with we media platform to adapt to the environment of the new era. This article adopts the method of literature review to classify and sort out the videos in today's video communication environment, break through the media differences between publicity videos under traditional media and videos in the We Media environment, and explore the social benefits of videos transmitted through society under different production mechanisms. The research materials are from CNKI and Sci-Hub, covering the We Media platforms such as Twitter, the Pet Network Red IP, and the Animal Protection Science Video Public opinion on animal abuse incidents. The research on the classification of animal-themed videos on the We Media platform is helpful to sort out the cut-in angle of animal-themed videos in the self-media environment in a less planned and organized We Media environment and clarify the social benefits that can be achieved by this kind of videos after social communication. Through the exploration of the main areas of the social impact of existing video communication, the direction and effective focus of animal protection development in the new environment can be unified, and the more powerful and accurate concept of communication with the development of the times can be realized under the new environment and new requirements of animal protection.

## **2. Types of Animal-themed Videos on Self-publishing Platforms**

As publishers of animal videos in the self-publishing era, there are professionals in the animal-related field, as well as animal lovers, animal rights advocates and caring people who are

not professionals. Depending on the identity of the video publisher, the videos produced by them usually have different content biases. Based on the professionalism of the video publishers and their orientation towards the cause of animal protection, the main types of videos on the self-publishing platforms can be grouped according to the following.

### **2.1. Pet Daily Sharing Videos and Secondary Creation of Edited Videos**

With the increasing pressure of life and the need for companionship in an increasingly fast-paced environment, "pets" have become an increasingly popular choice [2]. Many people are unable to have a real pet due to time and family circumstances, so more and more people tend to follow pet bloggers for a vicarious "online pet experience", which not only allows them to enjoy the "daily interaction" with their pets, but also avoids the hassles and problems of pet ownership. This is a great way to enjoy the "daily interaction" with pets and avoid the hassles and restrictions that pet ownership brings to life, thus gradually forming a huge audience [4]. This type of video has gradually created a large amount of video footage on the internet, which has been artificially collected and categorised, and combined with people's love of cute animals and their need to relieve stress, to create secondary edited videos of this type of animal video. This type of video takes the form of music jams, a collection of similar animals or a collection of special animal behaviours, and other ways of humouring or warming up a large amount of animal video footage to form a secondary creative video with a specific theme and more entertainment. The combination of cute animal images and the lively and light-hearted nature of these videos has made them a very influential category, giving rise to many "popular pets" and bloggers with large followings. The influence of net pets and pet bloggers is growing among audiences, especially young ones, and the public's love and interest in animals is also growing in popularity with pet IPs.

### **2.2. Video on Complaints and Advocacy Against Animal Cruelty**

On August 1, 2016, a car owner in Shandong Province dragged a dog by car, causing the dog to die in a bloody mess. The incident was photographed by a witness and uploaded onto the internet, and the topic "Weihai driver abuses dog" quickly emerged on Weibo, with over 100,000 readers within a few hours. The incident continued to ferment on the internet, with dozens of news outlets reporting on it and continuing to focus on it, sparking a huge storm of public opinion on the internet [5]. "As of 10 days after the information was disclosed, the topic of "Golden Siri" had been discussed on Weibo 200,000 times and read over 1 billion times. Self-media platforms have become a guarantee that animal abuse cases will be heard. As soon as the topic was revealed, animal protection videos, in-depth reports, and legal popularisation and analysis videos followed the incident from all angles [6]. The ferment of public opinion on the internet has led to an increase in public disgust and resistance to animal cruelty, as well as an increase in awareness of animal cruelty among audiences who have not previously been aware of such incidents [3]. Videos against animal cruelty can bring to the public's attention animal cruelty cases that have not received enough attention from society, raising public awareness and concern about the current state of animal protection.

### **2.3. Video of Rescue by Stray Animal Protection Organisations and Caring People**

In search of greater impact and power, more and more stray animal protection organisations and caring individuals are posting videos of rescued stray animals on online platforms. These videos are mainly about rescuing trapped animals, feeding or treating stray animals, showing the daily lives of rescued stray animals and finding adoptive families, and are related to animal protection initiatives. As the main source of funding for animal protection initiatives is social fundraising or the

participants themselves, they are often short of funds to sustain long-term activities [7]. As an important way to increase the impact of public service actions, seek social fundraising and rely on video traffic to subsidise public service actions, such videos are increasingly accepted by caring individuals and stray animal protection organisations. However, as most of the video providers are non-professionals with less experience and expertise in video production, the quality of the videos is usually mediocre and it is difficult to get high traffic, so these videos are mostly viewed by people who are already concerned about animal protection.

## **2.4. Videos on Wildlife Conservation and Animal Knowledge**

The sharing and popularisation of wildlife conservation knowledge is a more traditional type of animal conservation video, often disseminated in the form of public service announcements, propaganda films and documentaries in the mass media, but in the era of integrated media, these works also appear on self media platforms, and in order to adapt to the fragmented knowledge intake habits of audiences on self media platforms, a secondary editing of long videos such as documentaries is produced. These videos are produced from a professional perspective and output from the audience's point of view, sharing professional knowledge that is easy to understand and increasing the depth of knowledge and acceptance of animal protection concepts [8]. However, due to its professionalism, it is more suitable for audiences who already have some interest in the field to learn at a deeper level, rather than transmitting basic animal conservation concepts to a general audience who rarely pay attention to animal conservation in a generally entertaining environment [1].

In contrast to the more serious and professional videos produced by the government, there are science bloggers who have adapted to the self-media environment. For example, "Infinite Xiaoliang's Science Daily" has gained over 16 million followers in two years by producing a series of short science videos called "Identify the popular biology videos on the Internet". As the deputy editor of the youth edition of China National Geographic's "Museum", "Infinite Xiaoliang" has a high level of expertise in the field of biological knowledge, and his videos are produced in a way that combines "popular videos" and The short video format combines "hot videos" and "hot stems", striking a balance between professionalism and entertainment, expanding the scope of professional knowledge and drawing more audiences to biological conservation-related knowledge [9].

## **3. The Identity of Animal Video Publishers on Self Media Platforms**

The simple and user-friendly publishing and review model of self-publishing platforms and the increasingly common video editing software have made it easier for individuals to complete the whole process of shooting, editing and publishing videos. However, due to the varying video production expertise of individual bloggers, animal videos posted by individuals are generally poor in terms of follower base and video sophistication. Individual bloggers generally produce videos out of their own personal drive to share and talk about their pets, with daily pet videos being the most common type and a certain percentage of secondary edited videos. However, many of the bloggers who post these videos are only expressing their views on specific events and are not able to produce videos on a consistent basis. As a result, individual publishers show less continuity and regularity.

There are three general ways in which animal video accounts, such as public websites, are supported by groups. One is a smaller team formed by individual bloggers who spontaneously post videos and then recruit assistants, another is a team formed by individual bloggers who increase their followers and then join a professional video studio for higher exposure and more professional video production, and another is an account run by some of the people in the professional video studio for profit. As the creative team is more specialised, their video output will be more

sophisticated in terms of editing methods and text layout, copywriting and marketing. However, as it involves the employment of account operators, it tends to be more commercially managed, exploiting the value potential of the Netflix IP and undertaking advertising to bring in goods, and fans are easily bored with frequent advertising after they become familiar with the routine [10].

The content of videos posted by animal protection organisations in society is generally more directed, usually to promote the organisation itself or to seek social support. Such organisations are mostly private animal protection charity organisations or animal rescue organisations established by caring individuals, such as zoos and stray animal rescue stations. Nanjing Red Mountain Forest Zoo has been hit hard by the impact of the epidemic on the offline industry and has turned to developing an online industry to make up for the losses incurred by the offline industry through live streaming and other forms in order to build a brand and promote the zoo. The Red Mountain Zoo lost \$30 million in 2020 due to the epidemic, but in 2021 it launched its 'Zoo Live', which has seen over 10 million visitors and has produced many 'animal celebrities' [11]. In addition to videos posted to promote specific organisations, there are also videos that are more functional, such as those seeking adoption and sharing the rescue of animals. However, in order to ensure that the videos are both interesting and popular, the videos are often chosen to show the most interesting aspects of the organisation's operations [12].

There are three main types of animal videos produced by NGOs or the state: public service announcements, propaganda films and documentaries [1]. These videos are usually more expensive, more professionally filmed and have a clear focus on animal protection and scientific knowledge, and are more rigorous than those produced by individuals, groups and organisations, and their quality is better guaranteed. However, as the content of the videos is too obvious and usually relatively serious, they are less interesting and less likely to attract audiences. With the spread of the concept of inclusive media, NGOs and other official organisations are also creating accounts on self-media platforms to adapt to the psychology of audiences in the self-media short-form video environment, producing videos that combine fun with propaganda, or clips from long-form videos released by officials.

## **4. Initial Motivation for Video Production**

### **4.1. Daily Life Sharing and Hobby Sharing**

Due to the popularity of vlogs and other cultures and the self-publishing environment, many people have the habit of posting short videos of their own making to record and share their daily lives, and pets are part of it. Well-known pet bloggers such as "Memories Special Vest" and "Leo Its Dad" started posting videos in the beginning in order to share their pets' daily lives. With the accumulation of pet video resources on the internet, secondary creation videos using pet videos as material have emerged to meet the audience's demand for richer, fast-paced and finely crafted pet videos. The IP economy created by pet internet celebrities has led to increasing commercial profits and the emergence of video bloggers or video accounts created in pursuit of financial gain.

These videos do not directly address the topic of "animal protection", but are often motivated by a desire to share and commercial needs, but because they are close to life and have a fun, light-hearted style, they can be widely disseminated within the audience. They also create and consolidate a "pet culture" in society and, to a certain extent, pass on knowledge of animal protection on a more superficial level, such as "adopt instead of buy".

### **4.2. Anti-animal Abuse and Rights Protection**

This type of video is closely linked to public opinion and news, and generally only appears when there is news about animal abuse. It is mainly posted by caring people who want to speak out for the

animals in the incident or by smaller groups who are concerned about animal protection. The videos are produced and posted in close proximity to the animal cruelty story in question, and the content is clearly directed at fighting against animal cruelty and for animal rights. However, as they are too closely linked to a specific incident, they mainly show animal protection-related ideas in the area of the incident, which is rather thin.

#### **4.3. Promote and Popularize Animal and Animal Protection Knowledge**

These videos are mainly produced for the purpose of imparting experience, knowledge and education. As pet culture has become more popular, there are many experience sharing videos on pet ownership, where more experienced pet owners share their experience and tips to new pet owners. These videos are mainly experience-based, but they are prone to receive pet-related advertising as their number of followers grows, and are not produced for the sole purpose of imparting experience. The videos from unofficial self-publishing accounts are more professional in nature. Due to the interactive nature of the self-publishing platform and the audience, they are also able to produce videos that address the concerns of the audience. The main purpose is to popularise science, and there is a degree of commercialism, but it is not mainly commercial[8]. The official videos are mainly educational, with the function and purpose of popularising knowledge. The videos, such as animal protection videos and documentaries, do not aim to make a profit, but rather to disseminate ideas and knowledge. They are highly professional and less interesting in their approach to the dissemination of ideas and knowledge, and have a certain distance from the general audience.

### **5. The Social Benefits of Videos for Spreading the Concept of Animal Protection**

#### **5.1. Popularization of Knowledge and Awakening of Attention Under Daily Sharing and Hobby Sharing**

The prevalence of pet culture has given rise to an increasing number of pet video bloggers, while the growing number of pet-themed videos on self-media platforms has created a pet-loving ethos in the online environment. Some people in the audience have not had much exposure to animals in their previous lives, but the video pushing on self media platforms has provided people with access to this information [4]. As a result, people who have little exposure to animals and are unaware of animal protection topics have the opportunity to raise their awareness of animals through self-publishing platforms and have a greater chance of becoming aware of animal protection causes.

Videos on animal topics with scientific popularisation and experience-sharing can also entertain and relax audiences while teaching them how to raise pets scientifically and responsibly, learn about the habits of animals and how to protect them, fostering an atmosphere and trend of loving animals and caring for and understanding animal protection knowledge in the form of entertaining and fun videos on self-media platforms [4]. This atmosphere, in turn, will have an effect on the video makers and give birth to more animal-themed video bloggers, creating a virtuous circle of animal protection atmosphere diffusion [10].

#### **5.2. Creating Public Opinion Against Animal Cruelty and Defending Rights**

Videos against animal cruelty are often more explicit, relying on the discussion of a socially pernicious incident of animal cruelty. These videos are used to generate public support and solidarity by arousing the public's 'disgust' and 'resistance' to the event, in order to increase the impact of the event in society and thus spread the idea of resisting animal cruelty. However, the audience for the videos is mainly limited to those who are already concerned about animal videos.

Animal videos are usually used to gather public opinion on self media platforms in four ways: through the use of opinion leaders such as celebrities and well-known groups, through in-depth reporting with the help of online videos, through group communication with collective psychology and action, and through online public relations persuasion through direct interaction with "micro-interviews" [12]. By generating public opinion, the campaign expands the audience's exposure to the cause of animal protection, fighting for animal rights and opposing and condemning animal abuse.

### 5.3. Non-coercive and Personalized Appeal to Animal Protection Knowledge

In contrast to the compulsory export of ideas and knowledge, the creation of videos on self-publishing platforms requires a balance of fun, accessibility, professionalism and, to a certain extent, commercialism. This is why videos are often 'interest-inducing' and 'attention-grabbing' in order to generate spontaneous interest in animal and animal protection-related areas, changing from a passive transmission of ideas to a softer, more developmental and less resistant audience. The spontaneous uptake of the message. In order to adapt to the different knowledge acceptance abilities and knowledge bases of audiences on self media platforms, animal protection knowledge sharing videos are often presented in an in-depth style, attracting traffic and providing a shallow level of animal protection knowledge. At the same time, a certain number of videos that are more professional and less interesting are targeted at minority groups with a higher degree of concern for animal protection topics, relying on the video pushing mechanism of the self-media platform in the big data environment, and are more hierarchical and more personalised to deliver concepts and knowledge to different groups [13].

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, the cause of animal protection has received increasing public attention, and the way in which its ideas are disseminated has gradually shifted from traditional mass media to more hierarchical, more targeted and less coercive self-publishing platforms that can generate spontaneous attention to the topic. The identities of the publishers of animal-themed films and videos on self-media platforms are quite diverse, ranging from individual video bloggers who mainly share their lives, hobbies and opinions, to groups with a certain commercial bias, organisations with functional demands such as promoting organisations or seeking help, to officials who focus on the promotion of animal protection concepts and knowledge. The various identities of the publishers make up the climate and system of animal protection on self-publishing platforms. Among the animal-themed videos on the self-media platforms, the videos of daily pet sharing and secondary creation videos mainly rely on people's love and desire to share in the social atmosphere of pet ownership; the videos of complaints and rights protection against animal cruelty are closely linked to the vicious incidents of animal rights infringement in society and express firm support for animal protection; the videos of rescue by stray animal protection organisations and caring people show audiences the daily life of rescue and protection through the videos of rescue and protection. The videos of stray animal rescue organisations and caring people show the audience what they can do in their daily lives through rescue and protection; the videos of wildlife protection and animal knowledge are less interesting but provide professional animal protection knowledge. The motivation of existing animal videos on self media platforms is not always to promote the cause of animal protection, but for reasons of sharing and commercialism, but it can also foster an overall animal-loving atmosphere on self media platforms and lay the environmental and psychological foundation for more people to spontaneously learn about animal protection. Due to the video delivery mechanism, videos that promote the cause of animal protection can also be seen by people

with different levels of interest in the cause of animal protection, depending on the content and specialisation of the video, achieving a more personalised delivery between the video resources and the audience.

This article compares the animal videos on self-publishing platforms according to the identity of the video publisher, the content of the video, the motivation of the video and the social influence, and summarises the output and acceptance systems between the video publisher and the audience in the era of self-publishing in terms of the transmission of animal protection concepts and the popularisation of animal protection knowledge. The strong correlation between video publishers and their motives, as well as the connection between video content and its social impact, help animal protection find the focus of communication and popularisation in the less structured and less planned self media platforms, so as to align the concept with the self media era, better integrate into the information reception circle of contemporary audiences, and realise the dissemination of concepts and knowledge.

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